

MAY 2024  
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# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



**Teaching Bible  
During Public School  
Days Grows Nationally**

Full story on page 6

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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).

# God is at Work - We Need to Celebrate!



God is at work in our state, and I want to celebrate what He has been doing in our midst.

That's why we created the SCBO Vision Tour, which will make stops in all six regions of Ohio this year. The purpose is to provide pastors, church staff, and church leaders the opportunity to enjoy a meal together, engage in conversation, ask questions, and connect over the heart of ministry in our churches.

The Vision Tour began in the Southwest Region in April and is moving to the West Region in May and the South-east Region in June. It resumes in August in the Northeast

Region before concluding in September in the Northwest Region and the Central Region.

I want to personally invite you to join me as we celebrate the past, cast vision for the future, and collaborate as we prayerfully seek ways to work together for the kingdom. One of the keys to leadership is listening. I have always told my three children that the Lord gave us two ears and one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak.

My desire is for you to be able to ask your questions and I want to hear your heart as you hear mine. I have been looking forward to this. Please bring your leaders, your church, and whoever wants to come, as we sit down to celebrate, cast vision, and collaborate.

While no church, local association, state convention, entity, or seminary is perfect, we must be careful not to only focus on the flaws, but also on the favor of God. We must learn to celebrate the wins and the activity of God in us and around us. While we have had some challenging times recently in the Southern Baptist Convention and even here in Ohio . . . God is at work, and we need to celebrate!

Please sign up, show up, and spread the word. Registration for The SCBO Vision Tour is now available at <https://www.scbo.org/event/scbo-vision-tour>.

Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



National  
DAY OF PRAYER  
May 2nd, 2024

[www.nationaldayofprayer.org](https://www.nationaldayofprayer.org)



# Celebrate All Women This Mother's Day

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

On the outside looking in.

No one wants to be there.

However, on the second Sunday in May many women find themselves in just such a place as churches gather to worship and celebrate Mother's Day.

Mother's Day is bittersweet for these women. Their melancholy has roots in innumerable sources—singleness, infertility, miscarriage or the loss of a child, mother, or other significant maternal figure.

How do I know this? Because I was one of these women.

Infertility treatment that never seemed to work made Mother's Day excruciating for me. When the prospect of having my own child felt bleak, sitting in a worship service that focused on motherhood was another blow to my aching soul.

My heart felt crushed, and my empty arms ached even more.

Being a mother is a treasured role in life for many women, including me.

The Lord heard my cries and gave me four wonderful children.

However, all women, mothers or not, fill valuable roles, and our Heavenly Father loves them just the same.

Women are daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, wives, co-workers, and friends, just to name a few. Often filling maternal roles in the lives of people within their sphere of influence, women daily impact the world around them.

