

# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

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DECEMBER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO

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## Ohio Baptists Celebrate Unity While Continuing to Pray for Revival

By Karen L. Willoughby, Baptist Press national correspondent

WESTERVILLE, Ohio – During its recent annual meeting, the 704 churches in the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio celebrated 70 years of growth in the convention, new initiatives underway at the present time and near future, and prevailing unity among Ohio Baptists.

Baptisms in the last year are up 32 percent, to 2,300 across the state, reported Executive Director-Treasurer Jeremy Westbrook.

“There was a great spirit of unity and celebration of God’s activity in our work this year,” Westbrook said. “Our Cooperative Program giving is ahead, we reported 23 new churches this year, 15 new plants, five replants and three new affiliates.

“Our Send Ohio strategy is working really well,” Westbrook added. “We’ve seen 49 plants or replants in the last two years.”

With the hiring of Mark Jones, pastor of Freedom Hill Community Church, Stow, as part-time consultant, a new revitalization strategy is underway in Ohio. “Churches in 10 of our 15 associations have already engaged,” Westbrook said.

The 237 messengers from 112 of Ohio’s churches voted unanimously to “reject in its entirety” an abortion amendment to Ohio’s state constitution. However, Ohioans voted into law the amendment which allows the termination of pregnancies up to “fetal viability” as determined by a physician. *Story continues on page 12...*

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### *-- Tell us your story --*

*The Ohio Baptist Messenger* is a monthly publication highlighting what the Lord is doing in SCBO churches or ministries, and we need your help! Tell us your story and we could feature it in an upcoming issue of *The Messenger*.

Please submit your stories to [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).

For more information, please contact Stephanie Heading at [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).

## Gary Frost Receives 2023 Darty and Dot Stowe Award

By Steve Hopkins, SCBO senior staff



Rev. Gary Frost [pictured left] is presented with the 2023 Darty and Dot Stowe Award by Steve Hopkins.

Gary Frost is the 2023 recipient of the Darty and Dot Stowe Award presented on November 7 during the SCBO Annual Meeting at Genoa Baptist Church, Westerville.

Each year, the award is given in memory of Darty and Dot Stowe who served Ohio Baptists from 1954 to 1981. It is presented to a pastor or minister who has served faithfully, never recognized like those in the larger, more visible churches but leaving a legacy and serving in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12. Annual gifts to Georgetown College from the Stowe family provide the Darty and Dot Stowe Award.

Rev. Frost has served the Lord in Ohio and across the Southern Baptist Convention. He was senior pastor of the Rising Star Baptist Church in Youngstown for 18 years and served two years as president of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. He currently serves as associational missionary in the Steele Valley Association.

Nationally, Frost served two terms as second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the SBC as well as twice serving as a vice-president at the North American Mission Board, also serving as National Prayer Coordinator for NAMB.

During his time in New York City, Frost served as executive director of the Metropolitan New York Baptist

Association with over 200 churches, president of Concerts of Prayer Greater New York, and Senior Pastor at Evergreen Baptist Church in Brooklyn. He joined with New York pastors to establish the Urban Eagle Mentoring program at Rikers Island Jail.

He has served as the National Facilitator for Prayer with Mission America Coalition and serves as corporate chaplain for Corporate Chaplains of America. He is the National Director of March for Jesus.

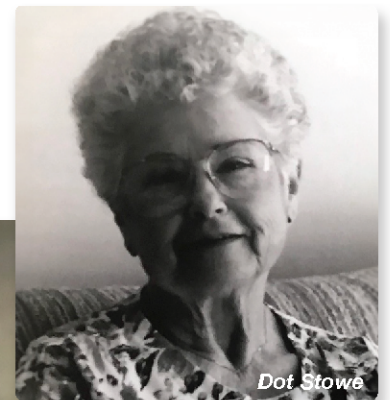
Frost is a graduate of Mount Union College, Central Bible College of Cleveland, and Ashland Theological Seminary. Upon graduating from Mount Union College with a degree in psychology he became coordinator of the Crisis Intervention Department of the Child and Adult Mental Health Center in Youngstown.

He has been married for 46 years to his wife Lynette. They have six children, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. The Frosts were foster parents, caring for over 40 children during an 18-year period. He and Lynette recently founded a residential home for home-challenged pregnant women called Eagle's Nest Life Equipping Center in response to the high infant mortality rate in Ohio.

"Starting and leading churches and training pastors for more than 40 years, Rev. Frost has been at the forefront of evangelism in Ohio," said Reginald Hayes, SCBO senior staff. "Thousands have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior because of pastors trained and advised by Rev. Frost"



Darty Stowe



Dot Stowe

## Mission:Dignity Recipients in Ohio to Receive a 13th Check

By Roy Hayhurst, director of executive communications at GuideStone.

