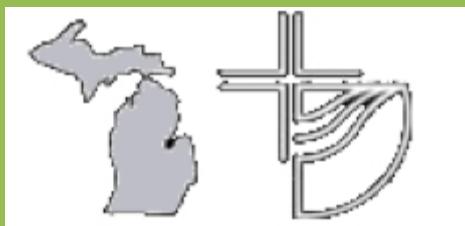


# The Brethren Bugle

Michigan District Church of the Brethren Newsletter



May 2016- Remembering Nigeria: 2 Years Later



## Contact Us:

Email Emily at:

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

Follow us on Twitter:

@michigancob

Find us on Facebook

Michigan District Church of the Brethren

## Important Links:

[www.michigancob.org](http://www.michigancob.org)

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

# Letter from the District Executive

Hello Michigan Brethren,

It appears Spring is finally here and now we all remember why it is that we live in Michigan! In addition to the weather, we have other reason to celebrate this month. Several of our congregations have recently added new members, and the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren just called Mik Sutton to be their pastor. I am looking forward to his installation service in the afternoon on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

It is with sadness that I share with you New Life Christian Fellowship's decision to leave the Church of the Brethren. After several conversations between the church and the District over the past couple of years, an agreement was reached by which New Life bought out the District's interest in their property, changed their name by removing Church of the Brethren from their incorporating documents and was released by the District to become an independent church. There will be more information and formal action at District Conference to disorganize the church according to our polity.

We have some serious challenges facing the District and the denomination, many of which are shared by our congregations. At our best, the District and denomination can be a place where local churches turn for encouragement and support in their local ministries. That's really what the wider church is for – to help individual congregations be more effective at home and do more beyond themselves. It is my hope that at District Conference, we'll be able to begin some conversations that will enable us to do that in a way that addresses the deep differences that exist in our district.

Wishing we were unified doesn't make us unified. The simple fact is we are divided and we can no longer realistically say we are just "diverse." I've been doing some reading, thinking and praying about leadership in conflicted systems. I am now convinced that what we need is not "conflict resolution," but instead a way to "manage polarities." To this end, we will be bringing forth some possibilities at District Conference for a new way forward that will encourage our like-minded congregations to band together and encourage each other within the District and denominational structure. I do hope you will join us there!

On that note, it is exciting that we will be holding District Conference August 19-20 at New Haven Church of the Brethren. This is the first time in decades that Conference has been at a church. New Haven is our oldest single congregation, and the founding congregation of a couple other of our churches.

I pray regularly for God's will to be done in our District and for the mind of Christ to be recognized and heeded. I ask that all of us join in that prayer.

For the glory of God and our neighbor's good,

Nate

# Letter from the Editor

## Nigeria: 2 Years Later, Gallery One:1

Greetings, Michigan Brethren! Many of you have heard me speak on behalf of the Global Mission Advocate Network and about the crisis in Nigeria. I am grateful to be able to bring this issue of *The Brethren Bugle* before you this month. There are writings from members of our district, as well as the denominational offices within this issue and I feel that you will find these stories uplifting and answers to many questions we have had these past two years. If you have not viewed the Church of the Brethren's latest video on Nigeria, The Long Journey Home, I highly recommend it. Share it with your congregation, your family, your friends. It is insightful and full of hope, something that we have been waiting for in the Church of the Brethren in the United States. This month's issue is dedicated to the second anniversary of the kidnapping of 276 Chibok school girls, go with me now.

Two years ago, an Islamist group called "Boko Haram" changed my life. Mine! Someone who is living thousands of miles away from Nigeria, in my house with running water and pursuing a college education, with a full time job and a steady church life. They affected me. The night that Boko Haram stormed into that school and kidnapped those girls as they were sleeping, they also ransacked my heart. They took over a piece of me that I didn't know existed, it felt as if a part of me was displaced.

Each update that our church received, I could barely read. It was my job to update our church on what was happening and there were times that I passed it off to our Pastor, for fear that I wouldn't be able to make it through the letter. Shortly after the kidnapping, I was sent to Annual Conference in Ohio as our church delegate and I saw a large presence of the Nigerian church. I couldn't even look at most of them, my heart was so broken for them. I studied them from afar and wondered how they could stand on stage in front of us and sing to God with joy in their heart at such a time. Yet they did. Their faith has been consistently strong and has challenged mine, many miles away. If I couldn't speak to them, I would certainly pray for them. Often, my prayer turns to weeping when it comes to me and Nigeria.

During this Annual Conference, there were nearly 2000 Brethren gathered together for about a week's time. We came together knowing about the crisis, knowing they had representatives in our midst, knowing we were praying together. At the end of the week, we all prayed together and grieved in our own ways before we departed. The next day, there was news that over 60 of the girls had escaped the grips of Boko Haram! If that isn't a testimony to the power of Jesus Christ, I don't know what is. A week of passion-filled prayers and brokenness was finished with such an amazing testament. The power of our King is real. He hears our prayers. I cannot explain the joy that I felt when I heard the news. Multiple people sent me internet links asking if it were true, asking questions and inquiring more and more. I was so grateful that it was true.