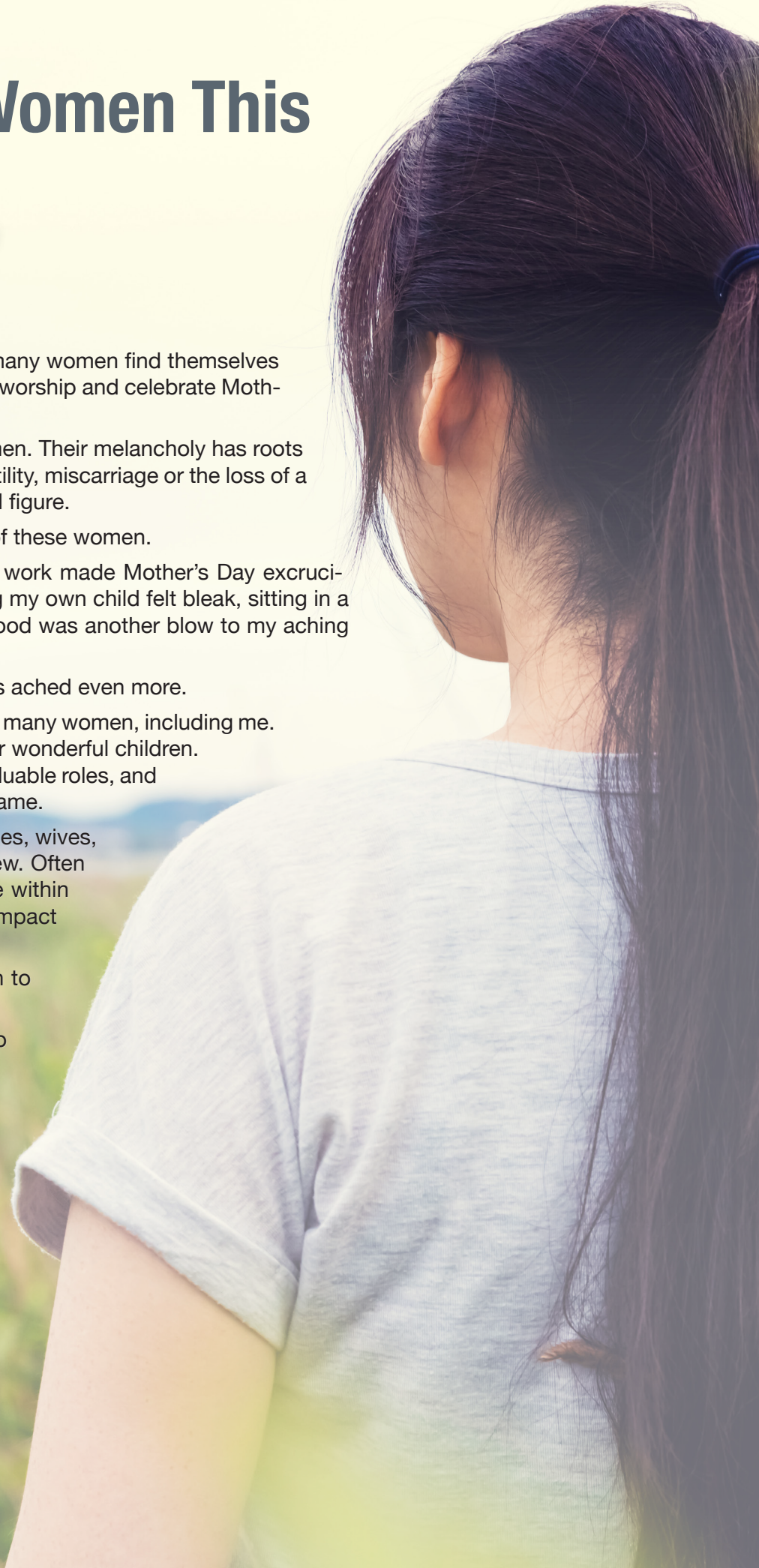
How can the church invite hurting women to come in from the outside?

By showing the compassion of Christ to wounded hearts. We show grace to those who don't know Jesus, but sometimes we forget that believers hurt too.

Celebrate mothers for the vital role they play in the lives of their children and grandchildren, but also recognize all women for what they do to bless the lives they touch. Make the Mother's Day worship service a place of comfort and healing for struggling souls.

As we celebrate this year, let's remember to uplift our hurting sisters along the way.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ."  
Galatians 6:2



# I'm looking for “\_\_\_\_\_” in Worship Ministry

By Zac James, SCBO worship consultant

Worship leaders wear many hats. There are so many elements to a successful worship ministry, and no one can be a world-class expert in all of them. Who you know makes all the difference.

Part of my role at SCBO is to be a resource for you and connect you to the people who can help you so that your worship ministry can flourish.

Here are the common needs that I hear from people and a few ways I may be able to help.

If you're a pastor trying to find a worship leader for Sunday, or a worship leader needing a week off, we can point you in the right direction!

I have a list of worship leaders who have expressed an interest in guest worship leading and I have shared it with our SCBO staff. We can provide you with that list (including contact information), and then you can choose a worship leader, contact them yourself, and schedule a weekend. We aren't acting as a booking agency, but we can provide referrals.

Some of these worship leaders are also looking for full-time positions. If you're hiring, I'd love to help connect you.

That list is constantly changing, so it's best if you call the SCBO office or email [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org) and we can provide you with up to date information.

I encourage you to pay honorariums if possible. Worship ministry is a critical part of weekly services, and it is important to compensate the leader who is driving your worship ministry.

My advice: You get what you pay for; it shows you value their contribution to the ministry of the church; and doing so makes it more likely you keep worship leaders for future weekends.

Please provide feedback to me on how guest leaders serve so we can use that to inform future referrals (email [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org)).

In addition to helping you find a worship leader, I can also provide recommendations for help with technical issues and installation as well as internet, IT, security cameras, and website issues.

Need more information? Send me an email at [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org), and I'll see if there's a way I can help you. On behalf of SCBO, I want to help you solve your worship ministry problems and direct you to the best long-term solutions.