Mission:Dignity® recipients in Ohio will receive an extra check in 2023, thanks to a generous gift from the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

“Ohio Baptists are blessed to serve those financially who have served the Lord faithfully,” said Jeremy Westbrook, executive director-treasurer for the SCBO. “I am thrilled to announce that our Ohio Mission Council board members and Messengers to the 2023 Annual Meeting have voted to partner with GuideStone’s Mission:Dignity and offer a 13th check to servants of the Lord who qualify. As Dr. Adrian Rogers once said, ‘God has not called us to be a reservoir, but a conduit.’”

In 2022, Mission:Dignity assisted more than 2,800 retired Southern Baptist workers, ministers, and widows near or below the poverty line with extra money needed for housing, food, and vital medications. It also ensures a well-deserved dignity, independence and, often, the ability to continue serving the Lord. Last year, in Ohio, 22 pastors and their wives, or widows, were served through Mission:Dignity.

GuideStone President Hance Dilbeck expressed his thanks for the continued generosity of Ohio Baptists.


“We believe it is a privilege to ensure we offer these ‘old soldiers of the cross’ a double honor for their service unto the Lord,” Dilbeck said. “What a joy it is to join with the SCBO in ensuring that Mission:Dignity recipients in their state are well cared for.”

Mission:Dignity expressed its thankfulness for the efforts of Ohio churches.

“Ohio Baptists are to be commended for their generosity to these retired ministers, their wives and in many cases minister widows,” Aaron Meraz, director of Mission:Dignity said. “The timing of this extra check is such a blessing as we enter the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.”

To learn more about Mission:Dignity, to refer someone in need, or to donate, visit [MissionDignity.org](https://MissionDignity.org).

Article used with permission from Guidestone



**PRAY FOR PEACE**  
*in the*  
**HOLY LAND**



INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION BOARD

## Be Encouraged, Ohio Baptists!

Our 70th Annual Celebration overwhelmed me with encouragement as I watched nearly 350 messengers and guests gather in unity and cooperation. We are better together! I want to personally thank Pastor Frank Carl and the entire staff team at Genoa Church, Westerville for opening their doors and being such a gracious host to all of us.

Here are just a few reasons why I walked away encouraged from the Annual Celebration:

**Cooperative Program Giving** – Through the first ten months of the 2023 budget, SCBO churches have given more to the CP this year than the same time last year in 2022 by nearly \$100,000. The Cooperative Program is the financial fuel that helps plant churches, send missionaries, and train the next generation theologically at one of our six seminaries here in the United States. While giving to the CP is down nationally, giving is up here in the Buckeye State... thank you and be encouraged!

**Mission:Dignity Support** – For the first time in SCBO history, a 13th check will be issued to retired recipients of Mission:Dignity, a partnered ministry of GuideStone. Many of our widows and retirees who have served the Lord faithfully here in Ohio did so without the financial capacity to save for retirement. Therefore, we have several retired Ohio Baptists who are having to choose between

buying gas or groceries. This 13th check will be an additional blessing to them financially and will prayerfully reduce the burden of choosing between necessities. Be encouraged!

**Cedarville Scholarship Grants** – Another historic moment in the budget is an official line item for Cedarville University. As I travel throughout the state to preach and meet with pastors, they often tell me what a blessing it would be to send their children to school at Cedarville, but the burden of tuition is simply too much to bear. Therefore, we will now be able to help the children of senior/lead pastors of cooperating SCBO churches with a one-time partial scholarship to Cedarville. Be encouraged!

There is so much more happening in the SCBO than I have space to share. It is such a joy to serve the Lord and you, Ohio Baptists! If I can come in 2024 to serve you or your church in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [jwestbrook@scbo.org](mailto:jwestbrook@scbo.org).

Encouraged,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



UPDATES REGIONAL  
REGIONAL UPDATES SCBO REGIONAL**Matt Pardi - Northwest**

The wisdom literature of the Bible tells us to expect change, but really “nothing new is under the sun.” As we reflect on 2023, and celebrate a time of thanksgiving and remembering, we see cause to praise God on the mountaintop and in the valley. Churches in our Northwest Region have experienced great highs and great lows. We as a community of churches praise God for the answered prayers AND for the valleys that He allows us to go through. “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

Times change and the health of our churches come and go, but God is constant. He is ever faithful, ever just, and ever kind in His pursuit of mankind. And He will faithfully make things beautiful in the end. “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” Ecclesiastes 3:11

The churches in our region are faithfully moving forward, believing that God will make all things beautiful and new. I am encouraged as all our churches find new ways as well as traditional ways to remind mankind that God “has set eternity in the human heart.” We are simply coming alongside God in His timeless work.

Thank you, Northwest Region, for your partnership together as we continue to join God’s work through the highs and lows of ministry!

**Chad Keck - West**

Wow! Fall has been busy. What a great season of ministry we have had together in the West Region. One of the highlights was our Prayer Gatherings with Bill Elliff. If you missed it you can watch one of the sessions here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHRy6DGG3xA>. We can do events and hold meetings, but if we do not have the power of God it is all for naught. I hope you are leading your church to be dependent on prayer.