When I returned to The Church in Drive and was able to share my experiences, it felt as if our entire church shared in the same sense of brokenness for Nigeria and for our girls. We prayed together as leaders, in our small groups, in our prayer meetings- searching for the way that we could contribute and do SOMETHING for these people. Initially, we wanted to plan a 6k walk and run through our city, then it morphed into something else. We continued to search for our "thing." Finally, in May of 2015, Kindra Kreislers and I attended a friend's painting event that raised funds for a group who tries to stop sex trafficking in the Bay area, they raised almost \$1000 in one night. This was it. We had the light bulb turn on above our heads and immediately started planning and figuring out the costs, how feasible it was. It all lined up.

At District Conference 2015, many of you were able to participate in the ground-breaking event for a group we have called "Gallery One:1." Co-founded by Emily Woodruff (me!) and Kindra Krieslers, of The Church in Drive in Saginaw, we have had several events since our first appearance at the conference. Gallery One:1 is a fundraiser for the Nigeria Crisis Fund, in which we teach a painting lesson and update and inform the participants on the happenings in Nigeria and why this fund is so important to us.

The name "Gallery One:1" comes from the book of Genesis. It begins with, "In the beginning, God created...". We saw the light bulb again. We feel that art is a great way to express ourselves and gives a physical reminder of where we were at certain points in our lives. My personal hope is that when any of our painters sees

their finished product, they're reminded of our girls and where every dollar of their entrance fee went to. Gallery One:1 allows us to connect with people who are inside of the church and gives us a great opportunity to reach out to those who aren't. We get a chance to share God's love and let people see His work and His people in action. We also are able to enjoy a great time while painting with friends, maybe even strangers.

With the support of The Church in Drive, we have been given the opportunity to travel to other churches and to host multiple events in our own sanctuary for these painting events. We have been to churches outside of our denomination and have met people who have never heard of Boko Haram or the horrible acts that they have committed. We have raised thousands of dollars in our events and are excited to share it with our brothers and sisters in Nigeria. Our hope is that we will be able to visit many of our Brethren churches and connect with you, learning the questions that you might have and assisting you in finding those answers.

Through the (almost) year of being Gallery One:1, we have been asked some tough questions. We have been able to interview multiple people in our denomination who are connected to EYN (Cliff Kindy, Carl & Roxanne Hill, Jay Wittmeyer, and Paul & Becky Gadzama and their children Nubwa & Japari). We have been given so many great opportunities to learn. Many of you, Michigan Brethren, have extended your hands to assist us with resources for our events, information you have found, articles you have read, and more than anything: prayer. We are so grateful.

Michigan, I just want to share that Gallery One:1 wants to assist in spreading knowledge about the Nigeria Crisis Fund. We need your help to do that. Since we aren't geographically close to most of our churches, we require 10 attendees at any painting event. There are no travel fees. There are no set up fees. We ask for \$25 per painter and 100% of our donations go to the Nigeria Crisis Fund. If you are fundraising for a trip or are working on a project that you need to raise money for, we are open to partnering with you! Gallery One:1 accepts donations, year round. They can be sent to The Church in Drive, 3069 Bay Plaza Drive, Saginaw MI 48604 with Gallery One:1 in the memo line.

In closing, I want to remind you to please continue to update your churches with the information released by the Church of the Brethren. They have the very best resources available and most of them are free to distribute. The power of knowledge and how to assist in rebuilding and restoring is crucial. Every dollar that is donated counts. It's someone's meal, someone's clothing, their housing, education. It's a job opportunity or a new building being built. It's gas in the truck that delivers these things, it's the counseling sessions held for those who need trauma healing. Every single dollar. If money is not abundant in your home, please give your time. There is a Tour to Nigeria occurring in August that you can join. You can fundraise at home. You can write congressmen. If writing isn't your thing, you can get on your knees and pray. If writing IS your thing, you can get on your knees and pray. I urge you to continue to pray for your Chibok girl. She needs you. I believe that our denominational offices entrusted with a task to pray for these girls without cease, and I believe that we are called to do such a thing. You are able. God is able.

I leave you with the reminder that God is bigger than terrorism. His love is grander than the hate and confusion that exudes from the group known as Boko Haram. God is listening to our pleas; He is at our girls' sides. He has not forgotten them, nor will He. God is our comfort. Our strength. Our strong tower. He is faithful, but He requires that we remain faithful as well.

In Christ,

Emily Woodruff, District Executive Administrative Assistant, Gallery One:1



# The Long Haul

Kindra Kreislers

Truth be told, our hearts were beating faster than either one of us would like to admit. Most Americans are familiar with the terrorist group, ISIS, but it's Boko Haram that is the most lethal, and perhaps the most underreported. The IDMC (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center) reports 2,152,000 displaced Nigerians since December. About 1,000,000 children, many orphaned or separated from their parents, have been forced out of their schools and homes, and are left to find a new normal.

Emily Woodruff and I have invested a portion of ourselves to raising funds and awareness for this ongoing crisis. In August, Gallery One:1, a painting party fundraiser was born. Since then, thousands have been raised, and we never keep a cent, except to replenish supplies.

Soon after the two-year anniversary of the kidnappings of 276 girls from a Chibok school, we would be meeting a family who has invested an incredible amount of themselves to the same cause, and relied heavily on their own dime to bring their initiative to fruition. Besides bringing orphaned girls into their own home, this family has helped 10 escaped girls find placement in the U.S., and is responsible for the schooling of over 3,000 orphaned and displaced Nigerian children. In minutes, due to complete 'coincidence' and the graciousness of the Gadzama family, we would get to interview these four real-life heroes.