## Pastors, Church Leaders Encouraged to Participate in Biennial Church Compensation Survey

By Roy Hayhurst, Guidestone Financial Resources

(BP) – Guidestone Financial Resources, Lifeway Research and Baptist state conventions have again teamed up for the SBC Church Compensation Survey. The survey – the largest free study focused on churches in the United States – is conducted every two years.

The survey's results will be available in early fall, in time for many churches considering their 2025 budgets.

Churches of all sizes can utilize the survey's results to determine comparable wages and benefits. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete at [GuideStone.org/CompensationSurvey](https://www.guidestone.org/CompensationSurvey). The survey started April 1 and goes on until the end of June.

“The SBC Church Compensation Survey provides a snapshot of what churches across our Convention are doing in paying their pastors and other church staff members,” said GuideStone President Hance Dilbeck. “We want to make sure that churches understand their

responsibility to pay the right wage the right way, and so taking this information when it's available and following best compensation practices will go a long way to help pastors as they seek to be financially secure and resilient servants to the Lord's churches.”

Individual survey results can be contributed anonymously; survey results are not reported individually. Lifeway Research will compile the results once the survey closes on June 30. Survey respondents will receive advance notice of the survey's availability.

Respondents should have the church's average weekly attendance, membership and 2024 annual budget. Additional information needed to complete the survey is the employees' yearly salary, the church's annual contributions to a retirement plan, annual church-paid insurance premiums, annual housing allowance, Social Security offset, and the rental value and utilities for church-provided housing.



## Teaching Bible During Public School Days Grows Nationally

By Diana Chandler, senior writer, Baptist Press

HILLIARD, Ohio (BP) — LifeWise Academy founder Joel Penton was on Bluetooth, driving a vibrant red and yellow school bus fashioned into a camper, heading from Ohio with his wife and five school-age children to the newest academy sites in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia.

He wanted his family to be present as LifeWise Academy launched its latest local chapters teaching elective, off-site Bible education to public school students during the school day, Penton told Baptist Press April 10. The program offering released-time religious instruction is fully protected by law that has survived challenges at the U.S. Supreme Court.

With an original goal of 25 sites in the first five years after its 2019 launch, LifeWise Academy is already offered to 330 schools in 14 states and confirmed to serve over 450 schools in 19 states by the fall of 2024, Penton said.

“The goal is to make Bible education available to every one of the 50 million public school students nationwide,” he said, “and in doing so introduce them to the Gospel, which will change their lives forever.

“We recognize the mission field that is our local public schools,” he said. “Every week we’re talking about Jesus and we’re urging kids to trust in Him and find their hope in Him.”

In *Zorach v. Clauson* in 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled released-time religious instruction is legal during

the public school day if it is held off-site from school grounds, is not supported by public funds, and requires parental permission for enrollment.

Southern Baptist pastor and LifeWise board member Stephen Hubbard leads his church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Logan to support the program by providing funds, offering prayer support, volunteering, serving on local chapter boards and donating buses to transport students.

“I cannot even begin to fathom a reason why any local church would not embrace, pray for, financially support, encourage volunteers to be involved in the local programs,” Hubbard said, “and if their church is within a close proximity of a local school, even allow LifeWise to use their church as a meeting location.”

LifeWise provides churches opportunities to present Christ to elementary-through-high-school students who might not attend church, to teach character to students and to present the local church within the community, Penton said, even building positive relationships with local schools.

Ebenezer supports local LifeWise Academy chapters in Hocking, Perry, and Fairfield counties. At a building it owns in Perry County, Hubbard said, the church opens a restaurant during the annual Perry County Fair and donates all its proceeds to LifeWise.

*Story continues on the next page...*

“We want to see the hearts and minds of students change,” Hubbard said. “We want to see their character change, because we believe that’s what’s going to really transform the community and then in turn enable the church to continue to do what it does in the community.”

Ebenezer is able to support LifeWise through its cooperative design, Hubbard said, encouraging churches to join with others in establishing and supporting local chapters.

Penton, a nondenominational Christian who homeschools his children, designed LifeWise to work across gospel denominational lines, and offers an adaptable 10-step program to launch LifeWise chapters.

While each local chapter manages the logistical work, has a leadership board, and raises its funds for the program, LifeWise accepts certain responsibilities for the program, carrying and paying for liability insurance for all local programs, Penton said.

Penton had been active in evangelical outreaches to public school students, but after school hours, for a decade before launching LifeWise. He launched the program in 2019 after school administrators in his hometown of Van Wert asked for his help with their released-time religion instruction program.