I am also really excited about our partnership with the West Region of Florida. We are in the process of getting this partnership off the ground, and I will be collaborating with our Associational Missionaries and our Mission Council to move this forward and to share opportunities for you to get involved. Please be praying for the churches in the Florida panhandle as I know they are praying for you.

Finally, it was great to see so many of you at the SCBO Annual Celebration. I know this event is one of the last of the year before we focus on family and our churches for the holidays, so it was great to connect and hear about what God is doing in your lives and churches.

**Reagan Wagoner - Southwest**

At the SCBO Annual Celebration I caught up with people from our region at Top Golf after the Pastor’s Conference and enjoyed spending time with our new SCBO President, Pastor Adam Pursel, who joined our region for dinner. At our regional lunch on Tuesday, we heard from our associational leaders and pastors. Mark Snowden, Cincinnati Area Baptist Association shared how their outreaches have impacted over 17,000+ people in Cincinnati over the past year! David Haarmeyer, East River Road, and Steve Renfrow, Southwest Baptist Association, shared about how God is working among the Nepali people, including East River Road utilizing its own church building for multiple church plants. Terry Lee Kirkland, The Oaks Church in the Ohio

Valley Baptist Association, shared how they just added their first Hispanic church and are growing as an association as well. James Kerr, Clough Pike, prayed for Tom Pendergrass, Urbancrest, as we closed our time together praying for him.

In addition, our Send Cincinnati team shared with us all that God has done this past year in our church plants all over the city. We currently have an average weekly worship attendance of 2,306 in our church plants, which has translated into 392 gospel conversations, 78 salvations, and 88 baptisms over the last quarter. Travis Smalley and Oliver Hawkins also shared that church planters are paying it forward, giving \$30,888 to the Cooperative Program collectively. So thankful for all that God is doing in Cincinnati this Thanksgiving season and can’t wait to see what’s in store for 2024 as we truly are better together!

# 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LOTTIE MOON:

1



Lottie was born in Virginia on **December 12, 1840.**

2



Her name was Charlotte Digges Moon, but everyone called her "**Lottie.**"

3

4'9"

She was **4'9"** tall.



4



Before she became a Christian while in high school, Lottie missed required chapels 26 times.

5



Lottie loved to pull pranks on others. Once, when asked what the "**D**" stood for in her middle name, she replied, "**Devil.**"

6



Lottie was appointed to China as a **missionary** at age 33 and served there 39 years, primarily in Tengchow and Pingtu.

7

She wore **Chinese clothes** and lived like her Chinese neighbors.



8



Lottie had several nicknames in China—foreign devil, foreign lady teacher, heavenly book visitor, and the cookie maker. (Lottie baked cookies to win the hearts of the children and families who were frightened of her.)

9



Lottie led in the campaign to **end the practice of bound feet.** The Chinese believed small feet made a woman more beautiful, so girls' feet were bound tightly with cloth. Girls with bound feet could hardly walk, and infections, gangrene, and even death were common side effects of this practice.

10



In 1912 at the end of her career, famine, flood, and war encircled her China. Her friends were starving. In a final act of empathy, Lottie **stopped eating** and gave all her food away. When her friends realized the depth of her sickness, they put her on a boat to return to the United States. Lottie died on Christmas Eve while en route to the U.S.

## LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

"Need it be said why the week before Christmas is chosen? Is not the festive season, when families and friends exchange gifts in memory of The Gift laid on the altar of the world for the redemption of the human race, the most appropriate time to consecrate a portion from abounding riches and scant poverty to send forth the good tidings of great joy into all the earth?"



Lottie Moon

## WHY THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING IS NAMED FOR LOTTIE:

While living in China, Lottie wrote letters to the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board) and to Baptist women. She asked for more missionaries and for money to grow her work among the Chinese.

Because of Lottie's determination, WMU collected a Christmas Offering to give to the Foreign Mission Board. In 1918, at Annie Armstrong's suggestion, WMU named the offering for Lottie Moon. Today, we still give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in honor of her work and sacrifice to keep our missionaries on the field.

**One hundred percent of the offering goes to the missionaries, none to administration.**



# Zac James Joins SCBO as Worship Consultant

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor



Zac James, SCBO worship consultant

On December 1, Zac James, associate pastor of worship, FBC Lancaster, assumes the part-time role of Worship Consultant for SCBO.

James comes to the convention with the experience and education to be a valuable resource to worship leaders across Ohio. Since 2000, James has served in over 400 churches in traveling and vocational ministry across 45 states, Canada, and South Africa.

He is a 2012 graduate of Cedarville University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music. He is the author of [eight online worship courses](#). He graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2022 with a Master of Divinity with Advanced Standing and from Cedarville University in 2023 with a Master of Business Administration.