Paul and Becky, walked into our church with their daughters Nubwa and Japari, each of them all smiles, and offered so much more than expected.

They shared photographs of their former home, burnt by Boko Haram, which had to be hard for them to revisit. Their smiles widened when they learned that we pray every Wednesday and Sunday for Rahap Ibrahim, the kidnapped girl assigned to our church for prayer. And I can't be certain, but I'm pretty sure the smiles even broke into a bit of laughter, and were followed by sighs of relief and more words of thanks. When Emily shared that we don't know if Rahap is safe yet, Paul immediately got on the phone, and found out for us. Tears welled up, waiting for an answer to a question we've been asking for months. She's still with Boko Haram.

We learned that Nigerian schools had provided good education until about 1973, but with more Muslim rule, the quality of education declined. Religious texts couldn't be read by an illiterate population, nor were debates or questions allowed. In fact, asking question about their prophet could result in death. Enlightenment is the enemy. Without literacy or critical thinking skills of a population, oppression is positioned to creep up and take hold. With the poverty that ensues, stability is lost, and oppression thrives.

Today, graduating seniors are writing at third and fourth grade levels, but my guess is it won't be this way for long. The Education Must Continue Initiative has exploded onto the scene. Paul and Becky Gadzama, along with their children, are bringing back hope and a future to as many children as their walls can hold. Initially, those walls were concrete blocks. When 1,000 kids showed up to attend a school that could accommodate 50, those blocks ran out, and grass walls were added. Students learned together, seated on dirt floors. Sadly, each wanted to be a soldier when they grew up, and have their revenge.

Now, more than 3,000 students attend the two schools, and life is returning to normal. Children are running and playing, trauma healing is ongoing, and the pro bono teachers are receiving a stipend. The children now want to be doctors and teachers.

\* Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. -John 14:12

Desks have recently been built to accommodate 180 students. A library and computer center are being built. Even the government schools don't have that. These schools, and future EMC schools are positioned to be the schools of choice. There is even talk of placing a school in a 100% Muslim community, because the Gadzamas believe every child, regardless of creed or sex, has the right to quality education.

Boko Haram targets uneducated potential recruits in the deepest levels of poverty, with promises of money and security. Not only are the Gadzamas giving hope and a future through quality education to thousands, they are also protecting them. Furthermore, without the EMC schools, Christianity in the entire region may be systematically wiped out.

When the interview concluded, we ate together at Emily's house, where her husband, Dan Woodruff, had been preparing dinner. Emily was nervous about fitting a total of nine in her small home without a dining table. The Gadzamas welcomed the full house and we were able to learn some beautiful cultural differences. For them, the closeness was normal. Life is more collective and less individualistic. Nubwa shared that one of the escaped girls placed in the states, sat next to a boy so close they were touching. However, there was plenty of open space to the left of her. She got her first lesson about personal space.

I asked about the moms of the kidnapped girls. Becky saw how their faces contorted as they saw their daughters in the most recently released video. Many moms are suffering physically with high blood pressure. Others have died.

I read that some of the kidnapped girls tried to slit their necks with broken light bulbs. Nubwa admitted her empathy to others who have ended their lives as suicide bombers. If a girl can do that, we can only imagine the torment she longs to escape.

In such a crisis, it's a miracle to see the progress made in the hearts of the school children after this short amount of time. Emily and I started a small charity, and the Gadzamas are moving mountains. Both started with two people praying to do something.

**Do something.** If you have more time than money, start something. If you have more money than time, give. There are many ways you can help.

**Visit [emcinitiative.org](http://emcinitiative.org)** and give directly to help fund school for a student for a year, sponsor an escaped Chibok girl, help place a child from an IDP camp into a school, or contribute toward infrastructure and educational equipment.

**Book a painting party** with Gallery One:1. We travel within Michigan. All proceeds are passed on to COB initiatives fighting the crisis in Nigeria. Email [galleryone1paints@gmail.com](mailto:galleryone1paints@gmail.com)

Because a bowl of rice might sustain until breakfast, but the Broken and Risen Bread of Life will rise within the broken, and give them new life indefinitely.

Kindra Kreislars  
Gallery One:1  
The Church in Drive



Nubwa, Becky, Japari, and Paul Gadzama with Dan and Emily Woodruff, Kindra Kreislars

# Some Reflections on Nigeria

Tim Joseph

May 1, 2016

To describe the history of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, and even of the recent troubles there would be beyond the scope of an article; it would take books to do that.

(If you wish to keep up on happenings in Nigeria, I suggest you frequently visit Brethren Newsline. For a Nigerian take on the news, the Nigerian page on AllAfrica News Service on the internet is something I read daily.)

I spent a month in Nigeria in the winter of 2009. I was called by my congregation, the Onekama Church of the Brethren, to take part in a work camp which had a goal of helping to construct a building to house the HIV-Aids program at the EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa Nigeria, or Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) headquarters near Mubi in northeast Nigeria. During my time there we also traveled extensively and visited many churches and communities from the capital, Abuja, in the center of the country, to Maiduguri in the far Northeast, including a day spent in Chibok, where the schoolgirls were kidnapped.

A few months after my Nigerian mission trip, the terrorist Boko Haram organization began a violent campaign which spread across northeastern Nigeria and into neighboring countries. The Nigerian Brethren were directly in the path of this violent onslaught and have suffered grievously with thousands of members killed and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes and farms.

