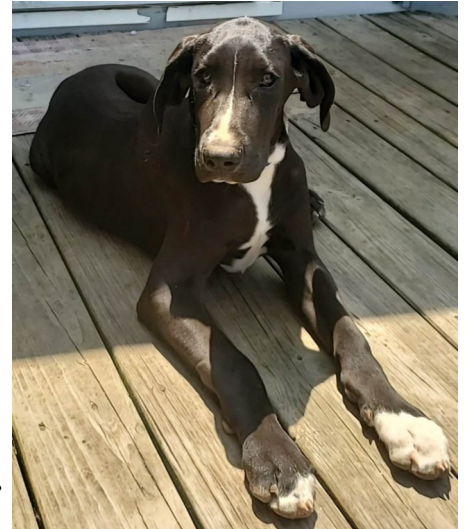


## ***Samwise, the Service Dog in Training***

Ten years ago I started falling and having neurological symptoms that affected my balance and mobility, which eventually led to a movement disorder diagnosis that will be with me for the rest of my life. A few years after that I learned of an organization that trained Great Danes to be mobility service dogs for veterans, helping to steady and support them. Since then I have dreamed, wished, hoped, prayed, learned, and looked for just the right Great Dane at just the right time, a dog I could train to be my mobility service dog.



Last week, Samwise (or just "Sam") made that a reality for me. In the four short days he and I have been together, the adventures have been unending. I am learning how to communicate with him and how to understand his communication with me. I am learning to see the world as he sees it, as he often catches small noises or movements that I would have missed. I have watched him gently introduce himself to my kittens and excitedly introduce himself to the people and dogs he comes across. I can already sense the richness and possibility present in this relationship.

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday in the church year, in which we usually look at the handful of scriptures that have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mentioned in the same passage, most notably the Great Commission. The creation story also comes up here, with the Spirit showing up as a wind sent from God, and with God saying of humans "let *us* make them in *our* image," indicating a plurality within God.

Much ink has been spilled trying to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, but us Church of the Brethren folks have more interest in what it means for our faith walk than in how it works theologically. For early Anabaptists (and even some present day Anabaptists), it was not unusual for all three persons of the trinity to be spoken of interchangeably -- a prayer that starts out to God, for instance, can easily switch to address the Spirit or Christ and back again fluidly, because we feel the oneness in the three-ness, and the three-ness in the oneness.

*(cont. on pg. 2)*

In the Iona Community, the last line of every morning's worship was this: "in the name of the Trinity of Love, God in community, Holy and One." I like this phrasing of it. God is community in essence. Our God of Love is a Trinity because the pattern of love is a flowing mutuality, giving and receiving in dynamic relationship.

So often our relationships in human reality are transactional, even when we don't intend them to be. We have a hard time staying in God's pattern of love -- mutuality that gives and receives without counting or measuring, without withholding or judging. We tend to love those who offer us something (tangible or intangible) more easily than we love those who have nothing to give us.

I'm learning a Godly kind of love from Samwise. He seems to always have more love to give, and he gives it indiscriminately and abundantly, no matter what he receives in return. For him it seems that the point of life is to love and that love is its own reward. I am also learning that in order to have as full a relationship with him as possible, I need to allow myself to enter into a kind of union with him, of giving and receiving mutually. The simplicity and profoundness of this kind of loving communion is the delightful relationship the Trinity of Love, God in community, invites us into. "Let us make them in our image!" God says, inviting us into the middle of this flowing, dynamic relationship.

May we find spaces of true communion with God, with nature, with each other in this season.

Blessings,  
*Laura*

\*\*PS, You'll likely meet Samwise. Thank you for your grace as he and I are learning. He'll wear "service dog in training" harnesses. If the labels say "do not pet", just ignore him (even if he *really* wants to say hi). If they say "service dog in training," it's okay to interact with him. He just always has to be polite! And if you are concerned about having him around for any reason, please let me know. We'll work at it together.

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A way that Laura will be using to stay in touch with the S/C IN District and provide updates is via video!

Her videos are available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@SouthCentralIndianaCoB>

Also look for updates from Laura and other folks in the S/C IN District on our District blog at:  
<https://southcentralindianacob.com/blog/>

# DISTRICT NEWS ITEMS

## DISTRICT CONFERENCE — SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, August 19, 2023**

Creative Financial Centre  
2704 S. Goyer Rd., Kokomo, IN 46902

### Theme: “Cross Training”

*“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’” - Luke 9:23*

Moderator: Mark Stahl

Delegate designation forms have been mailed to all the churches, if you need a new one please contact the District Office asap!

