

Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

22
April

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO

VOLUME 70 NO. 3

We are just weeks away from Easter Sunday and I could not be more excited. The tomb is empty, Jesus is alive and that changes everything! We are praying for all our SCBO churches as you plan and prepare for this incredible opportunity to reach your community for Christ. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any assistance or support you may need. Until then, please read the latest news from around the Buckeye State:

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE. Yes, you read that right. We are bringing back our annual state evangelism conference, known as Momentum. In just a few days on Monday, March 21, Ohio Baptists will gather for a day of networking, preaching and breakouts at Lifepoint Church in Lewis Center, just outside of Columbus. The entire event is free, but you must register for the luncheon at www.momentumoh.com. Also, we are excited that Dr. Willy Rice will be with us, who was recently announced as a candidate for President of the SBC and will be nominated at our annual meeting coming up in Anaheim. This will provide a great platform for all those in attendance to hear his heart and vision for the Southern Baptist Convention.

SOLD OUT. I am thrilled to share that the Timothy+Barnabas retreat coming April 20-22 in Cincinnati is now full. We are grateful for our partnership with Pastor Johnny Hunt and The

North American Mission Board for coming to Ohio and pouring into our pastors & leaders for three days. If you would like to be placed on a waiting list, simply email us at info@scbo.org and we will notify you if a spot comes open.

SENECA LAKE. For the past several months, we have been engaging in a potential partnership conversation with Crossings Camp in Kentucky. Many of our Ohio churches are attending camp at Crossings and recommended them to us. While all indications of moving forward were happening, the board of directors for Crossings Camp recently met and decided not to move forward due to financial concerns regarding the capital needed to improve Seneca Lake. While we are disappointed, we are trusting the Lord and pursuing all opportunities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at jwestbrook@scbo.org if you have any questions or concerns. It's an honor and a joy to serve the Lord and Ohio Baptists!



*President's
Pen*

by Ray Umphrey

Greetings Ohio Baptists,

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most well-known passages of Scripture. In this great sermon, Jesus presents the true nature of discipleship – living out kingdom righteousness. Jesus begins this sermon with nine sayings which reveal the characteristics necessary for kingdom living and he calls these people “blessed” or “happy.”

Jesus must have shocked his hearers when he began to describe those who are living the good life as poor in spirit, mourners, and persecuted. Jesus' standard of greatness is at odds with our expectations. We value power, position, and prestige. Far too often, these worldly goals become the ambition even among Christians, yet Jesus calls us to the counter-cultural life of discipleship – the way of the cross. One way we can embody the spirit of the beatitudes is by caring for those most vulnerable among our midst. Of particular concern at this moment in our convention is the scourge of sexual abuse...

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REGIONAL UPDATES



Stephen Long

It has been an encouraging month as I begin my role as the Interim Regional Catalyst for Northwest Ohio. I have enjoyed meeting with several pastors over the month and hearing stories about upcoming activities of the churches in NW Ohio. Keep watching for details about an upcoming banquet. The NW Ohio Association is planning an April event to celebrate what God is doing in the churches of NW Ohio.

I also want to take a moment to update everyone on the recovery progress of Matt Pardi. Matt is doing great and working hard at physical therapy. Matt could still use prayers for his lungs to fully clear up. The plan is for Matt to return to his roles on April 1, 2022, PTL! God has been so good in restoring Matt's health and we cannot thank the Father enough for His miraculous work!



Art Fulks

God is certainly at work in and through the churches in Southeast Ohio. It has been very encouraging to visit with several pastors and church leaders... hearing how God is at work. We face several challenges, including around 20% of churches in the Southeast without pastors. But we rejoice as God is on the move in the city of Athens where First Baptist Athens recently voted to invest their facilities with the H2O church.

