THE HIGHLIGHTS

Western PA District Church of the Brethren

December 2024/January 2025

DISTRICT MINISTER TEAM NOTES

One of the blessings of serving on the District Minister Team is the opportunity to visit congregations in our District. On Sunday, October 27, my husband, Jay and I, along with our two friends, Kris and Joel, went to the Robinson COB.

We were welcomed warmly and were blessed by being in worship there. The scripture focus was 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in

good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real."

Pastor Leah's message was one in a series on stewardship, specifically, our treasures. Citing from becomingminimalist.com she told us that the average size of the American home has nearly tripled in size over the past 50 years and yet 1 out of 10 Americans rent offsite storage! While 25% of people with two-car garages don't have room to park cars inside them, only 32% have room for one vehicle inside! British research found that the average 10-year-old owns 238 toys and even though only 3.1% of the world's children live in America, they own 40% of the toys!

The question was clear: Do you own your stuff or does your stuff own you?

Granted, we need stuff, but we cannot deny that most of us have much more than we need. So much so that we often cannot even *use* an item we know we have because we cannot *find* that item.

We are on the verge of entering a time when shopping frenzy occurs. Items are purchased only because "I need to get them something". We tend to over buy, especially for the little ones in our lives. In an attempt to keep some

semblance of control of "stuff", many parents try to clear out the old to make room for the onslaught of the new. Sadly, oftentimes those who have much get more and those who have great needs receive little.

Not only do we tend to stuff our spaces, we often stuff our schedules. "Joy to the world, the LORD has come" is often

obscured by the busyness of the season, often true joy is lost in the hustle and bustle. Baking, buying, wrapping, decorating, the list goes on ...

Do you need to clear out some schedules and stuff?

Let's be intentional this year to "let every heart prepare Him room". Let's clear out some of the clutter of the season, those traditions and treasures that have no eternal value or place in our hearts. May we truly receive our King, the King of Kings, into our celebrations and into our hearts this year.

"O come to my heart, Lord Jesus – there *is* room in my heart for Thee!"

Ruby Mader, District Minister Team

FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE

The Highlights deadline for the **February 2025** issue is

January 10, 2025

Please send your information to tlehman@brethren.org.

DISTRICT STAFF:

District Minister Team

Pete Kaltenbaugh mdalepastorpete@comcast.net

Ruby Mader redhatvicar@yahoo.com

Chris Forry

exit10dunkard@hotmail.com

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

**Closed every other Friday

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

2025 DISTRICT DIRECTORY

The 2025 District Directory will be completed by December 31, 2024. Please be sure to send any updates and changes to the District Office by December 15, 2024.

The directory will be sent out in the beginning of January 2025.

Thank you!

REQUEST FOR DIRECTORIES

It is very helpful to the District
Office staff to have <u>updated</u>
information from all the
churches we serve. If your
congregation will be making a
new directory for **2025** please
send one to the District Office,
115 Spring Road,
Hollsopple, 15935
Thank you!

Day 2 Isaiah 11:1 Day 3 Isaiah 7:14 Day 4 Micah 5:2 Day 5 Zechariah 9:9 Day 6 Luke 1:28-33 Day 7 Luke 1:34-35 Day 8 Luke 1:46-55 **Day 9** Matthew 1:18-23 Day 10 Luke 2:4-7 **Day 11** Luke 2:8-12 Day 12 Luke 2:13-20 Day 13 Matt. 1:1-2, 9-12 Day 14 Romans 6:23 Day 15 Galatians 4:4-7 Day 16 1 Timothy 1:15-17 Day 17 Titus 3:3-7 Day 18 1 John 5:11 Day 19 John 14:3 Day 20 Matthew 26:64 Day 21 Revelation 1:7 Day 22 Revel. 22:12-13 Day 23 Revel. 3:20-21 Day 24 Revelation 22:17

Christmas

SCRIPTURE READII

Day 1

>>>>> CHALLENGE: <<<<<

Isaiah 9:6-7

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



Day 25 Revelation 22:20

FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE



NEW MEMBERS

Arbutus - Dan Stutzman

Sipesville—Vic Caldrone, John Ringler

LEADERSHIP

Chris Fuska, Ordained—Shade Creek/Ridge

Addie Lucatorto, Licensed—Good Samaritan

ARBUTUS PET FOOD PANTRY

Each month the pantry has been adding about 15 new families to the list of individuals who use our service. We offer food to both cats and dogs. The food is distributed in 1 gallon bags. We also offer, when available, wet canned food and treats. The pantry relies on monetary and food donations from the community as well as support from the Arbutus Church. This is one of our missions in helping those in need in the community. Since the beginning of 2024 the pantry has received 35 monetary and food donations from individuals and organizations. We are very thankful for the support that we have experienced. We have served up to 39 towns through this program. In addition to the food provided there is always a free table for clients to choose items from. Donations of pet items such as bowls, collars, leashes etc. plus household items are available to them. In November, we will offer new and slightly used blankets. Should you have any that you would like to donate they can be dropped off at the Arbutus Church. The first set of doors of the church are open 24/7 so you can drop them off at your convenience. November 2, 2024 from 12-2 pet photos with Santa will be held at the church. Cost is \$10. Thanks to all who help this project become so successful. Any questions feel free to call: Cheryl at 814-410-3151.