I have no way of knowing how many of the friends I met there have been killed, abducted or made to be refugees-- how many of the churches whose congregations welcomed us so warmly and fed us so well are lying in ashes.

What has become of the young man I met in Chibok, walking his tire-less bicycle loaded with pieces of ebony he planned to use in building a musical instrument? Around his shoulder was a game bag with squirrels he had shot with his homemade, double-barreled, muzzle loading shotgun.

Or the boys, brothers Siliarnad and Paul who adopted me and stuck with me like glue while I stayed in Lassa? When I left, Siliarnad gave me a gift, a notebook of ruled pulp paper, the cheapest thing you could find in an American drugstore, but maybe the most valuable thing he owned.

Or Yukur and Ibrahim, next-door neighbors and bosom friends? Yukur was youth music director in one of Maiduguri's large EYN churches; Ibrahim was Imam at their neighborhood mosque. They asked me to pray over the breakfast of bean-cakes and sauce we shared sitting knee-to-knee in the little room where I had spent the night.

I can tell you that Nigerians are a vigorous, optimistic people who will eventually overcome the crisis they are in, and that the Nigerian Brethren will continue to build and grow. The seeds that were planted by Brethren missions have taken deep root and grown into a mighty "Tree planted by the water."

I can tell you that war is the work of the Devil, and that a really decent, prosperous life is not possible without peace. I don't know if, or when, using violence to resist violence is justified, but I believe that it is our place, our business to "Know the things that make for peace" and do them, as our Nigerian brothers and sisters are doing them.

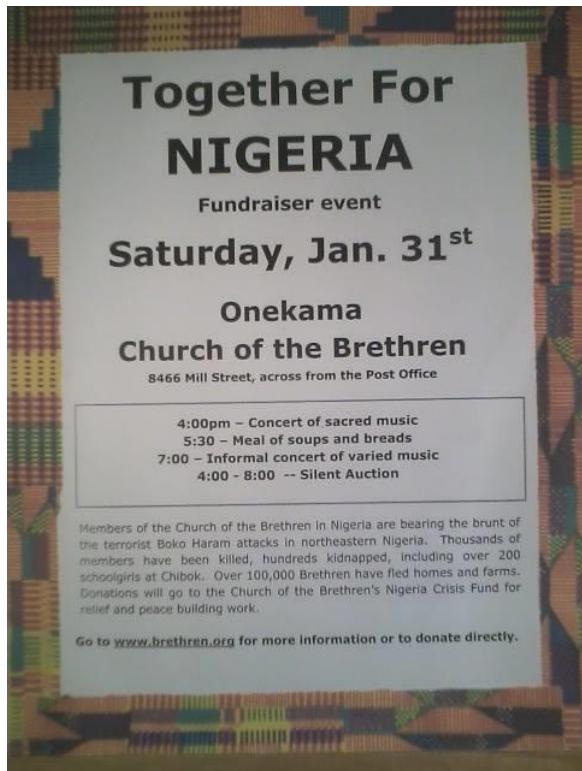
I can tell you that no American, myself included has a right to make judgements on anything as complicated as the troubles and conflicts in Nigeria, especially to put the blame on Islam as a whole. Nigeria is the only large

country with roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims. They have no choice but to live together. Our business is to help them, under their leadership.

Well, get me going and I'll talk about Nigeria until the cows come home. So I'll end by saying the Michigan Brethren have done a good job in raising financial help for the Nigerian Brethren, and we should continue to do so for years to come, considering how much rebuilding they need to do. The Nigerians for their part, coming as they have through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, have gifts of the Holy Spirit we sorely need.

"For the glory of God and my neighbor's good"

—Tim Joseph  
Onekama Church of the Brethren



The flyer to a fundraising event Tim coordinated in 2015, raising over \$10,000 for the Nigeria Crisis Fund



These girls were photographed by Alice Graybill when we were in Chibok, Nigeria, in 2009. As you probably know, Chibok is where the Boko Haram terrorists abducted almost three hundred school girls, girls the age these girls were when the picture was taken. Such a cruel and hideous crime. I'm involved in efforts to raise money to help Nigerians who have been driven from their homes and are living as refugees.

# Rebuilding EYN for a Better Future

Jay Wittmeyer

The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, or EYN) has had a very difficult past 10 years, culminating in the attack on its national offices in Kwarhi in Oct. 2014. That attack displaced its denominational staff and forced the church to be on the run in all but a few of its 50 districts.

Boko Haram, the radical wing of the Islamist socialists in northeast Nigeria, has been waging jihad to systematically impose Sharia law on all citizens in the region with the goal of establishing an Islamic state. Without space for dialogue, many Christians in the heavily affected northeastern areas have had to convert to Islam, be slaughtered, flee, or, for the young woman, be abducted and enslaved.

EYN, being a peace church, did not counter the armed insurgency by arming itself and engaging in a regional religious war, as has been common in some parts of West Africa. Rather, EYN has focused on "being church" and helping the displaced. It has been demanding that the Nigerian government perform the most basic of civil tasks—to protect its people from rampant brutality and to offer aid to those who have lost homes and businesses as well as loved ones.

Whether Nigerian political leaders or factions within the Nigerian government were compliant with the Boko Haram movement, or simply incompetent and complacent, the result has been widespread displacement of people, thousands killed, hundreds enslaved, and thousands of churches, homes, and businesses burned to the ground.