Non-delegate forms are available on the website at:

[https://www.scindcob.org/2023\\_non-delegate\\_registration.pdf](https://www.scindcob.org/2023_non-delegate_registration.pdf)

#### DISTRICT FINANCIAL REPORT as of April 30, 2023

	<u>April</u>	<u>YTD</u>
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Congregations’ Self-Allocation	\$15,094.23	\$31,036.86
Restricted Income	\$193.00	\$308.00
Other Income	\$6,615.26	\$57,368.79
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$21,902.49</b>	<b>\$88,713.65</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
District Expenses	\$11,480.09	\$46,412.83
Restricted Expenses	\$3,165.92	\$3,659.04
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$14,646.01</b>	<b>\$50,071.87</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$7,256.48</b>	<b>\$38,641.78</b>
<b>District Fund Balance</b>		<b>\$1,213,550.79</b>

#### 2023 DISTRICT DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE!!

The 2023 South/Central Indiana District Directory is now available. Digital copies have been sent to all churches and everyone listed in the directory.

If you do not receive a digital copy and would like one, or would like to have a paper copy mailed to you, please contact Sarah at the District Office (scindcob@gmail.com or 260-274-0396).

#### JUNE DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

**June 4** - Join us as we lift up Lower Deer Creek CoB and the Shenandoah District.

**June 11** - Join us as we lift up Manchester CoB and the Southeastern District.

**June 18** - Join us as we lift up Marion CoB and the Southern Plains District.

**June 25**- Join us as we lift up Mexico CoB and the Virlina District.

## **BRETHREN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES COURSE WITH BLI**

You are welcome to join us for any sessions that interest you. Below are the dates, times, and topics we plan to discuss.

Please RSVP to Laura ([scindlaura@gmail.com](mailto:scindlaura@gmail.com)) to receive the zoom link and the reading list for the class you wish to attend. Suggested donation \$5 per hour, to support BLI students. All Zoom meetings are 7-9pm on Wednesdays.

- ◆ **June 7: Radical Obedience, Living Out Our Baptism** (*Counting the Cost, Brethren History, Courage and Obedience*)
- ◆ **June 21: Worship God, Invite Others** (*Scripture, Worship, Theology*)
- ◆ **June 28: Reconcile, Refuse Violence, Make Peace** (*Peace, Shalom, Anointing*)
- ◆ **July 19: Serve and Care, Open the Circle** (*Service, Community, Love Feast*)
- ◆ **July 26: Minister, Go and Tell** (*Ministry, Evangelism, Baptism*)
- ◆ **August 2: Be Faithful and Be Different** (*Discipleship, Stewardship, Simplicity*)
- ◆ **August 13 afternoon: New Vision** (*and some polity... and some ice cream...*)  
-- 4 hours, in person, available to those who have attended any prior zoom session



### **MEET AND GREET THE NEW DEM**

Laura has been joining each section for a chance to meet and celebrate with folks around the district after her installation service in April.

**Central Section - Sunday, June 4, 3:00 pm**  
**Marion CoB - 2302 S Geneva Ave, Marion, IN 46953**

### **JUNE 2023 - DISTRICT CALENDAR DATES**

June 11 - Audri Svay Ordination - Eel River Community CoB, 3:30 PM

June 24 - District Board Meeting - Marion CoB, 9:30 AM

WITH  
*sympathy*

We extend our sympathy to the family of **Esther Norris** who passed away on May 27. Esther was ordained in the Church of the Brethren and served as a pastor in both the South/Central and Northern Indiana Districts. She also served as the interim District Executive Minister for the Missouri-Arkansas District in the late 90s.

## CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN HISTORY COURSE

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC) will offer *Church of the Brethren History*, online from September 11-November 5, 2023. Craig Gandy will be the instructor. TRIM students will receive one credit in Bible/Theology upon completion. EFSM students may take this course as part of a Learning Unit.

These online courses "meet" for 8 weeks in Moodle, a virtual classroom platform. New lessons are posted weekly, once the course begins, and students are given a week to complete their assignments. Students can log on at any time, day or night, to read lectures, watch videos, work on group projects and/or engage in forums (email-style conversations).

This course will be hosted on the Brethren Academy Moodle site. Brethren Academy students will use their Moodle account information. Passwords can be reset if needed. Non-Academy students will be provided with Moodle account information.

The deadline to register for this course is **August 1, 2023**.