“Now I didn’t even know what that was; I’d never heard of that. And they explained to me” what it was, he said. “They had 95 percent of the entire school enrolled in the program. Their question was, ‘How could we get this to



grow? Could this expand across the country because almost no one’s even heard of this.

“I said I think you need to put this in a box, make it a plug-and-play program that any community can implement. Their response was, basically, ‘That’s a great idea. We don’t want to do that, but we think you should do that.’ And I said OK.”

He encourages all gospel churches to embrace the program.

“Can you think of anything more important than reaching our next generation with the word of God?” Penton asked.

## Leading Well from the Second Chair Workshop

SCBO will be hosting “Leading Well from the Second Chair” on Thursday, August 1. Luke Francis, executive pastor, First Light Church, Vandalia is leading this one day workshop for executive pastors, associate pastors, and other key leaders who handle the implementation and integration of their church’s mission and vision.

The workshop features discussion, reflection, and action as leaders gain a clarified understanding of the unique calling of a second chair leader as well as a robust framework for leading within the leadership landscape of their local church and team, and encouragement from other like-minded and gifted ministry leaders. If you’re

looking to explore or cultivate your distinct second chair leadership toolbox, this one day workshop is for you.

**SCBO**

**LEADING WELL FROM THE SECOND CHAIR**

**SCBO**  
9000 ANTARES AVE  
COLUMBUS, OH 43230

**AUGUST 1, 2024**

**LUKE FRANCIS**  
EXECUTIVE PASTOR  
FIRST LIGHT CHURCH  
VANDALIA, OHIO

# President's Pen

## *Let's Remember His Benefits*

*2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits...*

*8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

*9 He will not always chide,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.*

*10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

*11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Ps 103:2, 8–11). (2016). Crossway Bibles.*

What is God like? As believers in Jesus Christ, we know the answer. But, sometimes, we forget. He is merciful. He is gracious. He is slow to anger. He has A LOT of steadfast love. How much love? About the distance between the heavens and the earth...give or take.

As we strive and serve, it can be easy to forget. Let's remember. Let's rejoice in God's abounding love! Let's rejoice in His mercy and forgiveness! Bless the Lord, O my soul!

And let's never forget that some people do not yet know the Lord. They are outside of His mercy and love. They cannot yet rejoice in Him. They are still under His righteous anger against sin. They are lost.

We have been redeemed. We have been sent. Let us rejoice and be glad in the Lord! And let us joyfully and faithfully share the great news about Jesus Christ with our lost friends, family, and neighbors!

One of the great things about being an Ohio Baptist is the support. Help is just an email or phone call away. There are amazing resources in our state to help church leaders who are struggling. We can help you remember the mercy of the Lord, and we can help you proclaim the Word of Christ in your community so that lost people can hear and respond to the gospel! You can always reach me at [president@scbo.org](mailto:president@scbo.org).

Grace and Peace,

Adam Pursel  
SCBO President



# Church Plant Baptizes Thirteen New Believers in One Day

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

God's work takes time. Just ask Pastor Jeff Deel.

For the past 14 years Deel has been working in rural Morrow County planting two churches in tiny villages and ministering to local middle and high school students during weekly Bible studies at both Highland Middle School and Highland High School.

On Sunday, April 14, Deel baptized 13 new believers at Word Baptist Church, Sparta. The majority of those baptized were students from Highland Local Schools.

In 2010, while Deel was pastor of Glory Baptist Church, a church plant in Marengo, population 280, the principal of Highland High School asked him to do ministry in his building.

Since then, Deel has faithfully taught a lunchtime Bible study at Highland Middle School on Tuesdays during three lunch periods and again on Thursday in three lunch periods at Highland High School.

In January 2022, Deel planted Word BC six miles down the road from Marengo in Sparta, an even smaller village of 123 people. The church meets on Sunday mornings at Highland High School at 8:30 am.

"We figured if people would come to an 8:30 am service they were probably serious about looking for a church home," Deel said. "It was slow to begin, averaging no more than 15-20 people for the first year or so, but in 2023, things started to take off."

Word BC baptized its first person on August 12, 2023. Then on August 16, 2023, the Lord led Deel to attend a funeral that would open doors to even more ministry.

The father of the Highland High School wrestling coach passed away. "The wrestling coach's father was very involved with the Highland wrestling program, working out with the boys and taking pictures at the meets," Deel said.

"I knew God was telling me to go to that funeral because many of the wrestlers attended the Bible study I do at the high school, and I know they loved that man. I felt it would be a very emotional time for them, and it was."

After the service, one of the wrestlers was very emotional. A few days later he came to Deel's home and listened to the gospel.