EYN entered into this year's annual gathering or "Majalisa" in April 2016 with a hopeful theme, "Rebuilding EYN for a Better Future." Two years ago the EYN denomination gathered in its conference hall in Kwarhi and mourned the loss of so many pastors and church members; that conference finished with the horrific news that Chibok was attacked and 278 girls were abducted. In 2015, after Boko Haram moved further and further south from Maiduguri and occupied one Brethren community after another, the leadership of EYN and staff and students of Kulp Bible College decided to hold the annual gathering in the city of Jos, where in previous decades many Brethren missionary children attended Hillcrest School. It was a gathering of a displaced church, in exile, but rejoicing to God for His goodness. Stan Noffsinger, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren traveled from the United States to attend, and washed the feet of EYN leaders to emphasize our fellowship and service to EYN on this journey of suffering.

EYN has recognized that it is only in operation as a church because the American Brethren are standing with it. EYN says that it was abandoned by its local governments, state governments, and national government; only the Church of the Brethren has stood with it during this great tribulation.

"Rebuilding EYN for a Better Future," was a strong theme for the 2016 Majalisa, also held in Jos. It expressed a belief that the darkest period had passed and now is a time to begin to start over, and to rebuild. Based on Nehemiah 2:17-20, the theme called for EYN to begin to rebuild its church structures just as the children of Israel needed to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. In attendance were several members of the American church, including Mission and Ministry Board chair Don Fitzkee, and Annual Conference secretary Jim Beckwith, as well as Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission and Service, who was asked to be the keynote speaker.

It was also a time for elections. EYN held elections for its president, a post currently held by Dr. Samuel Dali, as well as for the positions of vice president, general secretary, and spiritual advisor. According to the by-laws of the EYN constitution, once a person has been voted out of the office of president, vice-president, or general secretary, that individual will no longer be allowed to hold any office in the church, including teacher at Kulp Bible College or local pastor, and must go into EYN retirement.

The American Brethren were asked to oversee the election, an all-day affair that required the utmost attention to full transparency at every point. Many of the voting members were delegates from 45 districts, since 5 districts were unaccounted for due to the insurgency, and many were local pastors. A total of 847 individuals voted. By a

narrow margin of 50 votes, EYN elected a new president, Rev. Joel Billi, to lead EYN into the next phase of its life. The voting body decided to send Dr. Dali into retirement.

Rev. Billi is a pastor and has most recently served in the main EYN church in Michika, which has been on the front lines of the violence for many months. Many displaced families have returned to Michika, but not many have gone further north. Michika itself was burned and held by Boko Haram for a time, but then was retaken by Nigerian security forces. Joel Billi has also served in the largest church in Abuja, the Nigerian capital city, in the Utaku congregation.

While both individuals are exceedingly competent and excellent, the difference between them could not be more stark. Whereas Rev. Billi is quiet and confident, and has been a local Brethren pastor his whole career, Dr. Samuel Dali has never been a local pastor. Dali began his work as a community health worker, but after attending McPherson College in Kansas and Bethany Seminary when it was located in the Chicago suburbs in Illinois, Dali received a doctorate from Birmingham University in the United Kingdom and then served at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria as dean before being called to serve as EYN president in 2011. As the top leader of EYN, he pushed hard and had plans for a dramatic future. We do not know Billi's plans for EYN at this time.

What is EYN saying through this election, and how does EYN envisage its future? Some say the vote was simply rooted in African tribalism; some say it was a matter of timing or related to fears that EYN would never return to its regional home, but rather stay in the prominent city of Jos. Some stated that the EYN leadership did not care enough for its pastors at this time of trial but focused its attention too broadly.

Whatever the reasons for the change in leadership, the EYN body has spoken. I personally rejoice that the Nigerian Brethren community could hold an annual gathering, listen to the voice of the Spirit, and move forward as a church. Boko Haram's jihad has not succeeded in destroying the church in Nigeria, and we praise God for this.

Jay Wittmeyer  
Executive Director  
Global Mission and Service  
Church of the Brethren



Dr. Samuel Dali



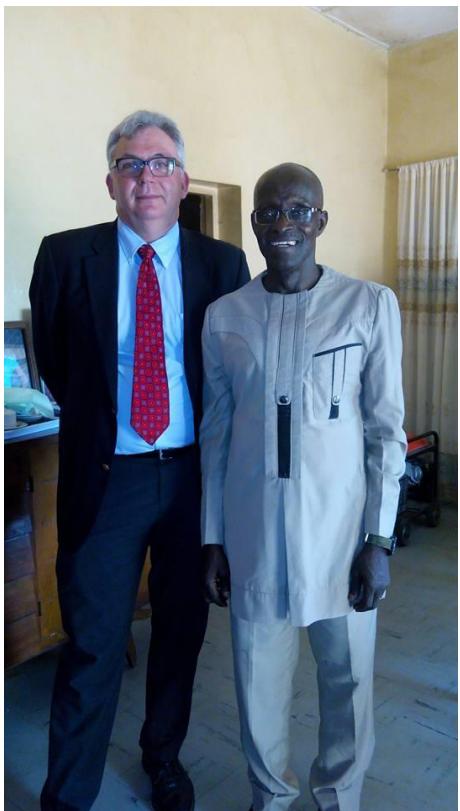
Rev. Joel Billie



Don Fitzkee, MMB chair, and Jim Beckwith, AC Secretary, holding a sing to remember the 2nd anniversary of the Chibok girls.