April 9 - Scioto Valley Baptist Association Annual Meeting (Chillicothe)

April 12 - Muskingum Valley LIFT Pastor's Gathering (Cambridge)

April 30 - IMPACT Mission Golf Outing (Lancaster) (timr@fbclancaster.com)

May 1 - IMPACT Missions Day (Lancaster)

10:30 a.m. - Celebration w/ Dr. Kevin Ezell

6:00 p.m. - [Banquet w/ Dr. Bryan Wright](#)

2:00 p.m. - [Disaster Relief Training](#)

[Missions / Pastor Training](#)



Reagan Wagoner

God is moving us forward as a city, and he is reaching people for His glory! It was so great in February to see so many of our Send Cincinnati church planters out for a date night, and to catch up on what God is doing all over the city! Also, I am excited to hear in 2022 about the Ohio Valley Baptist Association led by Chuck Smith beginning to give startup funding and monthly support to church planters. Ben Parks, church planter near downtown Cincinnati, is the first recipient and hopes to launch in August 2022! In the Southwestern Baptist Association, Bethany Baptist celebrated their

50th Anniversary, and have grown from 30 to 70 in the past year! In CABA, Urbancrest hosted its 18th Annual Men's Conference with hundreds of men worshipping Jesus together! Looking forward to seeing many of you at the sold out Timothy+Barnabas Conference in Cincy! Would love to catch you for breakfast or lunch to hear about what God is doing in your church. We can talk about how to start a multiplication pipeline, residency, or a new church. Let me know how I can be praying for you in 2022. Email me at rwagoner@scbo.org to get together!



Rick Williams

Pastors in The Buckeye Central Erie Association are pairing up to pray together for 40 days! I'm grateful to be a part of this 40-day journey with them. In addition to praying together, we met for a Lunch & Learn event at Der Dutchman in Bellville, Ohio. Steve Hopkins led the group based on the book "Praying with Jesus: 40 Days of Prayer." I'm excited to see how God is going to use these 40 days of prayer in this group of pastors and their Associational Missionary, Cliff Hartley.

In the Metro Columbus Baptist Association, we have scheduled a Lunch & Learn event at Violet Baptist Church in Pickerington, Ohio on April 7th from 11am to 1pm. Dr. Jeremy Westbrook will be presenting practical information regarding Multiplication Pipeline. A multiplication pipeline in the local church has the potential to multiply leaders and churches to make a significant impact for the kingdom of God. I want to encourage you to register for this event. [You can register right now by clicking here...](#)



Chad Keck

Ohio Visits Europe: Did you know that less than 2% of Europe identifies as Evangelical?

In late February several SCBO pastors joined me and Dr. Chitwood (President of the IMB) on a discovery trip to Europe to explore future mission partnerships. Our mission as a state convention is *'Inviting Churches to Rediscover Gospel Multiplication'* so we divided the group between London and Prague while challenging each of the pastors to identify ways that their church could join in the mission of gospel multiplication across Europe.

I look forward to hosting future discovery trips and inviting even more SCBO pastors to join me. If you would like your name added to my list to contact for the next trip please email me at ckeck@scbo.org.



Stephen Owens

Hey SCBO family. In February the SCBO was able to partner with Cleveland Hope (ASM: Darin Avery) to encourage pastors and their wives at a Marriage and Ministry brunch. Wayne and Sherry Sanders (Chardon Christian Fellowship) spent time sharing their experiences being married for over 50 years and being in ministry together for more than 40 years. This was a great time of learning and fellowship. The pastors and their wives were encouraged by this great event.

PRESIDENT'S PEN ...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We mourn for those who have been abused and for those who have been deterred from following Jesus because of abuse. We hunger and thirst for the true righteousness of God and for pure hearts in which sexual sin is crucified and repented of. We seek to be merciful to those who are in need of mercy. We seek to bring about peace among those who have been subjected to violence. We approach this entire task with the humility and meekness of the kingdom.

As SCBO President, I have been tasked with leading our Sexual Abuse Task Force to protect the most vulnerable among us. This is a difficult work, and for some a painful work, but it is a necessary work. I look forward to standing with this team in November to say that we have fulfilled the task assigned to us. Please pray for us as we seek to carry out this vital task.

I am here to serve you, Ohio Baptists. Please reach out to me anytime at president@scbo.org. I would love to hear from you and learn how we can work together.

Your partner in the gospel,
Ray Umphrey, SCBO President



SCBO Disaster Relief Providing Help to Displaced Ukrainians



The train station in Krakow, Poland is a waypoint for thousands escaping Ukraine.

by Stephanie Heading

As the Russian military continues its invasion of Ukraine, many people are experiencing shock at the brutality and helplessness at the plight of millions of refugees fleeing for their lives, leaving behind home and country. Southern Baptist Send Relief, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and churches of the Polish Baptist Convention are on the ground in Poland, working together to provide help, hope and healing to displaced Ukrainians.