"He didn't make a profession of faith that day, but he started coming to Word BC every Sunday with three other wrestlers," Deel said. "It was the start of several high school guys driving themselves to the 8:30 am service."

Through several months of consistent attendance at worship and the high school Bible study, God spoke to several of the young people.



Pastor Jeff Deel baptized 13 new believers, mostly students, at Word Baptist Church, Sparta.

In March, five of these young men approached Deel and told him they had been talking about baptism. Over the course of the next week, two more families told him they also had been talking about baptism. "The North American Mission Board Baptism Sunday had been mentioned at church and it initiated these discussions," Deel said.

Over the next three weeks, Deel counseled over 20 people about salvation and baptism and 13 of them were ready for baptism – six high school students, three middle school students, one elementary student, and three adults.

Deel got permission from the Highland Local Schools district superintendent and the high school principals to do the baptisms on-site, just outside the Highland High cafeteria where the church meets for worship.

"I've baptized off-site before and the problem is not everyone follows to the special moment being experienced by those being baptized," Deel noted. "It was of utmost importance to do it at our worship location if possible. And the Lord opened up wonderful doors for ministry in our district."

In addition to his work in Highland Local Schools, Deel also serves as a teacher at LifeWise Academy which started in September 2023 in the Highland District. There are 200 elementary students and 32 middle school students attending. High School LifeWise will begin this fall.

Word BC is now averaging 45-50 in weekly attendance. "For the last several months, we've just been praying for God to surprise us each week and He seems to do that very thing every week—through first-time guests, responses to the messages, or in other ways. We have been very blessed, and God is at work."

# Increased Tornadoic Activity Keeps Ohio DR Busy

By John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director

According to the National Weather Service, Ohio leads the nation in tornadoes with 43 so far in 2024. This increase in tornadoic activity has kept Ohio Disaster Relief (DR) busy. DR involvement in March and April led to 133 direct contacts, 22 gospel conversations and four professions of faith.

## New Albany – Chainsaw Crews - March

The tornado that hit this area occurred near the time that we conducted church training at Jersey Church, New Albany. The timing worked out well for teams to include newly trained volunteers in the day trip deployments. Teams of volunteers met in the parking lot of Jersey Church and went out to serve the local community.

## Lakeview at Indian Lake - QRU Feeding Unit – March

An EF3 tornado struck the town of Lakeview near Indian Lake and destroyed a good part of the city. Logan County Emergency Manager Helen Norris called and asked us to deploy the Quick Response Feeding Unit (QRU). The QRU cooked hundreds of meals per day for walk-up feeding and provided meals to the American Red Cross for people who were unable to come pick up food.

## Delaware County - Chainsaw Crews - March

The same round of tornados that hit Lakeview also hit Delaware County on a line from Stratford to Galena. We based daily recovery teams at FBC Westerville. The church provided a location to meet, as well as providing lunch for all the volunteers.

Untrained volunteers from Lifepoint Church in Lewis Center came and worked alongside trained DR volunteers. Teams were able to clear debris and share the gospel with homeowners. A volunteer from Lifepoint went back to a home where DR served and dropped off a gift bag and an invitation to Easter service.

## Ironton - Full Deployment – April

The storm that hit Ironton was a derecho--a system of straight line winds with speeds of 90 plus miles per hour. The storm knocked down trees and electric poles all over the area, so we organized a full deployment. Assessors went out in advance to survey the damage and secure work orders. Recovery teams, the feeding team, chaplains, and incident command deployed as well.

Sharon Baptist Church and Pastor Steve Harvey stepped up and eagerly opened their facility for us to use as a base of operation. The church also hosted DR in 2019 after an ice storm.

## Shower Trailer Purchase - April

We are excited about the acquisition of a shower trailer in April. God's provision made it possible to purchase a used 2021 four season shower trailer. The previous owner only used it twice. The shower trailer arrived in time for the Ironton deployment, and DR members enjoyed hot showers at the end of their workdays!

**A Leadership Program  
For students grade 8-12**

**June 25-29, 2024**  
on the campus of Cedarville University



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**SCBO**  
The State Convention Of Baptists In Ohio

# Indian Lake Baptist Church Distributes Aid After Tornadoes

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

LAKEVIEW, Ohio

Indian Lake Baptist Church, a small church in Lakeview, had to “go with it” to help its community in the aftermath of the March 14 tornado outbreak that killed three people and left dozens injured.