The theme of the 69th AC of Nigeria with a quilt donated from the Chiques COB



Jay Wittmeyer with Samuel Dali



Dear Brethren,

God's grace flows freely, and the current of that river of life brings with it an invitation. God's love invites us to respond to grace by sharing our gifts and dreams with others in order that we reflect God's grace. My heart and mind have been pulled toward one such response – and toward home. It is time for me to go back to Flint.

One block west of my childhood home on Knapp St. stands first Church of the Brethren, which is also the home of No One Without Ministries. I traveled back to Flint recently to find my old neighborhood where not even eight inches of snow could not bury the flurry of memories that came to mind. I also went with a specific mission in mind: How can I contribute to Flint in a manner that best reflects the Gospel.

After talks with the Flint Brethren and the ministers of NOW, as well as Genesee Health Systems (community mental health), I found out that there is plenty to do, and plenty of invitations from those living and working in Flint to contribute. There is a need, not only for water distribution, but also a need to address an overwhelming number of issues related to poverty for who have been experiencing a difficulty for decades. It is the water crisis that may bring us all back together, and work with resilient Flintstones to make the city stronger than ever. This work has started, and I have played an important role for more than eight weeks now.

As a minister and graduate-level social worker, I been in a unique position to help with the hands on work of distribution, as well as contributing counseling and training services through the church to both residents, and, the professionals who are working in some frustrating circumstances. The potential exists for me to continue assisting and providing resources to an entire neighborhood that gave me my start, and the potential to put a gospel ethic into practice – serving those in need by going to them and being with them, not just in word, but in deed and sacrifice. In fact, while I have been at First Church of the Brethren, we have been feeding as many as eight children three days a week while they help volunteer. That is one measure of growth over the past month. Another measure is the addition of two families of volunteers from outside of the church, but part of our neighborhood. The church has increasing visibility related to the water distribution, and increasing visibility city-wide as we work with other churches and service volunteers.

Through the Church of the Brethren, I have been working 40 hours weekly, staying at home in Flint for three nights a week and coming home to farm and be with family for the rest of the week. I will not be receiving income for this work, it is ministry from the heart, and a decision to trust that the church will test the spirit and contribute to my ministry in Flint. To this end, I ask for financial assistance.

Please contribute financially to support Sandhill Farm and our family while I commit to Flint. It takes about \$2000 monthly (minimum) to pay mortgage, electric, feed animals, purchase fuel, etc. All funds donated will go to the Church of the Brethren, who will account for disbursements and spending. At this time, I am hoping to raise \$2000 monthly toward a total of \$5,000 for a term of ministry that will then be assessed by the Brethren and the District.

Thank you for helping me preach the gospel. I try to use as few words as possible.

Scot Miller

# District Announcements

Hello Michigan Churches-

I am looking to find the most up to date Directory information your churches have, in order to keep our District Directory updated and to ensure that we can spread the Brethren Bugle to as many of our Michigan Members as we can. Please respond promptly with your congregation's Directory to [brethrenbugle@gmail.com](mailto:brethrenbugle@gmail.com).

The Michigan District Family has lost another of our beloved elders. Don Willoughby, former pastor of the Lakeview and Marilla churches passed away April 8, surrounded by this family. Don served the district in many ways, including a Moderator of District Conference. He was a great source of encouragement, and Don had a way about him that welcomed everyone. His wife, Marie, served as District Executive, and his son, John, serves now as our District Vice-Chair and Standing Committee delegate. The Willoughby family has given much to our district. We thank them for sharing Don with us all for so many years. Please keep them in your prayers as they gather to grieve, comfort one another and celebrate a life very well-lived.

We also mourn the loss from this world of Andrew Dale DeVault. Known to all his friends and family as Andy. He passed suddenly Thursday, April 14, 2016. Andy was raised in the Drayton Plains, COB with his 5 siblings by their parents Wes and Mary Lou DeVault. Many of us remember our friend from Camp Brethren Heights, Youth and Young adult activities, attending District Meeting. He was a loving, kind, loyal friend with a good sense of humor, who tended to be on the quiet side, and lived out his faith daily. He married Kirsten Samuelson of Detroit Trinity COB and together they have raised their son Luke in Redford. He and Kirsten are both very active in their large/extended families. They currently attend at Aldersgate UMC. Andy worked as an architect's assistant for many years doing architectural drawings, specializing in CAD- drafting. He has also taught at an area technological school.

Please keep these families in your prayers.

District Conference Information has been released! We will be gathering at New Haven Church of the Brethren August 19-10 for our annual meeting. The address to the church is 7587 Grant Rd, Middleton MI 48856. The theme of this year's conference, brought to you by Moderator Frank Polzin, is "Putting our Faith into Practice." Along with more District Conference information, the 2016 directory should be released shortly. Please pay attention to your e-mails these upcoming weeks, as important information will be coming your way. If you are reporting at District Conference, your reports are due by May 15 to be included in the booklet. If you are unable to meet this deadline, you will be responsible for distributing copies of your report at District Conference and making all materials available. Please review the District Conference Housing/Meals/Registration form and the District Conference Delegate Registration form and submit as soon as possible (at end of District Announcements). **Registration is due July 1 to** Mary Gault, 175 Bidwell, Battle Creek, MI 49015-2160, [gaultmary20@gmail.com](mailto:gaultmary20@gmail.com), or subject to additional fees at the conference office.