Just days after the invasion began, Send Relief activated its first international 'Disaster Assistance Response Team' (DART) in coordination with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. The six DR team members, including SCBO DR Director John Heading as well as four DR members from North Carolina and one member from Texas, flew to Warsaw, Poland to assess the needs of 40 Polish Baptist churches who are providing temporary housing so refugees can sleep, eat, and shower before moving on as they work their way to other European countries.

"Send Relief is currently supplying financial assistance to help Polish churches who are ministering to refugees. Southern Baptist DR is preparing to send small U.S. teams to assist," said Heading. "We are assessing all over Poland to see what additional needs our churches can help meet."

The first need is financial. Poland has many needed supplies in country, however it takes funds

to purchase these items. Anyone can give to Ukrainian refugee response at www.scbo.org/DR. One special project adopted by Ohio DR was to raise \$3000 to purchase an electric pallet



Church Sanctuary converted for sleeping in Chelm

jack for a church in Chelm, Poland which cares for over 200 refugees daily. This need has been met.

The second need is people. "It looks like we will be sending teams to Poland over the next few months," said Heading. "They will support local volunteers, sort warehouse donations, conduct children's activities, provide stress first aid, and do other tasks such as cleaning and general help. Teams will be about 6 to 8 people max. More details will be available soon. Please contact John Heading at jheading@scbo.org if you are interested in being on a mission team to Poland.

The third and most important need is prayer. Please pray for these displaced people and those providing care for them. Your help is needed now.



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Isaiah 61:1-3

First Baptist Church, Lancaster

For more information visit
www.scbo.org



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NOTICE: This is not an offer to sell our securities and we are not soliciting you to buy our securities.

The Ohio Baptist Foundation and the Louisiana Baptist Foundation offer a Short Term Fund to help churches and other ministries maximize their income on cash reserves and designated funds. The annualized payout rate is 1.35% as of 2/28/2022. Based upon our information, *this is one of the highest cash-type rates offered in Ohio to churches and other ministries at this time.*

If this would be helpful for your ministry, I would be honored to partner with your church or ministry to advance God's Kingdom here on earth. I can be reached at jackhelton@scbo.org or 614-309-9738. -- Jack Helton, Executive Director, The Ohio Baptist Foundation

Allowing a Shift in Student Ministries to Impact the Kingdom of God: *A Pastor's Perspective*

by *Joran Braughton* | Student Pastor, Highland Baptist Church

In 2014 I transitioned from a high school ministry in Georgia of 500 to a student ministry in Ohio of 10-15. I had longed for a smaller church community and desired to serve where I could know others on a deeper level. I believed my plan for ministry was formed in the perfect way to see immediate growth within this group. However, after 6 months numbers within our group remained unchanged. During our Wednesday nights we averaged a 'whopping' 6-10 students. My excitement quickly turned into exasperation. I focused on trying to increase our numbers by using many of the ministry strategies I had learned in the large group setting in Georgia, but I soon realized something which changed my direction in church leadership. Attendance had become an idol and I was the number one worshipper. My mindset needed to shift. We couldn't treat a small number the way we would treat a large number. That summer, our ministry had only 10 students and leaders come with us to camp, but I realized I wasn't called to grow our group in numbers - I was called to intentionally disciple the few God had placed under my leadership.

After nearly a year I made a list of areas where I wanted our ministry to succeed. This is where I would focus the majority of my time and energy:

1. *Teaching students the gospel so often they could easily articulate it.*
2. *Praying for adults to join in and pour into students.*

The gospel part was somewhat easy. Whether it was Sunday school curriculum, teaching at youth group, camps/events, or random gatherings; we would only gather as a group for one purpose - to teach Christ's death in our place and his resurrection so that we too can have life (2 Timothy 2:11.) Did all 10-15 students get this? Absolutely not. Did we get to watch many students lives change because of what Jesus had done for them? YES! In 8 years, I have seen students devote their lives to pastoral ministry, serve full-time with the IMB, take a gap year to serve in Southeast Asia (soon to be full-time), give summers to church planting, and pursue studying abroad in Africa - all for the sake of the gospel! I can't take any credit for what the Lord has done and continues to do in student's lives. It's been incredible to watch the Gospel impact hearts.