Lakeview is home to 1,213 people in rural Logan County. The town took a direct hit from one of six tornadoes that destroyed and damaged both homes and businesses leaving the residents without electricity and water services following the late night storm.

The church located on West Lake Street, a main road in Lakeview, was in the path of the tornado. Homes surrounding the church lost roofs and suffered damage and destruction but the church building only had one broken window.

Four days after the storm, the Logan County Emergency Manager called Indian Lake BC’s Pastor, Ben Baum, and asked for a favor. “The County Emergency Manager called and said that they were getting more donations than they could manage,” said Baum. “They wanted to know if we would volunteer our building as a place to distribute and store items out of the weather.”

Baum said yes and a quick turnover began at the church. “I was setting up for a church fellowship meal when they called,” he recounted.

Within an hour or two, eight to ten trucks and trailers full of food, clothes, baby items and household goods began arriving.

Volunteers from Indian Lake BC as well as the community arrived to organize and set up a distribution center in the church fellowship hall.

Two trustees from the church were among the distribution volunteers. “When things start showing up, you just have to go with it,” said Pat, one of the trustees.

During distribution, church members and volunteers spoke with storm victims, helping them gather needed items and sharing the gospel with all who would listen.

Lakeview is getting back to its new normal and the need for the distribution center at the church is waning, so the full-time distribution has ended. However, Baum and his church plan to keep the large collection of donated items and use them to continue ministering in their community.

“We still have a lot of stuff,” said Baum. “The emergency crisis might be over, but people still need things. Our church will make sure people have what they need.”

Baum believes the church will see the impact of their community outreach over time.

“After they get to talking to folks, time will tell,” he said. “In any crisis, people look for spiritual guidance. I believe people will remember the church that helped them.”



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A ministry of GuideStone®

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JUNE 23!**



Visit **MDSunday.org**  
to learn more.

*“Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress ...”*

James 1:27 (CSB)

# Sharing the Light in the Dark

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

WILLIAMSBURG, Ohio

**Q:** What do you get when you have 180 kids, flashlights, and a dark night?

**A:** You get a unique Easter outreach event—the Nighttime Easter Egg Hunt!

For the past six years, Central Baptist Church has sponsored the Nighttime Easter Egg Hunt as a community outreach in its hometown of Williamsburg, a village of 2,570 people in Clermont County, east of Cincinnati.

“It’s typically just like a regular Easter Egg Hunt except it’s dark and they use flashlights,” Pastor Brad Whiteford said. “For some reason, adding the flashlights makes it a totally different experience for the kids.”

On Saturday, a week prior to Easter the event kicks off with free food. “We usually do food before we do any activities, so we had hot dogs, popcorn, bottled water, coffee, hot chocolate,” Whiteford said.

“We had our parking lot full before we were ever supposed to start at seven o’clock which is not normal. And this year we had all sorts of people.” Whiteford

noted that 180 children, toddlers through sixth grade, were part of the total attendance of 400-500 people.

For the first time, The S.O.S. Blacklight Drama Team from Batavia performed for the children. “Basically, it’s a blacklight puppet show,” Whiteford said. “They put on a 40 minute presentation that was gospel focused and then that allowed us to use the Evangecube to come out and share the gospel with the kids.”

The team’s performance was a hit with the children. “They were paying attention. They were clapping and singing along.” Twenty-two children came forward after the program wanting more information on following Jesus.

“I think we were excited as a church because we really tried to figure out how to do a gospel presentation that was fun for the kids and this just seemed to work with what we are trying to do,” Whiteford said. “When we asked the Blacklight Team to come along with us, I really think that was kind of the secret sauce.”

The egg hunt followed the gospel performance. “We divide the hunts into age groups. We have toddlers to four-year-olds, kindergarten and first grade, second

*Story continues on the next page...*



*The Nighttime Easter Egg Hunt drew 180 children and a total crowd of 400-500 for the annual event.*

and third grade, and fourth through sixth grade.” The hunt is the shortest part of the evening. “Now the egg hunt really only takes two point five minutes. It’s not long.”