For the past several years, Zac led multi-church worship teams for SCBO conferences - Amplify and Loving and Leading the Local Church. He loves coaching worship leaders and teams and is passionate about helping people develop in worship ministry. He is married to Kaitie, his wife of ten years. They have two children, Kaiden, age 4, and Elaina, age 2.

"I am thrilled about Zac James joining the SCBO team," said Dr. Jeremy Westbrook, SCBO executive director-treasurer. "While he will remain in his full-time role at FBC Lancaster, he will join us in a part-time capacity as our Worship Consultant. Not only will he be our connection point to Worship 4:24, but Zac will also serve our churches through helping both to develop and network worship leaders from around the Buckeye State."

As Worship Consultant, James will facilitate Worship 4:24, the annual worship conference sponsored by

SCBO in conjunction with Cedarville University. Leading Worship 4:24 with Dr. Roger O'Neel, Cedarville University professor of worship, holds special meaning for him.

"I've been involved with this conference since I attended the original version hosted by Art Fulks & Brad Pilkington as a 13 year old in 2002," he said. "It had a huge impact on me and my calling. Then I attended 4:24 as a student at Cedarville while assisting Dr. O'Neel with conference logistics. For the past several years, I've been serving as a sponsor, vendor, and breakout speaker. To step into a director role with one of my mentors...it's really a full-circle moment."

The next Worship 4:24 is January 26-27, 2024, at Cedarville University. "I believe this is one of the best worship conferences in the country, headlined by an incredible artist in Shane and Shane. You won't want to miss it," said James.

The conference is open to churches across Ohio, and he hopes churches of all sizes will take advantage of the opportunity to worship and receive training in break-out sessions. "This is an event for whoever is in charge of the music in your church, no matter the size."

In addition to Worship 4:24, he is planning to create a database of worship leaders across the SCBO and identify churches in need. "We need to have a clear picture about the state of worship in Ohio."

He also plans to develop a list of guest leaders who could fill the role when churches are in need. "There is a significant need for worship leaders in Ohio," he said. "Over time we are going to see what we can do to make it easier for churches to find a worship leader."

For more information about Worship 4:24, visit <https://www.scbo.org/event/worship-424>.





## Celebrating Unity Continued...

Messengers elected new officers: President Adam Pursel, pastor of LifePoint Church in Mount Vernon. First Vice-President: David Welsch, pastor of First Baptist Church in Heath. Second Vice-President: Karlie Hale, pastor of One Love Community Church in Cleveland. Recording secretary: Mary Leigh Snowden, member of Clough Pike Baptist Church in Cincinnati. Assistant recording secretary: Charity Betts, member of First Baptist Church in New Lebanon.

In other business, messengers approved a \$5,394,000 budget for 2024, same as in 2023, with \$4,800,000 in Cooperative Program giving from churches, half of which – \$2,400,000 – is to be forwarded for global SBC causes.

Retired pastors and their wives who receive a check each month from Guidestone's Mission:Dignity will receive a thirteenth check each year from now on with money provided in SCBO's budget.

Also new in the budget, scholarships to Cedarville University for the children of Ohio pastors. Cedarville, affiliated with SCBO since 2003, has a student body of about 5,500 students and 150 degree programs including nursing, business, theology, and pharmacy.

Also new this year, SCBO included ethnic work in Ohio in its budget. African American, Hispanic, Arabic, and deaf groups gathered at various times throughout the year.

Now in its second year of a partnership with the Florida Baptist Convention, Ohio's six regions have been paired for mutual support with six Florida regions.

Prayer and fasting became an expanded thrust across Ohio this year, with Bill Elliff leading in day-long prayer events, first with state staff and then with associational leaders, followed by five gatherings in four regions of the state.

Interspersed with convention business and reports from state staff and SBC entities was worship led by "Chosen Road" from West Virginia, and messages from three Ohio leaders: Westbrook, outgoing President Ray Umphrey, and Greg Cooper, pastor of FBC Groveport, who delivered the annual sermon.

"For 70 years, Ohio Baptists have made a commitment to take the gospel across the street and around the world," Westbrook said. "After leaving the seventieth annual celebration, Ohio Baptists are praying and preparing for revival in the Buckeye state that would lead to an awakening across the United States and around the world."

Article used with permission from Baptist Press

## Men's Summit at Urbancrest in 2024 Marks the 20th Anniversary

Urbancrest Baptist Church would like to extend a special invitation to men from across Ohio to join us for our annual Men's Summit, January 26-27, 2024, at Urbancrest in Lebanon, Ohio. The Lord has blessed us to be able to host this event for 20 years. We have watched Him do amazing things in the past and are trusting that He will bless us again this year.

We are excited to announce that our speakers will include Joe Veal, You Turn Ministries; Aaron Taylor, teaching pastor, Living Hope Church, Powell;

Stephen Owens, pastor, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church Cleveland; Joshua Lenon, teaching pastor, Red Door Church, Cincinnati.