Registration and payment are through SVMC. To register, go to: <http://events.r2o.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ejorrz6fdf8e968c&llr=adn4trzab>

## UPCOMING BRETHREN ACADEMY COURSE

### *Defining Set-Apart Ministry Within the Multivocational Reality*

September 6-October 31, 2023

Instructor: Sandra Jenkins

*This class will explore the set-apart ministry within the multivocational context, including the rewards and challenges for both pastor and congregation. Topics include the multivocational ministry of the Apostle Paul and an investigation of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.*

The deadline to register for this course is **August 2, 2023**

Persons interested in taking an Academy course for CEUs or Personal Enrichment may register in one of two ways:

1) Mail registration form with payment to Brethren Academy, 615 National Rd. W., Richmond, IN 47374.

2) Register and pay online at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/brethren-academy-course-registration-annual-trim-payment/> There is a 3% service charge when registering online.

Questions may be directed to Academy Director, Janet Ober Lambert at [oberlja@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:oberlja@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1820

## JUNE VENTURES COURSE OFFERING

*“Black Panther Films as Metaphor: Lessons about Race, Colonialism, Violence, and Identity in Wakanda”*

Monday, June 5 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Central Time, online

Instructor: Dr. Steve Schweitzer, Bethany Seminary

The MCU film Black Panther (2018) engages in complex topics such as race, colonialism, violence/nonviolence, and issues of identity in explicit and surprising ways. The sequel, Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022), continues to explore these themes. The two films provide a helpful metaphor and entry point for such theological questions being raised both in the wider culture and within the church.

Registration for all courses and more information about Ventures in Christian Discipleship is available at [www.mcpherson.edu/ventures](http://www.mcpherson.edu/ventures).

## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023**

**Duke Energy Convention Center  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
July 4-8, 2023**

Registration is now open!!!

To register & for more information:

<https://www.brethren.org/ac2023/>

**Viviendo el amor de Dios  
Viv Lanmou Bondye A  
Rayuwan Kaunar Allah  
Living God's Love**

Ephesians 5:1-2  
Languages: Spanish, Creole, Hausa, English

### **2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUSINESS ITEMS**

#### **Unfinished Business**

UB 1. [Query: Standing with People of Color](#)

UB 2. [Query: Breaking Down Barriers – Increasing Access to Denominational Events](#)

#### **New Business**

NB 1. [Request for an Annual Conference Study on Calling Denominational Leadership](#)

NB 2. [Recommendation Regarding Nominations from the Floor of Annual Conference](#)

NB 3. [2023 Guidelines for Continuing Education](#)

NB 4. [Restated and Amended Articles of Organization for Eder Financial](#)

NB 5. [Recommended Cost of Living Adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors](#)

NB 6. [With Actions and in Truth: A Lament of the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

#### **Briefing Video**

[www.brethren.org/ac/2023/business](http://www.brethren.org/ac/2023/business)

Important information for all Delegates and any other interested persons.

#### **Mission and Ministry Board and Agency Reports**

This year, the Mission and Ministry Board and the three Church of the Brethren Agencies (Bethany Theological Seminary, Eder Financial, and On Earth Peace) have prepared written reports. The reports are available in the Conference book and posted at [www.brethren.org/ac2023/business](http://www.brethren.org/ac2023/business). During their live reports, delegates will have an opportunity to engage in table conversation and ask questions from the microphones.

#### **2023 Ballot**

The Nominating Committee and Standing Committee present the following ballot for the 2023 Annual Conference elections in Cincinnati, Ohio. Complete biographical information is available on the Annual Conference website: [www.brethren.org/ac2023/business](http://www.brethren.org/ac2023/business) and will be printed in the Conference booklet.

## NATIONAL OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE (NOAC)

September 4-8, 2023  
Lake Junaluska, NC



NOAC is a Spirit-filled gathering of adults 50 and older who love learning and discerning together, exploring God's call for their lives and living out that call by sharing their energy, insight, and legacy with their families, communities, and the world.

Online registration opens May 1. Past participants will receive an e-mail soon with updated information. For more information: <https://www.brethren.org/discipleshipmin/noac/>

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **Mark Charles**, speaker, writer, consultant on the complexities of American history, race, culture, and faith
- **Ken Medema** and **Ted Swartz**  
Ken is a singer/songwriter and “sneaky” theologian. Ted is a Mennonite actor and writer.
- **Osheta Moore**, writer, pastor, speaker, and podcaster

*Note: Timbercrest is planning to host online viewing of NOAC for Timbercrest residents and S/C IN District folks who are not able to travel to Lake Junaluska.*

*More details about plans for this will be available in upcoming newsletters.*

## 2023 SONG AND STORY FEST

The 2023 Song and Story Fest family camp co-sponsored by On Earth Peace will be hosted at Camp Peaceful Pines, in California, on July 29-Aug. 4.