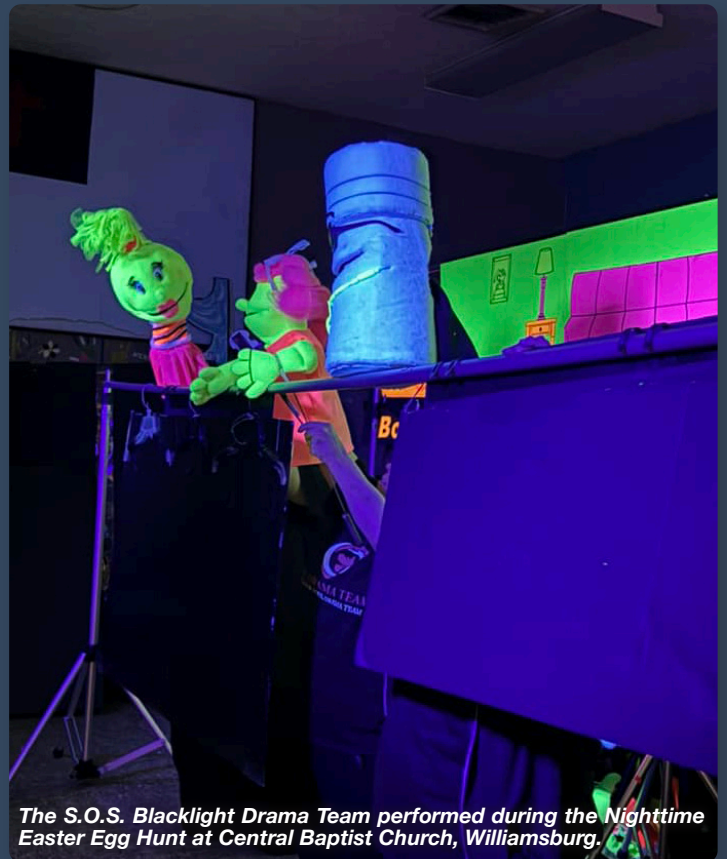
In addition to the novel time for an egg hunt, Central BC also has an interesting and cost effective plastic egg approach.

“I don’t want to say the word ‘lazy,’ but we’re lazy. We don’t put anything inside the eggs,” Whiteford said. “We like to keep our eggs from year to year to keep that cost down because if you give the eggs away, the eggs cost.”

Instead, children collect the eggs and turn them back in and receive a bag of candy. Each child keeps one egg and takes it to the prize distribution area to redeem the egg for a prize.

“We were concerned at one point that we weren’t going to have kids hunt for eggs because they would be wise and go ‘it doesn’t really matter if I do this. I’m gonna get a prize and candy anyway,’ but that didn’t seem to be an issue.”

The egg hunt was a success, and children heard the gospel. An evangelism grant from the State Conven-



*The S.O.S. Blacklight Drama Team performed during the Nighttime Easter Egg Hunt at Central Baptist Church, Williamsburg.*



tion of Baptists in Ohio partially sponsored the event, and Central BC used the funds in two ways.

“One, that helped us to be able to give a monetary gift to the Blacklight Team because they also do mission trips and stuff like that they self-fund, so it helped us be able to help them.”

The church also bought 200 Easter devotional books for families from Lifeway. Each child received one. “We wanted to give them something that we thought they might use at some point.”

For Central BC, a church of 40-60 in attendance on Sunday mornings, the egg hunt is an all hands-on deck event. “I would say we probably had at least 35 of our adults there doing it. Usually, the ones that can’t do it are the ones that are just not physically able. We try to be as accommodating for people as possible so they can be there to do something.”

After all the preparation and work, Whiteford says his church is pleased with how this year’s Nighttime Easter Egg Hunt turned out. “I think we as a church are excited this year because we finally accomplished all the things we wanted to.”

# Serving the Lord in Ohio and Around the World

By Chad Keck, West Region catalyst

God is moving in the West Region of our state, and I am so excited that I have a front-row seat to watch Him move.

Our partnership with the West Region of Florida is off to a great start. In March we hosted 12 pastors from the panhandle. It was great to see the connections made and the partnerships that have continued to develop. There is potential in this partnership for prayer, relationships, and ministry opportunities. I am hopeful that no matter what region you live in you will work with your state catalyst to get involved.

## Cooperative Learning in West Region

One of my favorite aspects of serving as a catalyst is the opportunities to fellowship and learn alongside fellow pastors. We need each other. I recently attended a Lunch and Learn with Dr. James Risner, associational mission strategist, Greater Dayton Association of Baptists, to discuss Rob Peter's book "The Overseer." What a great time of learning. I also loved hearing how God is revitalizing churches across our region.

I also attended the Lunch and Learn with Dr. Kie Bowman, SBC national prayer director. Dr. Bowman was my pastor when I served on his staff at Hyde Park Baptist Church. I learned so much about the power of prayer from him. His new book, *Evangelistic Prayer: Engaging the Power of God for the Lost*, is excellent

and I encourage everyone to pick up a copy. One of the things I learned about prayer is that the more we pray for the lost, the more we will want to share the gospel with them. This philosophy can also apply to missions.