Each of these men will bring a powerful word from the Lord. Caleb Spann, worship pastor, Urbancrest Baptist Church, will lead worship.

Your ticket price includes Friday dinner and breakfast on Saturday. Please visit [menssummit.urbancrest.org](https://menssummit.urbancrest.org) for all the details and to order your tickets.

Learn more about the Men's Summit on the next page...

# Job Postings

## SENIOR/LEAD PASTOR

### Urbancrest Baptist Church, Lebanon

Urbancrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, OH is searching for a Senior/Lead Pastor. The church family at Urbancrest is excited about this next chapter in its history. Urbancrest is a highly missional church with a biblical worldview in sharing the gospel. The church has a solid staff team that includes over 15 full and part-time employees. Urbancrest has 70 acres of beautiful property that includes a 900-seat worship center and classrooms, full high school sized gym, separate student worship area, outdoor pavilion, fishing pond, and two missionary homes. Urbancrest also has an on-site ministry that provides food and furniture to the community. The church is debt free.

Urbancrest is praying for a pastor that will lead them in continuing to impact its community and the world for the Lord Jesus. To apply or to request more information, candidates may contact the church at [jobs@urbancrest.org](mailto:jobs@urbancrest.org).

## FAMILY MINISTER

### New Bethel Baptist Church, Norwood

New Bethel Baptist Church in Norwood (Greater Cincinnati) is seeking a family minister who will lead our church in reaching the families in our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Focused on the mission "to know Christ and make Him known," we are committed to making disciples of all ages.

We're looking for a committed Christian leader with a passion for connecting students and children to Christ and His church. The ideal candidate for this role is a gifted, spiritually mature Christian who has experience in discipling young people with the gospel and a desire to equip others for ministry. This position starts as part-time but can easily expand as the ministry expands.

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to Pastor Ben Wilson at [ben@newbethelbaptist.com](mailto:ben@newbethelbaptist.com).

## BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

### Medway Baptist Church, Medway

Medway Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor to collaborate with an existing fellow lay pastor to lead the congregation. The opportunity for the spiritual and numerical growth of our church is significant. Our church has an active and faithful Hispanic ministry/outreach to the community. Responsibilities include overseeing the spiritual growth of our congregation, leading Sunday morning worship services, and coordinating evangelism opportunities. Medway is situated between Dayton and Springfield. In addition to a pay package, the church offers a 3-bedroom parsonage for housing.

For a full job description or to apply, please contact: [medwaybcpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:medwaybcpastorsearch@gmail.com)

## SENIOR PASTOR

### Grace Baptist Church, Tiffin

Grace Baptist Church is seeking a full-time senior pastor to lead the church in outreach and authentic Christian discipleship and worship. The church is in a growing community of approximately 18,000 with two universities. Candidates should have a seminary degree and experience in preaching and teaching the Bible. Candidates should also meet the biblical qualifications for an elder/overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

For the full job description and application requirements, please contact Dianna Distel, [grace@gracetiffin.org](mailto:grace@gracetiffin.org), or Grace Baptist Church, 161 North State Route 101, Tiffin, Ohio 44883.

## DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

### Jersey Church, New Albany

Jersey Church is seeking a full-time Communications Director. The Communications Director is responsible for and focused on leadership and team development, oversight, and execution of all aspects of Communications and Marketing. Additional responsibilities include promotion, digital communications and social media, design and brand management, and team development. A degree in communications, media, or related field, or at least 2-4 years' experience in communications is required. For the full job description and application contact, please visit <https://jerseychurch.org/resources/employment/>.

## FULL-TIME DIRECTOR/PASTOR OF LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION

### University Baptist Church, Beavercreek

University Baptist Church, Beavercreek, is seeking a full-time Director/Pastor of Leadership and Education. The Director/Pastor of Leadership and Education will be responsible for supporting and extending the ministry of the Lead Pastor by doing three main things: supervising the church staff; building effective processes for leadership development within the church; and overseeing the adult classes ministry and curriculum used in our church to help make disciples who know Christ biblically. For more information or to apply for this position, please visit <https://www.ubcbeavercreek.com/employment>.

## PART-TIME BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

### First Southern Baptist Church, Meigs County

First Southern Baptist Church in Meigs County is in rural southeastern Ohio near the small village of Pomeroy. The church is seeking candidates for a part-time bi-vocational pastor position. Qualified candidates should exemplify the principles set forth in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1: 5-9 as a leader, pastor, and teacher. He must also have a walk with God that follows the teaching of the New Testament. Prospective candidates should send a resume/CV and references to Mr. Jeff Needs, chairman of the Pastoral Search Committee: [jsneeds77@gmail.com](mailto:jsneeds77@gmail.com) or 740-416-1582.

