

Lenten Fasting

The season of Lent is traditionally a time for fasting, for taking stock of the things that help us come closer to God, be more fully free, and of the things that divide us from God and one another, things that bind us in some way.

We fast in Lent as a preparation. Just as one heroic act is made possible by a lifetime of little heroic acts, just as a marathon cannot be safely run without days, weeks, months, even years of training; likewise, if we are going to run the race of faith, dare the foolishness of faith in the decisive moments, we need to have trained in the little daily moments. Fasting can be an opportunity to learn how to open ourselves to God's grace as we travel little valleys, so that when the Valley of the Shadow of Death comes, we will fear no evil because we will know the God who is at our side.

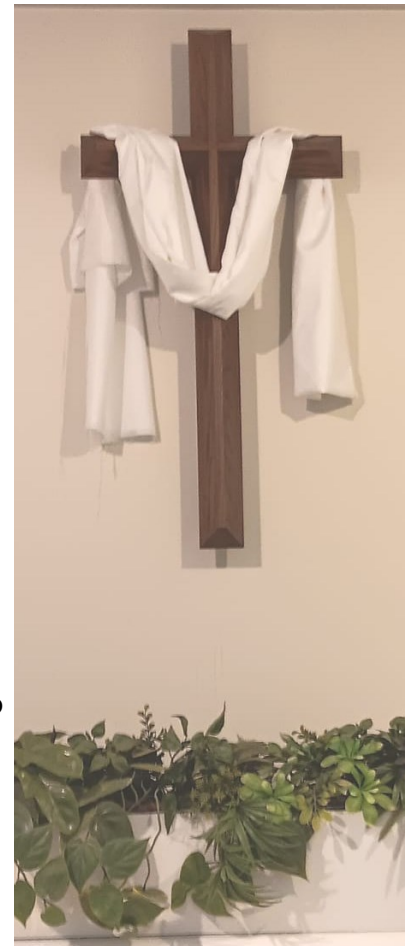
Fasting in Lent can be an expression of freedom. We are bound by so many things of which we are barely aware. Perhaps we are bound by anxieties, by complaints, by consumerism, by addictions, by habits of mind and heart that keep us from experiencing abundant life. In Lent we can declare with our fasting and by God's help, that none of the things that keep us bound are ultimate. We can declare with the full freedom of children of God, that these things do not have control of our lives. And this freedom inevitably spreads, because we can't step into our own freedom (however haltingly) without noticing others' lack of freedom.

Lenten fasting can be done in a spirit of justice. Our fasting during Lent can remind us that Love is what is eternal. It can create a thin place, lifting the veil between worlds, easing scales from our eyes, and allowing glimpses of things as they truly are. When we step bit by bit into our own freedom, we can become aware of the ways in which others are enslaved. Freedom can lead to confession, which can lead toward compassion and justice, which leads back again to freedom. Indeed, is not this the fast God chooses: to loose the chains of injustice, to set prisoners free, to shelter the homeless, to feed the hungry.

For Christians, Lent is a journey to the cross, toward death, and always in the shadow of sin. But we also know that the story doesn't end there. Lent is also a journey toward new life that rises from the ashes of the old, through the miracle of resurrection. So while we may choose to fast in Lent, we can also immerse ourselves in activities and postures that open us and bring us and the world joy.

What practice or posture might you adopt this Lent that might bring you closer to God, might lead you toward fuller expression of the true freedom that Christ proclaims?

Laura



Akron CoB

Look for updates from Laura and other folks in the S/C IN District on our District blog at:

<https://southcentralindianacob.com/blog/>

To subscribe to the blog and get new articles by email, click the brown gear icon at the top of the website.

Also, follow South/Central Indiana District on Facebook to see current information and upcoming events.

Save the date

District Conference at Camp Mack, September 13 and 14.

Fellowship, service, and learning activities for everyone on Friday; worship, business and insight sessions on Saturday.

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR: 2024 DISTRICT CONFERENCE THEME

John 17:20-26

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one -- 23 I in them and you in me -- so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Unity not uniformity!

Jesus had previously prayed for his disciples in John 17:6-19 and then moved His immediate attention to those who would follow in the teachings of the disciples. The prayers contain the same call to "unity" found in and through Jesus' life. Jesus was calling for unity, not uniformity. That might be where we are today. We need unity, not uniformity! Unity is a relationship and points of contact between both people and churches. When we lose those connections we suffer, and when we strengthen connections we do better.

~Brother Moderator, Bruce Dunk, pastor at Lower Deer Creek

2024 District Conference
Camp Mack
September 13-14

DISTRICT NEWS ITEMS

DISTRICT FINANCIAL REPORT as of January 31, 2024		
	<u>January</u>	<u>YTD</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Congregations' Self-Allocation	\$8,434.09	\$8,434.09
Restricted Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$6,539.31	\$6,539.31
Total Income	\$14,973.40	\$14,973.40
<u>Expenses</u>		
District Expenses	\$13,444.12	\$13,444.12
Restricted Expenses	\$6.00	\$6.00
Total Expenses	\$13,450.12	\$13,450.12
Net	\$1,523.28	\$1,523.28
District Fund Balance	\$1,132,605.50	

2024 District Directory Updates

We are behind on this project, due to Sarah being out of the office. If you still haven't reviewed your church's form, you still have a chance. Send it back to the district office by e-mail or USPS mail or online at: <https://forms.gle/QnUv9kogbjDnUFdx6> .

