

MARCH 2025  
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# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



**Worship 4:24 Trains  
Worship Leaders and  
Teams at Record-Setting Event**

Full story on page 8

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## *The Ohio Baptist Messenger Staff*

Dr. Jeremy Westbrook, editor-in-chief  
Stephanie Heading, managing editor

Seth Wicker, digital communication assistant  
AJ Frasure, director of IT

### *-- Tell us your story --*

*The Ohio Baptist Messenger* is a monthly publication highlighting what the Lord is doing in SCBO churches or ministries, and we need your help! Tell us your story and we could feature it in an upcoming issue of *The Messenger*. Please submit your stories to [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).

*For more information, please contact Stephanie Heading at [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).*

# Supporting and Serving Our IMB Missionaries Around the World

Several weeks ago, I experienced one of the greatest honors of my life and ministry.

The Lord allowed me the joy of preaching in a chapel service at the International Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Paul Chitwood, IMB president, was gracious in extending the invitation for me to come and represent the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO).

Over the past several years as SCBO Executive Director, I have come to understand that many pastors and leaders are unfamiliar with the historical foundation of the IMB and its critical partnership with Southern Baptists in helping to send the gospel message across the street and around the world.

According to the IMB website and annual statistical reports, the IMB has had one goal: bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost peoples of the world.

At the first Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) was founded as part of “one sacred effort, for the propagation of the gospel.” Southern Baptist churches believed that by working cooperatively, they could accomplish more for God’s kingdom. That belief still stands strong today.

Empowered by an enlarged worldview and the support of the Cooperative Program, which was founded in 1925, Southern Baptists responded with 1,000 missionaries serving in 1955. In the 1960s, FMB initiated new opportunities for people to participate in foreign missions through

programs such as Missionary Associates and Journeyman.

IMB’s history continues, and its strategies to reach the world change as the world changes. What has not changed is the strong commitment of Southern Baptists to join the author of history in his redemptive movement to advance his gospel among all peoples.

Did you know we are the only network of churches in the world where our missionaries do not have to raise a dime of their support?

Through your giving to the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, we not only send our missionaries, but we also sustain them on the mission field. Your generosity to the Lottie Moon offering helps send them, and your giving to the Cooperative Program helps sustain them.

On behalf of the nearly 80 missionaries serving overseas who call SCBO churches home, thank you for your faithful prayers and generosity. May we stay faithful, thankful, and humbled to help support and serve.

Moving forward,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
*Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO*





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



**Send Network**  
Columbus

# ONE DAY

## LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

WITH BOB BUMGARNER

REGISTER TODAY
MARCH 13 2025
10AM - 3PM

# President's Pen

## Rejecting the Status Quo

*2 And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Lk 10:2). (2016). Crossway Bibles.*

The church where you worship hasn't been there forever. Whether it was five years ago or 100 years ago, at some point, somebody planted the church where you worship. We can safely make a few assumptions about those people: they loved Jesus, they wanted other people to love Jesus too, and they weren't content with the status quo of their day.

What about today? Should we accept the status quo? Does Ohio already have all the healthy churches it needs? Would more faithful churches be a good thing for our country or our state? What about your county? Would more healthy, evangelistic, Christ-exalting churches be a good thing for your county? Would they be desperately needed co-laborers for the harvest? Or simply competition for the opportunity to serve the church people in the area? How would you see it?

I live in Knox County. It's mainly rural. It's got about 63,000 people. These are my people. I love them. A lot of them don't know Jesus. About 21,000 people in my county say that they have a meaningful connection to a local church. About 8,200 of those 20,000 say they belong to an evangelical church.

That means that in my county, there are at least 40,000 people with no meaningful connection to a local church who very likely do not know Christ. That bothers me.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

If you're receiving and reading the *Ohio Baptist Messenger*, there's a really good chance that you belong to a **cooperating church**. This is awesome!!! So many laborers are supported by our generosity to the Cooperative Program. Let's keep it up!