*Let the Ohio Baptist Messenger help your church find a new pastor or staff member!*

*The Messenger is offering classified ads free of charge for Ohio churches searching for new pastors and staff members. The Messenger is read by churches and individuals in Ohio and across the country.*

To submit a classified ad, please send brief information about the position along with a return phone number or email:

[classifieds@scbo.org](mailto:classifieds@scbo.org)

# Revitalize Ohio Team looking forward to 2024

By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization consultant

## REVITALIZE

*assisting declining churches back to health*

What a year it has been church revitalization. In the past year, we have seen seven churches replanted or in the replanting process in Ohio. We have assessed over ten churches and are collaborating with them on the best next steps to health and vibrancy. We have encouraged more than 40 pastors and trained 15 to become better overseers. We have entered the process of revitalizing two associations in the Northeast Region with more than 50 congregations.

In 2024, we will begin a “First Friday Fast and Pray” initiative in some associations. If you are interested in participating, contact me at [mjones@scbo.org](mailto:mjones@scbo.org). We will also focus on assisting pastors in various regions to become greater overseers to their congregations. I plan to travel around Ohio providing “Refresh Luncheons / Dinners” for pastors and leaders to discover how the SCBO Revitalization Team can come alongside you in your congregation’s health. Our team of missional volunteer leaders continues to grow, and it is my prayer that each region will have a coach to assist by 2025.

Will you pray for our team and the SCBO congregations in your region? Will you pray for revival in your



Members of the SCBO Revitalization Team.

congregation, our state, and around the world? Will you pray for a kingdom-cooperative mindset over an empire-competitive mindset in the church?

Save March 22-23, as Richard Blackaby will be coming to the Renaissance Family Center in Windham for “Hearing God’s Voice.” Pastors and senior leadership will be the focus of the Friday evening session. The Saturday session will be open to everyone. The event is free, but an RSVP is requested. Also, save May 21-22 on your calendar for NAMB’s Revive Tour with Mark Clifton and the Revitalization Team at Violet Baptist Church in Pickerington. More information will be available soon. Check out our revitalization page on the SCBO website - [www.SCBO.org/revitalize](http://www.SCBO.org/revitalize).

## OSBDR TRAINING

**JAN. 13**  
University Baptist Church, Beavercreek  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

**APRIL 13**  
Trinity Baptist Church, Ashland  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

**JAN. 27**  
Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

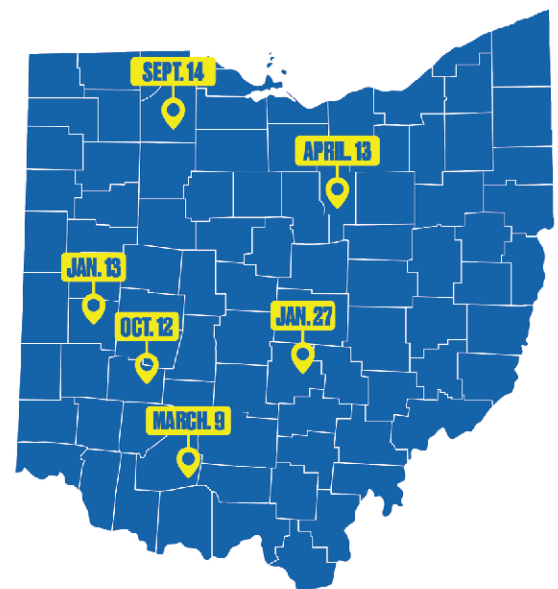
**SEPT. 14**  
H2O Church, Bowling Green  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

**MARCH 9**  
Northview Baptist Church, Hillsboro  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

**OCT. 12**  
First Baptist Kettering, Kettering  
QRU, FR, CSR 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇩🇪

**Types of trainings:**

🇺🇸 QRU - Quick Response Feeding Unit 🇨🇦 FR - Flood Recovery 🇩🇪 CSR - Chainsaw Recovery



# Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

## From the Field



### Ohio IMB Missionaries Minister in Vancouver

By John and Cheri Randall, IMB missionaries

**Editor's note: John and Cheri Randall are IMB Missionaries from Spring Hills Baptist Church, Granville, Ohio.**

Greetings from Vancouver Canada!

The mission of the International Mission Board (IMB) is "to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations." We are serving in Vancouver alongside the Canadian National Baptist Convention among Chinese churches and encouraging Ohio churches to be more involved in God's great mission endeavor.

Vancouver is home to more than 600,000 Chinese people. Chinese people come to Vancouver to immigrate or study for advanced degrees. Vancouver is a secular global city in which only three percent of the population regularly attend church. It's also a lonely place. People are afraid of confrontation, so they don't get involved -- they just keep their eyes forward and their faces emotionless. To meet people, we started volunteering at a food bank on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus. UBC is home to many struggling international students.