The theme for this year's Sierra Wildfire Song and Story Fest is “After the Fire...” (Psalm 19:1-3). The event is billed as an intergenerational camp for all ages, individuals, and families.

Storytellers, musicians, and workshop leaders include Rhonda and Greg Baker, Hannah Button-Harrison, Matt Guynn, Bill and Jacob Jolliff, Erin and Cody Flory Robertson, Anna Lisa Gross, Kathy Guisewite, Jonathan Hunter, Katie Loomis-Adams, Mike Stern, and Barbara West.

The schedule includes, in the mornings, intergenerational gatherings and worship followed by workshops for adults, children, and youth; in the afternoons, family time, recreation, story swaps, and music-making; and in the evenings, campfires, snacks, and concerts or a folk dance.

Registration includes all meals, on-site facilities, and leadership, and is based upon age—adults \$370, teens \$240, children age 5 to 12 \$150, children 4 and under free—with a maximum fee per family of \$1,000. Daily fees are available. Registrations after July 1 add 10 percent as a late fee.

To register online and for additional information: <http://onearthpeace.org/song-and-story-fest-2023>.

For questions contact Ken Kline Smeltzer, director, at 814-571-0495 or [bksmeltz@comcast.net](mailto:bksmeltz@comcast.net), or [SongandStoryFest@gmail.com](mailto:SongandStoryFest@gmail.com)

**In case you missed one of them in an earlier newsletter, here are links to some upcoming events that you can still sign up for:**

- ◆ **National Junior High Conference**—June 16-18, 2023— Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA - <https://www.brethren.org/yya/njhc/>
- ◆ **2023 Ministers' Association Event**—Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience and Beloved Community - July 3-4, 2023, Cincinnati, OH - <https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/sustaining/>
- ◆ **Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience and Beloved Community, DISU** - July 3-4, 2023 with Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey as the facilitator. This course is a Directed Independent Study Unit in conjunction with attending the Annual Conference in Cincinnati, OH. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VrnTT97tYr6sB3CkXjSl9XPD38tk9WRu/view?usp=sharing> *Registration deadline is June 5.*
- ◆ **2023 Camp Mack Camps and Retreats:** <https://www.campmack.org/summer-camp/> or <https://www.campmack.org/retreats-and-events/>

### TIMBERCREST NEWS RELEASE



Stanley Noffsinger, Chief Executive Officer of Timbercrest Senior Living Communities, retired at the close of business on May 31, 2023.

Stan began work in February 2019 as a “long-term interim” executive with a charge to help the community prepare for the next generation of residents. His “servant leadership” enabled the management team to work together to navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, a major flooding incident and accomplish other facility developments. Together, Stan and the management team placed the health and well-being of the residents as their primary objective in every decision and action.

Together with the Board of Directors, Timbercrest launched a new strategic plan with a bold vision of “*Sustaining a vibrant community that values a culture of dignity and compassion.*” The board thanks Stan for his experience in executive leadership and crisis management.

Timbercrest Senior Living Community is pleased to announce that Christine Huiras will assume the position of Executive Director of Timbercrest on June 1, 2023. Christy has nearly thirty years of experience with Timbercrest, beginning as the secretary/receptionist in 1994. While working, Christy earned her Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Huntington University in 2011 with honors. She then went on to fill the positions of Financial Service Director, Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer. Over the years, Christy has earned the respect of the residents of Timbercrest, the employees, and the Board of Directors.





# *Peacefully, Simply, Together.*

**SOUTH/CENTRAL INDIANA DISTRICT OFFICE, CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**  
260.274.0396

**LAURA STONE, DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MINISTER**

[scindlaura@gmail.com](mailto:scindlaura@gmail.com), 574.306.8768

Usual work days: Wednesday—Sunday

**SARAH O'HARA, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

[scindcob@gmail.com](mailto:scindcob@gmail.com)

*Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM*

District Website: [www.scindcob.org](http://www.scindcob.org)

Denominational website: [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)



<https://www.facebook.com/SouthCentral-Indiana-District-205091192857321/>

South/Central Indiana District  
Church of the Brethren  
PO Box 32  
North Manchester, IN 46962



Church of the Brethren

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«ADDRESS»  
«CITY» «STATE» «ZIP»