But what would it look like for your church to also become a **sending church**? A sending church takes the primary responsibility for a new church plant—sending them, supporting them, caring for them, training them, etc.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe your county already has all the healthy churches it needs. But if your area could use another healthy church, what part is God calling you to play?

If you're interested, but not sure where to begin, we can help! It's just an email or phone call away. There are amazing resources in our state to help church leaders. You can always reach me at [president@scbo.org](mailto:president@scbo.org).

Grace and Peace,

Adam Pursel  
SCBO President



SCBO pastors and church planters traveled to Jacksonville, Florida, for a vision tour in the East Coast region of the Florida Baptist Convention as part of the Florida-Ohio Partnership.



## “Special” Partnership Develops Between Florida-Ohio Regions

By Rick Williams, SCBO Central Ohio regional catalyst

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 1:3-5, “I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” (CSB)

Paul expressed gratitude for the ongoing gospel partnership he shared with the Philippian believers. His words resonate with me as I reflect on the special partnership between Ohio Baptists and Florida Baptists.

Recently, I had the privilege of traveling to Jacksonville, Florida, with a group of nine SCBO pastors and church planters, for a vision tour in the East Coast region of the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC). We arrived on Friday, January 31, and stayed through Sunday, February 2. Though our time was brief, we experienced remarkable moments.

Patrick Coats, east region catalyst for FBC, organized a full schedule filled with opportunities to engage with Florida pastors and churches in the region. This included a fellowship dinner with 20 pastors from both Central Ohio and Florida.

We also participated in training sessions at Aspire Church in Jacksonville, which highlighted the gospel-centered, mission-oriented work of the East Coast region churches. Several of our Ohio pastors had the opportunity to preach in Florida Baptist churches on Sunday morning.

Here are some insights from SCBO pastors and church planters who joined the trip:

**Darryl Baker, lead pastor, Change City Church, Pickerington:** “The partnership between Florida and Ohio is great for networking and building support systems, especially for church plants!”

**Josh Swinehart, lead pastor, First Baptist Church, Upper Sandusky:** “I was grateful to have taken part in the vision tour, which sent me home with a clear vision for my own church and ministry. I thank God for the new relationships made and look forward to seeing where this partnership takes us.”

**Aaron Taylor, teaching pastor, Living Hope Church, Columbus and church planting catalyst for Send Network:** “As an Ohio Baptist, I’m looking forward to how God will continue to use the relationship and partnership between our two states to see the Great Commission move forward in North America!”

**Scott Gibson, lead pastor, The Bridge, Lancaster:** “How great it was to connect with and hear about all the amazing things happening in our Florida churches. It was so awesome to see the multi-ethnic planting and brotherhood among the churches.”

**Ashton Walton, church planter, The Bridge, Logan:** “On Sunday I had the opportunity to speak at a church that could’ve only been lined up by the Holy Spirit. South Putnam Church is a thriving church plant about 90 minutes south of Jacksonville. Pastor Daniel and Pastor Aaron welcomed me warmly and let me share my story before their congregation. At the end of service, they all prayed for me and God’s calling on me and my family, and I am so grateful.”

Our trip to Florida was an extraordinary time of fellowship, worship, training, and partnership. Myles Dowdy, FBC missions and ministries lead catalyst, summed up our partnership with the word, “special.” Indeed it is a special partnership. We are partners in praying together, sharing together, going together, and celebrating together!

We truly give thanks to God for our partnership in the gospel with Florida Baptists!

# Serving Above and Beyond in Ohio Disaster Relief

By John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director

Each January Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) volunteers from all over the United States gather for the National SBDR Winter Roundtable. The Roundtable includes two days of intense training for volunteers and one day for Disaster Relief directors to conduct SBDR business.

Last month, roughly 200 people gathered in San Antonio, Texas, for this event.

The highlight of the week is the banquet on Tuesday night. The banquet offers good food provided by the host state's Disaster Relief feeding teams, entertainment and acknowledgment of individuals who have served over and above the call of duty.