If there are no changes, a quick e-mail or phone call to let us know that would be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

MARCH DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

MARCH 3 - Join us as we lift up Guernsey CoB and the Northern Ohio District.

March 10 - Join us as we lift up Bethany Theological Seminary.

March 17 - Join us as we lift up Hickory Grove CoB and the Southern Ohio & Kentucky District.

March 24 - Join us as we lift up Huntington CoB and the Pacific Northwest District.

March 31 - Join us as we lift up Kokomo CoB and the Pacific Southwest District.

MARCH 2024 - DISTRICT CALENDAR DATES

March 2 - District Board 9:00am—
Lafayette CoB

March 10 - Kay Theel's licensing service during Marion's morning worship—9:30am
Marion CoB

March 14— Ministry Credentialing Committee Meeting - 7:00 pm—District Office

March 16—Nominating Committee—
10:00am on Zoom

March 21-23—Bethany Board of Trustees Meeting in Richmond

DISTRICT CHURCH UPDATES

- **Anderson** - Is currently in the search process to fill a new part-time ministry position, Leader for Growth and Community Engagement. For more information about this position, go to: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a7uN41DD7o8pDfI0J_cp-3b6B-cfDeIsJr6gRs4bj5s/edit?usp=sharing
- **Eel River Community**—Audrey Svay is resigning at the end of May. Eel River is in search for 3/4 time pastor or team.
- **Guernsey** - Is in the search process.
- **Manchester** - Is in the search process.

April and May Special Courses Available Through Ventures

April: Afrofuturism and Theology

The April offering from the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson College will be “Introduction to Afrofuturism and Theology” to be presented by Tamisha Tyler, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture and Theopoetics at Bethany Theological Seminary. The course will be held online Tuesday, April 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Central Time.

May: Becoming a More Inclusive Church

The May offering from the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson College will be “Becoming a More Loving and Inclusive Church” to be presented by Tim McElwee, 2023 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Moderator. The course will be held online in two sessions, Tuesday, May 7 and Thursday, May 9, both at 7:00-8:30 p.m. Central Time.

Continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course. During the registration process, you will have the opportunity to pay for CEUs and give an optional donation to the Ventures program.

To learn more about Ventures in Christian Discipleship and to register for courses, visit www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

HELP NEEDED



(First Church of the Brethren Cemetery in Indiana)

Lybrook Cemetery Workday

(sadly the cemetery has fallen into disrepair. We need to preserve our history. Some of the graves are of children that only lived a short time and this is the only record of their existence)

Saturday, March 9 🗓️ Starting at 8 AM

Gather at:

Four Mile Church of the Brethren
5022 E Kitchel Rd
Liberty, IN 47353

(shuttle provided due to limit parking at site)

Lunch provided by the church

MOST NEEDED:

Pick-up trucks Chain Saws Weed eaters
shuttle drivers clippers for weeds kitchen help
Laborers to carry wood and debris

RSVP by March 1

Anitra Kraus

440-444-7017 or akraushouse@gmail.com

(If unable to attend but would love to volunteer to help contact Anitra)
This is more than a one day project.



Thank you for Stamps!!

Thanks to all who brought canceled stamps to the district office or district conference! Because there were more than usual, this round netted \$35 that is being sent to Compañeros en Ministerio for their work in Mexico.

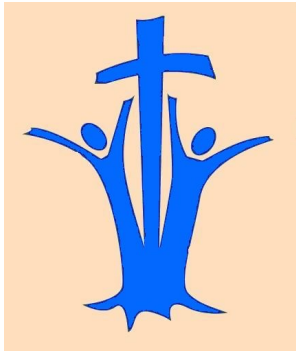
The Brethren Academy will offer the in-person course, *Polarization as an Opportunity for Ministry*, at Bethany Theological Seminary (Richmond, IN) from April 11-13 2024, with an additional Zoom session before and after. Russell Haitch, Professor of Theology and Human Science, will be the instructor. This course fulfills a required Biblical/Historical/Theological course and fulfills the Bethany Theological Seminary Experience. EFSM students may create a Learning Unit for the course.

The deadline to register for this course is March 7, 2023.

This course will examine ways that politics, evolving media, AI, and other forces are driving divisions. At the same time, it will explore how leaders can help people find common ground—and higher ground—in situations of strife.