Looking forward to meeting again this summer,  
Emily Woodruff

---

## **Help Needed at Annual Conference 2016:**

We are in need of volunteers to serve as Floor Tellers during the business sessions of Annual Conference. Delegates and Non-delegates alike can volunteer for this position. The Tellers see that all printed information is provided to the delegates so that they can fulfill their responsibility. Any standing vote count is also handled by the Tellers. If you are willing to serve, or know of someone who is, please contact Mark Liller (Head Teller) at [mwliller@gmail.com](mailto:mwliller@gmail.com) or 814-695-3979.

---

ARE YOU A DR, NURSE PRACTITIONER, RN, LPN, OR EMT?

The First Aid Office at Annual Conference in Greensboro is looking for DR.'s, RN's, LPN's and EMT's who would be willing to volunteer a few hours during Annual Conference this summer. Jane Laprade is coordinating the First Aid Office at Annual Conference and would be glad to hear from willing volunteers! Please contact her at: d.laprade@b2xonline.com

---



@HIM #hope #imagination #mission

Church Planting Conference  
May 19 - 21, 2016  
Hosted by Bethany Theological  
Seminary  
Richmond, Indiana

The 2016 Church Planting Conference is coming up quickly! There is still time to register! Visit [www.brethren.org/churchplanting/events.html](http://www.brethren.org/churchplanting/events.html) for registration

---

The 231st Recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference is happening in Grand Rapids from June 28 to July 2, 2017! Randy Short and Joanna Willoughby have been working with the Annual Conference Office to get Coordinators in place for a lot of the behind the scenes programs. Right now we're still looking for Early Childhood Coordinators, a First Aid Coordinator and a few other things. Once we get those people in place, we'll be asking for lots and lots of volunteers to make Annual Conference run smoothly. If you would like to volunteer, please email [jojozazo@yahoo.com](mailto:jojozazo@yahoo.com) or [randyfordsales@gmail.com](mailto:randyfordsales@gmail.com) to let them know!

Joanna Willoughby

Annual Conference On-Site Co-Coordinator

---

For members of Church of the Brethren churches in Michigan: We are asking for your help, by filling out the online Gifts Survey. This helps the Michigan District get people connected with opportunities to serve! Thank you so much for your help! <http://www.michigancob.org/survey/>



---

Blessings and greetings to all of you. My name is Daniel D'Oleo (Chair of the Renacer Hispanic Ministry) a ministry that seeks to encourage our Brethren denomination to plant more Spanish congregations while developing leaders and creating a supporting network of congregations that shares the same vision.

I want to share with you information about our Multicultural trip to the Holy Land. This tour will be hosted by: Bob Krouse, Stafford Frederick and Daniel D'Oleo. (Please see the attached brochure English and Spanish). We are promoting this tour as a way of fellowshipping together, promoting a more multicultural church, and raising funds for the Renacer Hispanic Ministry. We are asking you to help us promote this event in your District and organization by forwarding these flyers among your congregations, family and friends. We need your help!

If you may have further questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail.

In Christ love,

En el amor de Cristo

Daniel D'Oleo

--

Iglesia Cristiana Renacer

Pastor: Daniel D'Oleo

2001 Carroll Ave. N.W.

Roanoke, VA 24017

540-892-8791

---

As I'm writing, I'm also planning for a group of Beaverton guys to help Thom Deily prepare the volunteer housing in Detroit. The BDM project in Detroit is starting April 17. Much of the work on this project will be flood repairs, which include drywall work, painting and basement finishing. Depending on the week, this may also include muck and gut work to clean basements. I'm thinking that if I go with you for additional leadership Thom would welcome extra volunteers there any week if there is room for them. For those close enough, you may wish for day trips to the project. To make arrangements for this talk to Thom at 814-327-1919.

The project in Colorado is continuing and is available occasionally when groups cancel for some reason. Summer is coming and it might be quite pleasant to work there. To find out what weeks are open you may look online at <http://www.brethren.org/bdm> or call me. I get emails once in a while letting me know of openings.

Michigan District is not scheduled for any week this year. As a Project Leader and District Coordinator I'm reluctant to schedule a week for us having no volunteer contact list. I'm available to share with your congregation about BDM in an effort to make such a list. I can facilitate arrangements for your group to share a week on project.

Bob Schnepp  
989-435-3768  
[cschnepp@hotmail.com](mailto:cschnepp@hotmail.com)  
Facebook: Bob Schnepp

---

---

The Church of the Brethren has hired Joe Detrick as interim director for the Office of Ministry. He will begin in this position on June 22, working out of the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. And from his home in Seven Valleys, PA. This interim assignment is expected to continue for one year.

Detrick is a former district executive and brings related skills and experience to the Office of Ministry leadership position, including experience in pastoral placement and in training search committees, providing resources for conflict transformation and leadership development for pastors and church boards, developing a mission and vision process for a district board, coordinating Ethics in Ministry training, developing budgets, and interpreting and implementing church polity. He served in Southern Pennsylvania District as district executive for Pacific Southwest District for a year from January 2014- January 2015.