One day, we met a family from Hangzhou, China. They came to know Christ in Kenya through a Malaysian Baptist pastor. We were able to connect them into a

Chinese Baptist church. When they visited the church, they realized the Malaysian pastor and the Vancouver Chinese pastor were mutual friends. It's interesting how God is opening opportunities to engage Chinese people in global cities.

On another day at the food bank, we had a long conversation with Peter, a PhD student from Beijing. We originally met at an English corner. As he collected food for his family, we talked about his life and the pressures he felt. We asked if he had any religious beliefs and shared with him for 15 minutes about faith in God, and Jesus as an anchor for our lives.

Our volunteering at the UBC food bank has opened doors to other relationships on campus. Some of the families we have encountered are now meeting with us to discuss knowing and following Jesus.

Every year, Southern Baptist churches collect the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions to send and support missionaries to be steadfastly present among those who have yet to understand the gospel. Without your faithfulness we could not have these opportunities in Vancouver!! Thank You!

# Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

## Ohio Student Serves With Nehemiah Teams in Uganda

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

"After the shutdown in 2020, I knew that I wanted to do more to reach the nations and live up to the Great Commission," said Brooklyn Smith, member of FBC Grove City.

"I did a lot of research and sought wisdom from my local church. One of my pastors pointed me to the IMB and that is where I found Nehemiah Teams" (NT).

Nehemiah Teams is an 8-week summer mission opportunity for students ages 17-29 which strategically involves them in cross-cultural missions among unreached people groups. As a program of the International Mission Board (IMB), NT partners with IMB personnel and other global Christians, connecting with state conventions, local Southern Baptist associations, and churches to reach the unreached and hard to reach.

### Lottie Moon Fast Fact:

The 2024 Lottie Moon National Goal is \$200 million.

After finding NT, Smith continued her research trying to decide which mission project would be best for her. "After looking over the 300 plus mission opportunities on the IMB website, I knew that I couldn't leave it to myself to choose where I was being called," she noted. "I began to pray and seek even more wisdom and guidance from those around me and landed on an NT trip to Uganda!"

Smith spent eight weeks in the Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Uganda in 2021 celebrating her 23rd birthday while serving there. "The Holy Spirit broke my heart for this opportunity and refugee people groups."

Throughout its history NT's goal has been to equip and send this student generation to take the gospel to unreached peoples and places. Over the past 15 years, Nehemiah Teams have trained and sent out more than 3,300 American and Filipino students to share the gospel throughout Southeast Asia and around the world. As the IMB notes, "Today's students are tomorrow's career missionary force."

As one of those students trained through NT, Smith learned more about herself, God, and lostness in the world. "My NT trip has grown me, fueled me, and taught me that I am capable of the uncomfortable,"



Brooklyn Smith, holding child, worked with a Nehemiah Team in Uganda.

Smith said. "It showed me that we do not need American comforts and securities to survive or serve well."

Smith believes God used her trip to Uganda to give her a heart for reaching the lost. "God used this trip to empower me to go again and again and again. The trip broke me down and left me empty so that God could humble me before his creation and so he would fill me with what he needed me to hold so that I could do it all again for his glory."

The lostness of the world also became evident to Smith during her trip to Uganda. "The trip showed me how dark the world can be but how the joy, provision, and love of Christ will truly overcome in the end."

Since her time with NT, Smith has been on additional mission trips with FBC Grove City traveling twice to Mexico as well as trips to Jamaica and Salt Lake City, Utah. She encourages students ages 17-29 to consider joining NT. "There is no place like a mission trip to surrender every aspect of your life to Christ and see how He is going to work."

### Lottie Moon Fast Fact:

Seventy current IMB missionaries call Ohio home.

In 2024 NT will be sending teams to Africa, Indonesia, North America, Philippines, South Asia, Southeast Asia, South Korea, South Pacific, and Thailand. For more information about Nehemiah Teams, visit [www.nehemiahteam.com](http://www.nehemiahteam.com)

## Prayer gatherings challenge believers to seek God's presence

By Steve Hopkins, SCBO senior staff

In October, pastors and church leaders met in four regional "Seek His Face" prayer gatherings with Bill Elliff, focused on seeking and knowing the manifest presence of God, personally and corporately. Elliff defines manifest presence as when God makes Himself known in clear, visible, and unmistakable ways.

Elliff brought attention to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6. "Jesus used 120 words on how to come into the Father's presence, and only 60 words on what to pray when we are there." So often, our thoughts are on what to say or what to ask, without concern to first come into His presence and know Him. "The purpose of prayer is to put God at the center of my life and lose my focus on anything else," he shared.

"For me, this is what God's people need to hear. I have been fortunate to have been in churches where the presence of God was there," said Barbara Byrne, First



Bill Elliff led "Seek His Face" prayer gatherings in four regions of Ohio.

Southern Baptist Church, Camden. "Once you've experienced it, you want more. Bill laid it out so beautifully. People do not realize what they are missing. ...This was life-changing!"