For the second year in a row, Ohio Disaster Relief volunteers have been recognized with the Distinguished Service Award as Most Valuable Volunteer. It is an honor to receive this award as there are only six people recognized each year out of roughly 50,000 SBDR volunteers in North America.

## In 2024, Debbie Klepinger received the Distinguished Service Award.

Debbie serves as Ohio DR's Administrative Assistant. She is passionate about DR and puts in many, many hours as a volunteer. She does things for Ohio DR that others would not want to do. She maintains the DR database of roughly 440 volunteers and manages all the paperwork.

Debbie also serves on the Incident Management Team for Ohio Disaster Relief. She deploys with Ohio DR teams to

manage paperwork, team assignments and statistics that must be reported. This ministry would be in big trouble without someone like Debbie who is committed to the details that matter. Debbie is a member of Beaver Creek Baptist Church, Beaver Creek.

## In 2025, Carl Brown received the Distinguished Service Award.

Since Carl took the lead role for disaster feeding in 2022 he has dedicated countless hours to feeding volunteers and communities in times of crisis. When Ohio Disaster Relief purchased its first Quick Response Feeding Unit, Carl was the one who set it up and organized it for deployment. Since then, Carl has deployed with the QRU every time it has been deployed and has served most of the time as feeding team leader.

In the fall of 2024, Carl led a feeding team to do mass community feeding in Cleveland. The very next week he led a feeding team to feed volunteers in Brook Park. On Saturday of that same week, he led a small feeding team to assist Central Baptist Mission, Akron, with a community event. Carl is a member of Dayton Avenue Baptist Church, Xenia.

We have many volunteers just like Debbie and Carl who serve many hours that go unnoticed. It is volunteers like them that make the work of Ohio Disaster Relief possible.

The 2026 National SBDR Roundtable will convene in Columbus, January 27-29, 2026.



**REGISTER TODAY**

**DISASTER RELIEF UNIT TRAINING**

**March 29, 2025**  
**8:00 AM – 1:30 PM**  
First Baptist Waverly  
303 E. 3rd St  
Heath, OH 43055  
[scbo.org/dr](https://scbo.org/dr)

**April 5, 2025**, 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM First Baptist Heath, 525 S 30th St., Heath, OH 43055  
**September 13, 2025**, 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM University Baptist Beaver Creek, 2223 Hanes Rd., Beaver Creek, OH 45432  
**October 4, 2025**, 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM Marion, OH

Logos for Disaster Relief Ohio and SCBO (The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio) are present in the top left corner.

## Heading Elected Chairman of SBDR National Steering Committee

During the National SBDR Winter Roundtable in San Antonio, Texas, Ohio DR Director John Heading was elected as the new Chairman of the SBDR National Steering Committee. This is the first time a non-southern state DR director has served in this position. North Carolina DR Director Tom Beam was elected as vice chair.



# STUDENT MINISTRY ROUNDTABLE

MARCH 20, 2025



**REGISTER NOW!**

Early bird pricing through January 31.

## Over 250 Collegiate Men Gather for Man Makers Conference



The Man Maker Conference was an incredible time of growth, challenge, and encouragement as 250 collegiate men from across the region gathered to be equipped as godly leaders in their homes, churches, and communities. The event was sponsored by H2O Church and SCBO.

“Thank you so much for investing into our young men and women! So thankful for SBCO and getting to run together!”  
–Josh Ortega, H2O Wright State University.

# Worship 4:24 Trains Worship Leaders and Teams at Record-Setting Event

By Zac James, SCBO worship consultant

Worship 4:24, a partnership between Cedarville University and SCBO, had another amazing year setting multiple records while training worship leaders and teams from Ohio and across the nation.

God is truly at work in our state, and the kingdom footprint He allows us to have to invest in worship leaders and teams is enormous.

Last year, we saw a massive increase in total conference attendance. In 2023, our attendance was 804, and it shot up to 1,485 in 2024 with Shane & Shane.