Secondly, I needed more help. I alone couldn't connect with all of our students. I couldn't give them the attention and support they needed all the time. So I prayed and

prayed (and cried) and then prayed more for God to send leaders. I wish I could say this happened immediately - it certainly did not. I prayed for more help yet we remained with the small group of faithful leaders who continued to serve faithfully.

This is something I didn't pray for, but it has changed our group...

Though I was praying for adult leaders, it wasn't long before two of our 10th grade girls stepped up and began discipling incoming 7th graders. This is something I didn't pray for, but it has changed our group ever since. The small number in our youth ministry from the beginning included these two 10th graders. We poured into them and they went on to disciple 4-5 girls each. Our God delights in using small things for the glory of His son, Jesus! Because of God using these two girls, our group began to grow as students were pouring into students. This brought parents and former students around because of the excitement and community within our growing group. We also saw students reaching out to one another and holding each other accountable. We have now seen growth in our ministry for 5 years straight. (Even through a pandemic!)

This year we are excited for more than 50 students and leaders from our church to join together for a week of camp. It has been so exciting to watch our student ministry grow and see how God answers prayers faithfully. As we have grown in student numbers we have also grown in wonderful and faithful student leaders. We continue in striving for gospel-centrality in our ministry and we remind our leaders often how incredible they are. God is faithful. (Isaiah 25:1)



Tales of Transformation FROM OHIO WMU

Millie Hall, a student from Jacksonville State University in Alabama, along with three other students spent the summer of 2021 volunteering with “Nehemiah Teams” to serve as summer missionaries to East African immigrants living in Columbus, Ohio. Millie shares, “I can think of two reasons why volunteering in this East African community is a good idea. First, the Bible commands it, but secondly, I experienced personal growth in my walk with the Lord. I am so grateful God brought this people group to the United States. Tutoring kids and living life with these families last summer is one of the strongest times of my prayer life and

reliance on the Holy Spirit. God used the time I spent in Columbus to teach me so much about His character, and I feel confident for any college student who volunteers with Nehemiah Teams, going anywhere in the world, that He will transform your life in ways you never imagined.”

What are IMB Nehemiah Teams?

There are teams that focus on evangelism, service, orphanage work, healthcare, and multimedia. Whatever your passion or field of study is, God has a place for you in His will to reach the lost world. Students who join Nehemiah Teams realize that God calls us to live for more than the things of this world that do not satisfy. We are invited to lay down our lives, join God’s work and live for His glory. His name and renown are the



desire of our hearts. Are you ready to have a rendezvous with destiny this summer?

Share the Nehemiah Team’s 2022 summer mission options with Ohio college students.



How to Become a Christian

If you are not a Christian, meaning you have never surrendered your will to the Lord Jesus, let me share briefly how you can make this life changing decision. GOD WANTS TO SAVE YOU.

FIRST, you must believe that God loves you and wants you to have peace in your heart and an everlasting life (John 3:16).

SECOND, you must recognize that you are a sinner, that you have done things which have displeased God and that you have separated yourself from Him (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

THIRD, you must believe that Jesus came to this earth, was actually God in the flesh, lived a perfect life, and yet went to a cruel cross, dying for your sins, paying once and for all the penalty of sin (1 Peter 2:24). However, it’s not enough just to

know these three things. Many of us knew them for years before we ever gave Jesus our lives.

FOURTH, you must personally ask Jesus to come into your life and forgive you of your sins (Revelation 3:20).

You can pray this prayer now and if you mean it with all of your heart, Jesus will come in just like He said. He cannot lie.

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I’m really sorry for my sins, Lord. I ask you now, Lord Jesus, to come into my heart, forgive me of my sins, take control of my life, and make me the kind of person You want me to be. I now receive You into my heart. Thank You for coming in. I will follow You all the days of my life. In Your name I pray, Amen.

We want to hear your story!

Submit your church news and stories to messenger@scbo.org

Published monthly by *The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio* for members of Southern Baptist churches in Ohio.

9000 Antares Ave
Columbus, Ohio 43240

Member of *Baptist Press*, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jeremy Westbrook | Executive Director-Treasurer, Editor

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