VIRTUAL SERVICES

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

Freedom Church (Indiana COB) services are on Facebook (Freedom Church Facebook page) and on YouTube (@FreedomChurch-cd9xj)

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 LKf8aqZM8lDlo0J 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



SERVING IN THE DISTRICT AND BEYOND

DISTRICT DISASTER MINISTERIES



3-D- The ministry is great, still alive and well and with your help, we will be able to make it even greater. With all the severe weather events we

have had, the need becomes greater each passing day. We need you to help with this ever increasing work load. We have a core of dedicated volunteers who give of their time and participate on just about every trip that is scheduled. For this we are very, very thankful. We are looking to have a full crew of volunteers each trip, which would be 14 people.

Think about being a volunteer, where else can you go for an all-expenses paid trip where you work hard, but eat well, have great fellowship, and have tons of fun!Contact your church coordinator to volunteer and, if your church does not have one, please contact me at hjewald@atlanticbb.net or (814) 539-8530, (C) 814-691-5718

2024 Schedule

December 8-14, 2024 OPEN

2025 Schedule

February 16—22, 2025 April 6-12, 2025 June 1-7, 2025 August 3 -9, 2025 October 5—11, 2025 December 7-13, 2025

There are no New Windsor day trips scheduled, the program may be discontinued.

Maximum of 7 Volunteers on each trip except if noted OPEN, then 15 Volunteers would be needed. Locations of all week long trips to be announced as info is available.

EL HOGAR DE NIÑOS ENMANUEL **SHOE PROJECT**



THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR

CONTINUED SUPPORT!

It takes many people working together to make this drive possible. Sincere thanks to the congregations and individuals across the district who collect and donate shoes to the drive; the Westmont COB that generously allows us to store the shoes in their building until pick up; the volunteers who inspect, band, and bag the shoes; the packers who tag, carry and toss heavy bags of shoes onto the truck; and the district office staff for accepting donations on our behalf and storing them until they can be processed, along with handling the profit checks.

To this date, we have been able to donate a total of more than \$8,000 to the work of the Home, and have already begun collecting shoes for the next shipment. For details on becoming part of the shoe project, contact the Shoe Committee:

> Marie Camut - 814-266-3010 April Mackell - 814-536-1589 Karen Nagyvathy - 814-244-6977

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.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

An Afternoon of Christmas Carols Sunday December 8th, 2024 music starts at 2pm

We invite you to come enjoy an afternoon of singing Christmas Carols accompanied by music from local musicians. Pastor Rod Horner will be leading the event.



CALL FOR GOOD NEWS

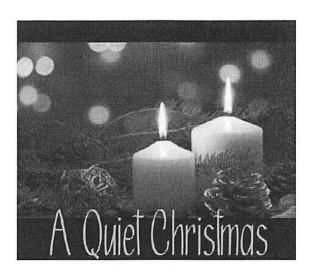
We can all use some good news now and again right?

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

CHRISTMAS SERVICE



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

-Isaiah 9:2

Please join us at the Uniontown Church of the Brethren 20 Robinson Street Uniontown, PA on December 22, 2024 at 2:00pm for

A Quiet Christmas Service.

Together we will join in quiet reflection, prayer, scripture, and carols which remind us that Jesus comes to bring hope and light into the darkness. Quiet Christmas is for those who are missing a loved one, needing an infusion of comfort and joy, or just seeking some peace amidst the chaos of the holidays.

For more information, please call the church office at 724-438-8372.



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 / Irbeac@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

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

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

KABLER, ERIC—126 Clermont Street, Johnstown 15904-2132 / 814-242-0920 / eric.kabler@kablerthomas.com

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

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

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

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

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

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



Below are **Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center's** current continuing education events that are open to everyone. For more information and to register, please do one of the following:

- Click on the title of each event and follow links to register. (Can only register for one event at a time).
- Visit www.etown.edu/svmc and follow links for "Continuing Education"
- Email KARENHODGES@SVMCCOB.ORG, OR Call SVMC at 717-361-1450

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO SUICIDE RISK

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025 • 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM • ZOOM ONLY

Leader: Julie Guistwite

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

Individuals considering harming themselves often seek guidance from spiritual care professionals over mental health providers. This interactive and engaging workshop discusses suicide risk factors and warning signs across generations and provides clergy guidance in responding. Engaging with an individual considering suicide forms the basis of a small group role-play activity. Attendees will gain practical knowledge and skills relevant across settings.