## Hands On mission opportunity

One of the people I pray for each day is my daughter. She is 20 years old and has spent the last two semesters serving with the IMB outside the United States in the Hands On program for college-age students. I was not familiar with this program before my daughter connected with it last year. It is an incredible opportunity for students to serve overseas. As I talk to my daughter, I am amazed at what God has done in her life. She has had the opportunity to live in an international city of 12 million people and to share the gospel in ways that challenge me.

In March I had the opportunity to visit her there. One night we went to dinner with friends that she made there. I watched her repeatedly lead the conversation back to the gospel and the importance of a relationship with Jesus. Just a year ago she was a senior in high school and now she is learning another language and making disciples halfway around the world. If you have a college student in your church who might be interested in serving in Hands On, I encourage you to check it out at: [www.imb.org/students/semester-hands-on](http://www.imb.org/students/semester-hands-on).

*Story continues on the next page...*



# TOGETHER FOR THE NATIONS

[Imb.org/together](http://Imb.org/together)

## Together for the Nations Event

This leads me to something that I believe has the power to transform your church and our state. On September 14, 2024, FBC Kettering will host the IMB's Together for the Nations event. This will be an amazing day of learning how you and your church can engage in taking the gospel to the nations. This event is not just for pastors but for every member of your church.

There will be missionaries from every part of the world, so no matter where you are interested in serving, there will be opportunities for you to learn and speak to people serving in those regions. More details will be coming, but plan to spend the day engaging with other leaders on the Great Commission. This event is open to everyone, not just the West Region, so make plans now to attend and bring a busload of people from your church with you.

## Moving Forward in Revitalization

By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization consultant

I am excited for the future in revitalization throughout the state of Ohio. I have been engaging in conversations with associations and sharing opportunities to take a journey toward renewal. Our associations are only as healthy as our congregations and our congregations are usually only as healthy as their pastors.

If you desire to grow in ministry, join us May 21-22 for Revive Summit at Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington. Speakers Mark Clifton, Colin Pugh, Joe Crider, JimBo Stewart, and Dr. Richard Blackaby along with others will lead us to be healthier. The event begins at 8:45 am to 6 pm on Tuesday, May 21 and continues from 8:45 am to

3 pm on Wednesday, May 22. Even if you cannot attend both days, the summit is well worth the \$15 per person. I encourage any mature believer to attend this phenomenal summit designed with you in mind. For more information and to register, go to <https://www.namb.net/church-replanting/events/revive-summit-pickerington-oh/>.

Thank you for your prayers and cooperative giving that makes revitalization ministry possible. If I can be of help to you or your congregation, please email me at [mjones@scbo.org](mailto:mjones@scbo.org).



# REVIVE SUMMIT

Pickerington, OH

May 21-22, 2024

REGISTER TODAY!

# Job Postings

## PASTOR

Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Amherst

Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Amherst, is prayerfully seeking a pastor who will be in the instrumental role of teaching and expository preaching the whole counsel of God's Word and shepherding the church family at GSBC. He will lead the development and implementation of a strategic vision, along with the congregation, for the future of the church. He is to be engaged in pastoral care, providing supervisory and administrative leadership in all areas of congregational care including paid and volunteer staff.

For a full job description or to apply, please contact Chris Jordan at [cmjordanranch@frontier.com](mailto:cmjordanranch@frontier.com).

## GUEST AND INTERIM WORSHIP LEADERS NEEDED

Do you know of anyone who could serve another church as a guest or interim worship leader? If you know of someone with potential in this area, email SCBO Worship Consultant Zac James at [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org). Developing and sending worship leaders is a critical part of our missional cooperation as Southern Baptists who fulfill the Great Commission. There is a significant need for worship leaders who are willing to be sent, and we want to help connect them with churches in need.

*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)



# PRAYER AT THE STATEHOUSE

Thursday, May 16

10:00 to 11:30 am

Ohio Statehouse Atrium

- Gather with Christians from all over Ohio to lift our state, legislators, and laws up to God in prayer
- Praise and worship led by **Zac James**, Associate Pastor of Worship at First Baptist Church Lancaster
- Unite with leaders from different denominations and churches throughout Ohio to pray through Scripture
- Receive a 15-minute pastoral exhortation from **Dr. Jeremy Westbrook**, Executive Director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio

To register or learn more,  
visit [CCV.org/Pray](https://CCV.org/Pray)