He also served two pastorates, in Indiana and in Pennsylvania, totaling 16 years of pastoral ministry. From 1983-88 he was on the denominational staff as coordinator of orientation for Brethren Volunteer Service, working out of the Church of the Brethren General Offices. He is an ordained minister and holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary, and a bachelor's degree from Manchester College (now Manchester University).

---

For the past forty-two years, the Brethren Revival Fellowship has sponsored the Brethren Bible Institute. Over the years, hundreds of individuals have attended the Institute, representing many of the districts of the Church of the Brethren. This summer, July 25-29, the BRF will hold the forty-third Annual BBI. It is to be held on the campus of Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, PA. Total cost for dormitory students is \$250.00 for the week, cost for commuting students is \$100.00. To register, send for an application to **Brethren Bible Institute 155 Denver Road Denver, PA 17517**. Application process must be completed by June 25.



## Michigan District

2016 Michigan District Conference



Church of the Brethren

### Congregational Delegation Registration Form

Please return this form to the Michigan District Office: PO Box 6383, Saginaw, MI 48608-6383, **by July 1st, 2016** along with the congregation's Delegate Registration Fee with a check payable to the Michigan District Church of the Brethren. **New this year, churches pay \$50 per allowed delegate (whether or not a church sends all their delegation does not alter the fee) if the registration is received by July 1st. After that day, a late charge of \$25 will be due.**

(Membership determined by the number of members reported on the 2015 CoB Yearbook.)

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Delegates \_\_\_\_\_ Delegation Fee \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Delegates**

Name	Address	Phone	Email
------	---------	-------	-------

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Alternates

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Michigan's District Conference is August 19-20, 2016 at the New Haven Church of the Brethren (7587 Grant Rd., Middleton, MI 48856). Each congregation is allotted 1 delegate per 25 members, or fraction thereof, with a maximum of 4. Please consult the enclosed chart for your congregation's delegate allotment and registration fee.

**Church of the Brethren, Michigan District Conference Housing, Meals and Registration  
August 19 - 20, 2016, New Haven Church of the Brethren  
7587 Grant Road, Middleton, MI 48856-9750**

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Persons attending:** (check appropriate boxes) child age Fri. Sat. delegate?  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**1. Non-Delegate Registration fee:** \$4.00 per person per day **registration subtotal:** \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: the **maximum** registration fee is \$32.00 per family

(Fee includes on-site insurance protection. Delegate registration is prepaid by the local church.)

**2. Meals:** (Age 4 & under: no charge; Child ages 5-11, Adult ages 12 & above)

**Note schedule!** **Friday:** lunch, supper; **Saturday:** breakfast, lunch, supper

Saturday Breakfast: \$4.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult** Friday Lunch : \$6.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Lunch: \$6.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Friday Dinner: \$7.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Dinner: \$7.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Child** Friday Lunch: \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Lunch: \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Friday Dinner: \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Dinner: \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ meals = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**meals subtotal:** \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Lodging:** Note: Room requests will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis.

A. With church families: Rooms needed \_\_\_\_\_ Beds needed in each room \_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_

B. Campsites at church are rustic: (no hookups) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Other lodging: **You must make your own arrangements for motels or camp grounds.**

Comfortable Inn, 3110 W, Monroe Rd., Alma, MI 48801 989-463-4400

(\$62.54 per night with free breakfast)

Leisure Lake Campground, 505 S. Warner Rd., Sumner, MI 48889 989-875-4689

**4. Child/day care donation:** \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Registration Fee:** (\*add lines 1, 2, 3) \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Make checks payable to: **Michigan District Church of the Brethren**

**Amount due:** \_\_\_\_\_

Send preregistration no later than July 1 to: Mary Gault, 175 Bidwell, Battle Creek, MI 49015-2160,  
[gaultmary20@gmail.com](mailto:gaultmary20@gmail.com)

# 2016 Calendar of Events

## May

- 7- Ministry Team Meeting
- Camp Board Meeting
- 19-21 Church Planting Conference
- 21- Camp Spring Open House
- 25-28 Camp Trail Work Days- contact Randall Westfall for more info
- 27-30 Wolf Camp at CBH (family)

## June

- 27-29 CODE Meeting
- 29-July 3 Annual Conference
- 16-18 Owl Camp at CBH (intergenerational)
- 23-26 Red Tail Hawk Camp at CBH  
(Grades 10-12)
- 26-2 Survivor Camp @ CBH (Ages 12-14)

## July

- 10-12 Otter Camp (grades 1-3)
- 10-13 Archer Camp (ages 10-14)
- 17-23 Beaver Camp (grades 4-6)
- 19-Program & Arrangements Meeting
- 24-30 Bobcat Camp (grades 7-9)
- 31-6 Dadirri Camp (ages 15-18)

## August

- 6-Camp Board Meeting
- 13-14 Young Adult 20s Camp @ CBH
- 19-20 District Conference
- 25-28 Young Adult 30s Camp @ CBH

## October

- 10-12 CODE Midwest Meeting
- 28-30 Bethany Board Meeting

## November

- 5-District Leadership Meeting

If you would like to submit materials for the monthly Michigan District Church of the Brethren newsletter, please send them to Emily Woodruff [bethrenbugle@gmail.com](mailto:bethrenbugle@gmail.com). All material must be submitted to Emily by the 22nd of each month to be included and must be in .docx format.