This year, the conference continues to grow, as we celebrated 1,265 conference attendees, plus 141 high school students who came early for Cedarville's Weekend of Worship and stayed through the conference. We hosted 125 speakers, vendors, and those they brought with them to help.

Once again, shoutout to the Cedarville Team for solving so many logistical hurdles! Roger O'Neel, John Chillicothe, Susan Troth, and Jesse Oliver. Also, shoutout to Katrina Umphrey for redesigning registration, and to our SCBO and volunteer team which hit a home run in getting people registered quickly.

This year conference attendance was 1531, a new record.

On top of that, 1,354 people bought tickets for the Friday night Charity Gayle worship concert with the 4:24 Worship Choir.

The chapel was filled with worshipers, and if you couldn't make it, you missed something awesome. Charity Gayle,



Worship 4:24 broke records while training, encouraging, and challenging worship leaders and worship teams.

her husband, Ryan, and their team did a phenomenal job leading us in worship the whole weekend. They were a delight to work with and the worship was incredible.

All told, we had 2,885 people during Worship 4:24, which is 4 less than last year.

More major milestones: we hosted 480 students. Our attendees came from 29 states and 308 churches. To serve this many attendees, our speakers hosted 128 breakout sessions.

### Here's what that means:

- Last year was not an anomaly. It is no small thing that the Lord showed favor so we could maintain and build on the huge spike from last year.

Story continues on the next page...

## WORSHIP 4:24 BY THE NUMBERS



### 1265

CONFERENCE ATTENDEES  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 141

TEENS AT WEEKEND  
OF WORSHIP



### 125

SPEAKERS, VENDORS  
AND HELPERS



### 1531

TOTAL CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 1354

CHARITY GAYLE  
CONCERT-ONLY ATTENDEES



### 480

STUDENT ATTENDEES  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 29

STATES REPRESENTED  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 308

CHURCHES REPRESENTED  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 128

BREAKOUT SESSIONS  
(\*RECORD NUMBER)



### 258

SCBO ATTENDEES FROM 70 SCBO  
CHURCHES (\*RECORD NUMBER)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR WORSHIP 4:24, JANUARY 30-31, 2026



- The core conference attendees continue to grow, which is most important because those are the people we invest in through breakout sessions.
- We are impacting the next generation of worship ministry in a massive way through the students who are attending.

But remember, it's not just about numbers: each attendee represents a real worship leader or worship team member who is trying to serve the local church in their gifting and calling. It's about the mission: equipping our worship leaders and teams to lead worship with passion and excellence for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This year, we saw 258 SCBO attendees from 70 churches. I don't have a ton of historical data for SCBO attendance, but to my knowledge, this is a record. Thank you to all who sent your worship teams and engaged with Worship 4:24 this year.

Our goal for 2026 is to see our churches send at least 300 of our people to be trained at Worship 4:24.

If you didn't come this year, please consider sending at least one person from your church to Worship 4:24 next year - and register early! It will hugely impact your worship ministry.

Here's the secret: registration opens at a steep discount usually in September or October, so if you plan ahead, you can make it much more affordable.

Why am I so confident attending Worship 4:24 will help your worship ministry become more effective?

Because, I hear it directly from our conference attendees.

A normal part of our process is to get feedback on sessions through the Worship 4:24 app. Attendees can give feedback on each session with comments for our team to review.

This year, we received 1058 feedback submissions throughout the weekend, with an average session rating of 9.1/10. Needless to say, our speakers did an incredible job.