Elliff challenged attendees with two questions. "What good is a church that isn't filled with the life and presence of God? What adjustments will we make to be a presence-centered church?" He quoted Steve Gaines: "We do not plan a service to attract people — we plan a service to attract the presence of God, and the presence of God attracts people."

Murph Byrne, FSBC, Camden, commented: "I was moved when the reference was made concerning the two groups of individuals in the world: those who experience the presence of God and those who do not experience the presence of God. We need to be good stewards of the presence of God."

"I like what Pastor Elliff shared," said Connie Ducker, FSBC Camden. "Everything flows from the presence of the Lord. Everything. If you have Him, you have all you need. Without Him, you have nothing that matters or lasts."

Elliff, founding and National Engage Pastor of The Summit Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, also serves as the Pastor/Church Director for OneCry! A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening and is a national leader for the 6:4 Fellowship.



### GOD'S WORK THROUGH THE IMB IN 2022

**728,589**  
PEOPLE HEARD  
THE GOSPEL

**21,231**  
NEW CHURCHES

**146,026**  
PEOPLE RECEIVED  
LEADERSHIP  
TRAINING

**178,177**  
NEW BELIEVERS

**67**  
NEW PEOPLE  
GROUPS AND  
PLACES ENGAGED

**3,521**  
MISSIONARIES  
SUPPORTED WITH  
COMPREHENSIVE  
CARE

**102,417**  
BAPTISMS



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## **JOSHUA LENON**

Author, Artist, & Pastor of Red Door Church in Cincinnati, Ohio



## **STEPHEN OWENS**

Author, Pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Bedford, Ohio



## **AARON TAYLOR**

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# MINISTRIES HUB

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## Stephen Owens - Northeast

Hey Northeast Region family. This is a time to be thankful for the blessings God has bestowed on us. Over the past few weeks, one of the things I'm thankful for is our fellowship in the gospel. My mother-in-law is in hospice, and that's why I couldn't be at the SCBO Annual Celebration. I want to say thank you for all the calls and texts I have received from the pastors throughout our region.

One of the blessings of being a part of the SCBO and the Northeast Region is the genuine care the pastors have for one another. During this holiday season, let's continue to encourage one another and be thankful for the blessings the Lord has given us, which includes our fellowship in the gospel. If I can serve you or your ministry, please reach out. ([sowens@gmail.com](mailto:sowens@gmail.com)) God bless.



## Rick Williams - Central

I am incredibly grateful for the wonderful work God is accomplishing through the pastors and churches in the Central Ohio Region. One highlight was hosting a regional luncheon for Central Ohio leaders and pastors during the SCBO Annual Celebration. It was heartwarming to see over 100 pastors and leaders come together to share fellowship and uplift one another. The event was even more special because of the powerful testimonies of five pastors.

Scott Gibson, The Bridge, Lancaster, spoke about the importance of developing a prayer culture. Aaron Taylor, Living Hope Church, Columbus, shared his passion for church planting. Chad Berry, New Liberty Baptist Church, Lexington, spoke about ongoing growth and discipleship within his church. Jeff Deel, The Word Church, Marengo, shared his excitement about the launch of LifeWise Academy in his church and community. Mike Feliciano, Hillside Church, Rowsburg, shared about the growth of this new church plant.

On Thursday, February 29, we have scheduled a Next Gen Roundtable event with SCBO Director of Next Gen Keith Hurt. This event will take place from 11 am to 1:00 pm at Pizza Cottage in Pickerington. I strongly encourage pastors and leaders who are looking to start or strengthen youth ministry to mark this date on their calendars.

I am looking forward to connecting with more pastors and leaders in Central Ohio in 2024! Please contact me at [rwilliams@scbo.org](mailto:rwilliams@scbo.org) to schedule a breakfast or lunch.



## Josh Remy - Southeast

Merry Christmas! That's something we can still say freely in the Southeast Region of Ohio. People here would look at you funny if you said, "Happy Holidays!" However, that isn't necessarily a good thing. We can be more religious at Christmastime than those in the big cities because southeastern Ohio is home to nominal, cultural "Christians"-- people who claim the name of Christ because of tradition but haven't responded to the gospel.

You will see them in your church in the coming weeks. I encourage you to make an extra effort to connect personally with them. Make certain your Christmas sermons and programs point to the gospel and not just a familiar story. Challenge them to become a new person in the new year by surrendering to Christ. These folks know about the gospel but haven't allowed Christ to change their hearts and lives. I'm praying that this Christmas they will open the gift that's been waiting for them all these years.

Speaking of incredible gifts, don't forget to celebrate the Lottie Moon Christmas offering for international missions. Southeastern Ohio people love to give to missions! There are so many creative ways that churches can remind and challenge people to give. Find a way to communicate to your church how much this annual offering means to those in the field. What a pleasure it is to be able to affect people around the globe from a small town in southeast Ohio.