For more information, see this brochure:

<https://bethanyseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Revised-Polarization-brochure.pdf>



Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

A ministry training partnership of Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren

Position Description

Title	Administrative Assistant
Supervisor	Director, Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership
Classification	Part-Time, non-exempt, 25-30 hours per week, Weekdays
Range	\$16-\$18 an hour

General Description: The administrative assistant of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership (BAML) provides direct secretarial and administrative support to the BAML staff, students, and programs. The administrative assistant works collegially with the Bethany Theological Seminary (BTS) staff and faculty, the staff of the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry and Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC).

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- General office support for Academy staff, including processing correspondence and phone calls, photocopying, document and manual preparation
- Processing course fees and other income; preparing check requests, reimbursements, invoices, credit card statements, and instructor compensation
- Designing and publication of materials that assist and promote the Academy
- Processing course registrations, distributing syllabi, and arranging online course access
- Maintaining student and BAML records
- Website management
- Managing logistics for student orientations, courses, continuing education programs and special events

Qualifications Required

- A high school diploma is required; an associate degree is preferred
 - Clerical experience preferred
 - Strong professional and interpersonal skills necessary to communicate by telephone or in person, a warm and welcoming presence, ability to respond to requests in a friendly, encouraging way
 - Organizational skills
 - Good proofreading skills
 - Intermediate knowledge of Microsoft Office suite
 - General knowledge of databases
 - Knowledge and ability to use typical office equipment
 - Ability to maintain confidentiality
 - Ability to work as part of a team
 - Ability to set priorities and follow through on tasks
- Flexible schedule to allow for occasional program needs

Qualifications Preferred:

- Bilingual: English and Spanish

Benefits:

- Professional development assistance
- Paid Time Off

Location:

This position is in person at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Indiana 47374. Applicant must be willing to commute or relocate before the job begins.

Applications will be reviewed upon receipt and will be accepted until the position is filled. Interested candidates should send their resumes, a letter of interest, and contact information for three references by email to:

Janet L. Ober Lambert, Director

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

615 National Road West

Richmond, IN 47374

academysearch@bethanyseminary.edu

Bethany Theological Seminary's policy prohibits discrimination in employment opportunities or practices with regard to race, gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or religion.

Camp Mack Upcoming Events

Summer Camp registration is open! Go to <https://www.campmack.org/summer-camp/> to find out more.



Calling All Quilters!

Each year quilt blocks from congregations across the denomination are gathered to create the wall-hangings auctioned at Annual Conference to fund hunger projects. Click here for a flyer with more information, including how to submit a quilt square:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaaid:sc:VA6C2:f3e126cf-c51d-455a-bb4d-ff5860025395>

BRETHREN DISASTER MINISTRIES —HELP NEEDED

Friends,

South/Central Indiana District is invited to fill 7 volunteer spaces to rebuild homes the week of **December 1 -7, 2024**. At this time we don't have a location, but will have the complete BDM support structure in place when that time comes! :-) Are you and folks from your congregation willing to fill these positions? Email or call Cliff.

Also, on shorter notice, **we need 7 volunteers May 5-11 in Dawson Springs, KY** to build new homes for families who lost theirs in tornadoes two years ago. Email or call Cliff.

Interested in the training for Children's Disaster Services? Two nearby are April 12-13 in Ankeny, IA and May 3-4 in Freeport, IL. Cliff can send you info if interested.

Blessings of peace to you! Cliff Kindy phone: 260-982-2971



Solar for Nonprofits

If your congregation is considering solar, here are some resources from a local organization helping non-profits access funding. You can watch the recording of this webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zhu8altONlo>

You can [view the presentation slides here](#). There is also a **free program called Ready, Set, Solar! for nonprofits**. This is a perfect way for nonprofit organizations to start the process of going solar, starting at the very beginning! Feel free to sign up, or pass the information along to an organization you know.

Becky Ullom Naugle is the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Church of the Brethren. Each year that there is not a National Youth Conference, she plans the **Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS)**. This year, CCS takes place in Washington DC April 11-16. The focus is on immigration and asylum policies, looking especially at Matt. 2:13-23, where Jesus' own family had to flee political violence and leave their home. Youth and their advisors will learn about the issues, meet with policymakers and activists, and experience ways in which our faith drives our service to and advocacy for others. Check out the website (www.brethren.org/ccs) for a draft schedule and a reflection from last year.

If you are interested in more information or would like to learn about scholarships that may be available to help your youth attend, please reach out! April is coming fast, so register soon!

God bless you, your families, and your ministries!

Nate Polzin, NPolzin@brethren.org

Peacefully, Simply, Together.

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

LAURA STONE, DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MINISTER

scindlaura@gmail.com, 574.306.8768

Usual work days: Wednesday—Sunday

SARAH O'HARA, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

scindcob@gmail.com

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

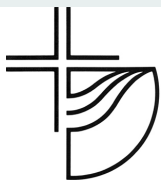
District Website: www.scindcob.org

Denominational website: www.brethren.org



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

South/Central Indiana District
Church of the Brethren
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Church of the Brethren

«FIRST» «LAST»
«ADDRESS»
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