I want to share some of the feedback we got from our conference attendees so you can hear from them directly:

*"THANK YOU FOR THIS AMAZING WORSHIP 4:24 CONFERENCE! I'M A BEGINNER IN LEADING WORSHIP AND I HAD A LOT OF QUESTIONS. AND EVERY QUESTION RECEIVED AN ANSWER. MAY GOD BLESS EVERYONE WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THIS CONFERENCE!"*

*"4:24 2025 was spectacular! Informational/interesting sessions, excellent organization, varied/engaging vendors, smiling/helpful volunteers, and the Lord's Chicken, as always. Every bathroom and breakout room I stepped into was always sparkling and ready for service."*

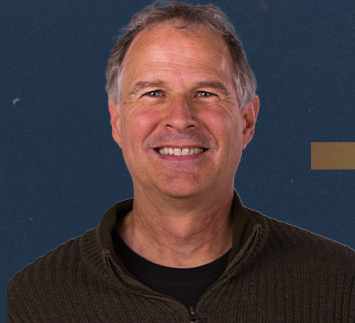
*"It was my first time visiting and I had a great experience in worship, the classes are very good. I learned a lot of new ideas and ways to be more effective for the Lord in the ministry he is leading us to be part of his body. Very organized and a lovely atmosphere of brothers and sisters praising God is a life-changing experience. I recommend it for next year 110%."*

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

THE  
**WAYS**  
OF  
**GOD**



**Dr. Richard Blackaby**



**Dr. Bill Kirkwood**

**March 7-8, 2025**  
**Broadman Baptist Church**  
**Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221**

**[scho.org/WaysOfGod](http://scho.org/WaysOfGod)**

# New Training Center Prepares African Missionaries to Reach Nations

By Lauren Milewski, IMB, Kenya

Editor's Note: Chad and Miriam Pumpelly are IMB Missionaries from Ohio.



*IMB missionary Chad Pumpelly will direct the Lead Global Training Center in Nairobi, Kenya. The center's goal is to equip "African churches sending African missionaries to the ends of the earth." IMB Photo*

International Mission Board missionaries commissioned a new facility, Lead Global Training Center, in Nairobi, Kenya, on Jan. 26 to prepare Africans to reach the nations.

IMB missionaries, along with senior leaders from Richmond, gathered to pray for healthy African churches to send African missionaries and to praise God for the work He is already doing across the continent.

Chad Pumpelly, who serves with the IMB and directs the Lead Global Training Center, shared his hope for the facility.

"I want to look around the room one day and see African missionaries being sent out," he said.

Pumpelly's wife, Miriam, added, "Our hope is for African believers to own their part in the Great Commission and for us to equip those who are already called, so they can use their skills for God's glory throughout the world."

The dedication included messages from local IMB missionaries and Todd Lafferty, IMB's executive vice president. During the program, IMB missionaries who gathered spent time praying for the dedication of the facility, the future potential of the people being sent out through the training and the people groups God will reach through them.

Daren Davis, who leads IMB's work in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Lafferty celebrated with a ribbon-cutting and a dedication stone. At the end of the event, everyone spent

time worshiping God for all He is doing in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

The goal of the Lead Global facility is to equip churches to engage unreached people groups effectively. IMB missionaries aim to help African Baptist churches reach a point where they can send and support missionaries independently. Historically, missionary support has not been a priority in African church budgets, so the IMB team is working to help churches understand the value of this investment. IMB and Lead Global will work together to help churches fulfill their role in the Great Commission.

Pasifique, a believer from Burundi, is already embracing this mission. Two years ago, he was trained in the components of the missionary task and discovered a passion for sharing the gospel. After completing the training, he and a colleague shared the gospel in a challenging area, resulting in 16 new baptized believers.

Now, he wants to become a trainer himself, so he can equip churches in Burundi and other French-speaking countries in evangelism, discipleship and church planting. He is among the participants who attended the first Lead Global training in February.

The Lead Global property was originally purchased by the IMB (formerly Foreign Mission Board) in 1980. Since 2019, the site has been used for missions training, while leaders

*Story continues on the next page...*

brainstormed and developed its long-term potential. The IMB has long had the vision for “African churches sending African missionaries to the ends of the earth,” said Davis. Lead Global is now a key part of that vision.

By the year 2050, 38% of the world’s professing Christians will be from Sub-Saharan Africa. Lead Global participants hope to collaborate with IMB globalization partners to identify mission fields in need of African workers. The Lead Global team also trains African missionaries to join IMB teams worldwide as Global Missionary Partners. Pumpelly shared, “We want the light of the gospel to reach every dark corner.”