TWO DURNBAUGH EVENTS ARE BEING SPONSORED BY THE YOUNG CENTER AT ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE. PLEASE NOTE THAT SVMC IS ONLY PROVIDING CEUS; **REGISTRATION FOR THE EVENTS (WHICH IS NOT YET OPEN) WILL BE THROUGH THE YOUNG CENTER YOUNGCTR@ETOWN.EDU**. FOR NOW, MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND CONTACT SVMC ONLY TO REQUEST CEUS.

Leader: John D. Roth serves as Project Director for Anabaptism at 500, an initiative of MennoMedia, and is coordinating the development of the Anabaptist Community Bible. He is professor of history emeritus at Goshen (IN) College, where he also served as director of the Mennonite Historical Library and the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism, and as editor of Mennonite Quarterly Review. John has published widely on topics related to Anabaptist-Mennonite history and church life and has been a key participant in ecumenical dialogue with Lutheran and Catholic church leaders.

- Thursday, March 20, 2025 7:00 PM Susquehanna Room, Elizabethtown College
 Topic: "The Bible as a Source of Renewal in Anabaptism and Pietism" (.175 CEUs, \$10 to SVMC)
- Friday, March 21, 2025 9:30 AM 12:00 Noon •Location on Etown College Campus TBD
 Topic: Introducing (and Reading!) the Anabaptist Community Bible: An Interactive Seminar (.25 CEUs, \$10 to SVMC)
 If requesting CEUs for both Thursday and Friday events, cost will be a total of \$10 (not \$20).

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



SEMINAR

Saturday, February 1, 2025 11:00 am - 4:00 pm (EST)

Students, clergy, and anyone who deals with clergy finances are invited to participate in this online Zoom seminar.

- Learn how to prepare clergy taxes correctly and legally.
- Comply with regulations while maximizing tax deductions.
- Earn 0.3 CEUs for the first 2 sessions only.

Schedule:

11:00am - 12:30pm EST (0.15 CEUs): Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Clergy Taxation, part 1. Topics covered: IRS's definitions of ministers (ministerial "status") and of ministerial work (ministerial "services"), as well as the three kinds of income ministers receive, the two kinds of taxes ministers pay, and the various ways ministers can pay those taxes during the tax year.

1:00pm - 2:30pm EST (0.15 CEUs): Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Clergy Taxation, part 2. Topics covered: Housing exclusion, parsonages and parsonage adjustments, and self-employment taxes, as well as ways to reduce total taxes.

3:00pm - 4:00pm EST: Completing the Clergy Tax Return. Rev. Zeke Zacharias, pastor at Litlold Church, has a typical clergy tax return to complete. We will walk through it with him. Deb will be using H&R Block's Premium (for self-employed people) version of their downloadable software.

During this 5-hour webinar, you will learn a great deal about clergy tax law, tax preparation, and clergy compensation. It will be a resource-full day, so plan to take care of yourself as you learn. Eat when you're hungry. Get a drink when you're thirsty. Stand up and walk around when you need to. But most importantly, ask questions! If you have a question, Deb guarantees at least 6 other people are wondering the same thing!

(Continued)

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Registration and Cost

Registration is \$40 per person (generally nonrefundable to keep fees and overhead low). Current Brethren Academy, Bethany Theological Seminary, and Earlham School of Religion students may attend the seminar at no cost, although registration is still required to allow us to provide you with web access to the seminar. Instructions and handouts will be sent a few days prior to the event. Registrations are not complete until payment is received. For quality reasons, registrations may be capped at eighty-five people.

Prompt registration is advised - *registration deadline is January 24, 2025*. A Zoom link will be sent prior to the seminar.

Leadership:



Deb Oskin has been doing clergy tax returns since 1989, when her husband left seminary to pastor a small rural Church of the Brethren congregation. As a pastor's wife and later as a tax professional, she learned the tax problems and pitfalls associated with the IRS's identification of clergy as "hybrid employees." In 2011, after twelve years with H&R Block, Deb left to start her own tax practice, specializing in clergy taxes. Clergy clients now make up 90 percent of her client base.

Deb was ordained in 2004 when she was called by the Living Peace Church of the Brethren in Columbus, Ohio, to be their peace minister to the wider community. She served as Southern Ohio District's board chair from 2007-

2011 and served as the Southern Ohio-Kentucky 2018 District Moderator. She is the former Chair of the denomination's Pastoral Compensation & Benefits Advisory Committee.

She has been teaching and presenting nationally on clergy taxation to clergy, treasurers and administrators, and tax pros since 2004. Other than the fact that she really likes to teach, Deb does this because of her deep belief that clergy can devote more of their energy to ministry if they aren't stressed by tax debt.

Deb is an experienced presenter, and despite the complexity of the material, you'll find yourself laughing. Learn and enjoy!

Deadline to register is January 24, 2025

Register now!

Special thanks to our sponsors:







The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry, and Bethany Theological Seminary.

DENOMINATIONAL NEWS

go to www.brethren.org for the most complete and up to date news from the Church of the Brethren



GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.... Be doers of the word."

~ James 1:17, 22a NRSVue

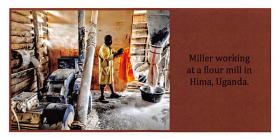
Together with our siblings around the world, we are doers of the word and generous givers of God's blessings.



Instructor at an Aquaculture Training for Comunidad de Fe, Dominican Republic.

Jennifer Hosler, Global Food Initiative manager, at the community garden of the Washington City (D.C.) Church of the Brethren.





Thank you for generously partnering in the ministry of the Global Food Initiative!

Learn more at www.brethren.org/gfi.

Global Food Initiative - Church of the Brethren 1451 Dundee Ave. Elgin, IL 60120

Job Openings: http://www.brethren.org/ about/employment.html



2025 Schedule

Join FaithX during Summer 2025 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 2025 opens on January 8, 2025 at 7:00pm (eastern time), and closes on April 1, 2025.



On Giving Tuesday (December 3), join us in celebrating all that we do together as the Church of the Brethren. Together we grow courageous disciples, love and serve one another, extend generosity and witness, and steward God's blessings. In all that we do together, we intentionally call leaders, connect with our neighbors, cultivate relationships, and encourage stewardship. Together we passionately live as the body of Christ. Together we build up one another and our neighbors near and far. Together we join Jesus in the neighborhood.

Make a gift now or on Giving Tuesday at www.brethren.org/givingtuesday.



CAMP HARMONY CHRISTMAS COOKIE **FUNDRAISER**

Order by December 5



4 doz. cookies/platter 1 = \$25 or 2 = \$45

Each platter will contain a mixture of the following cookies:

Chocolate Chip Snicker Doodle

M&M

Peanut Butter Meltaways

Sugar

Peanut Butter Blossom

Oatmeal

Thumbprint



Cookie pick up at Camp on December 18 & 19, 9-4 each day.



To order: 814-798-5885 harmony@campharmony.org

1414 Plank Road Hooversville, PA 15936 www.campharmony.org







WPA DISTRICT CALENDAR DECEMBER 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	9	7
					Harmony Light Fest	Harmony Light Fest
First Sunday of					Walk-thru	Drive -thru
Advent					6:00 pm—8:30 pm	6:00 pm—8:30 pm
8	6	10	11	12	13	14
					Harmony Light Fest	Harmony Light Fest
Second Sunday of					Walk-thru	Drive -thru
Advent					6:00 pm—8:30 pm	6:00 pm—8:30 pm
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
					Harmony Light Fest	Harmony Light Fest
Third Sunday of					Walk-thru	Drive -thru
Advent					6:00 pm—8:30 pm	6:00 pm—8:30 pm
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
- - - -			:			
Fourth Sunday of Advent		Christmas Eve	Merry Christmas!!			
29	30	31				
		New Year's Eve				

Saturday 18 25 11 District Office Closed District Office Closed Friday 10 17 24 31 WPA DISTRICT CALENDAR JANUARY 2025 Thursday 23 30 District Office Closed Happy New Year! Wednesday 15 29 22 ∞ Tuesday 14 28 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Camp Craze Camp Harmony 9:00 am Monday Epiphany Day 13 20 27 Sunday 12 19 26

2025 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!

JANUARY 2025

20 - Camp Craze, 9:00 am, Camp Harmony

FEBRUARY 2025

- 1 Clergy Tax Seminar, Zoom
- 6 Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, Zoom
- 7 Youth Winter Retreat begins, 6:00 pm, Camp Harmony
- 8 Youth Winter Retreat ends, 4:00 pm, Camp Harmony
- 8 SVMC Class
- 13 District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, (TBA)
- 22 SVMC Class

MARCH 2025

8 - SVMC Class

APRIL 2025

- 5 SVMC Class
- 26 SVMC Class

MAY 2024

- 8 Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, Zoom
- 10 SVMC Class
- 17 District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA

JUNE 2024

No meetings or events scheduled

JULY 2024

2—6 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Greensboro NC

AUGUST 2024

No meetings or events scheduled

SEPTEMBER 2024

- 11 Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, Zoom
- 20 District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA

OCTOBER 2024

18 - District Conference, 9:00 am, Somerset COB

NOVEMBER 2024

- 6 Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, Zoom
- 15 District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA

DECEMBER 2024

No meetings or events scheduled

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

THE HIGHLIGHTS December 2024/January 2025