### How can you be involved?

#### Pray

Pray for African churches to fully embrace the vision and commit to supporting missionaries long term.

Pray for those in training and the unreached people they will serve.

Ask God to provide the resources Lead Global needs, including an outdoor pavilion for events and housing for married couples. The lack of space has already resulted in two couples being put on a waitlist.

#### Give

The full cost of each training must be subsidized. You can join the effort by giving here: <https://www.imb.org/give/project/lead-global-team/>.

#### Go

The Lead Global team needs four more trainers and an operations manager to join them in the work.

Article courtesy of IMB

**JERSEYCHURCH.ORG**

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

## CHURCH PLANTER RESIDENT, JERSEY CHURCH, NEW ALBANY

Jersey Church, New Albany, is seeking to plant churches as a way of growing God’s Kingdom, with each new congregation aiming to become an autonomous, stand-alone church. Our Church Planters will help guide this endeavor by casting a clear vision for ministry and motivating others to fulfill that vision, overseeing and supporting staff and lay leaders as they lead various ministries, helping in the planning of meaningful personal and corporate worship experiences that draw people into the presence of a holy and awesome God, praying diligently for and with the church community while seeking God’s direction for those in need, and providing compassionate guidance and assistance to individuals in the congregation.

“Jersey Church has always been about God’s Kingdom. As we move into a new season of ministry we want to send people out to further God’s Kingdom in central Ohio,” Pastor Matt Read, senior pastor. “We are looking for someone to join us in this great endeavor. A person who is passionately in love with Jesus, the Church, and the Lost to see God’s Kingdom grow and people transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of Light.”

For a full job description or to submit a resume, please use [email@jerseychurch.org](mailto:email@jerseychurch.org).

# Let's Change the Statistics in Pastoral Health!

By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization consultant

Have you ever felt like you were all alone or like no one would understand your situation?

In 2023 at the SBC Annual Convention, a resolution entitled, "On Needed Care and Support for Pastors and Ministry Leaders" passed. One of the paragraphs says:

*"WHEREAS, The reality of internal struggles among spiritual leaders has reached a critical point, with current research indicating that 42% of pastors are thinking of leaving the ministry in the next year, 80% believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families, 75% of pastors have reported a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry, and 70% of pastors do not have someone they consider to be a close friend."*

If this is true of Ohio, more than 250 of our pastors are contemplating leaving the ministry, more than 480 pastors believe that pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families, more than 450 pastors have experienced a stress-related crisis, and more than 420 pastors do not believe they have a close friend.

I can remember times of isolation, stress, and even depression. I remember being hospitalized and not realizing stress was the real issue. I found a coach, a mentor, and even a few friends.

Over the past three years, the SCBO has been working hard to "Prioritize the pastor because the church is God's

plan." This is a core value of SCBO. If the pastor is not healthy, the church will not be either.

SCBO is investing in you and your congregation to help bring you back to health. Around the state, we provide free resilience coaching and revitalization coaching to help you in your journey.

There are biblical counselors available as well. We also have a customizable process to walk your congregation through a path to health and growth. All of this to say, YOU MATTER, and you do not have to feel alone.

In the coming weeks and months, there will be help and hope around the state. On March 7-8, in Cuyahoga Falls, Dr. Richard Blackaby will share concentrated sessions on the "Ways of God" – [www.scbo.org/WaysofGod](http://www.scbo.org/WaysofGod). A bonus post-lunch session with Dr. Bill Kirkwood on worship will be provided as well.

On May 16-17 in Bedford, join us for the annual Lead Well Conference – <http://mtcalvaryofbedford.org/events/lead-well-conference>.

Will you pray with me for the congregations in your association, region, and state to partner together for a greater kingdom impact? Will you take a moment to encourage another pastor right now? If I can be of any assistance to you or your congregation, please email me at [mjones@scbo.org](mailto:mjones@scbo.org) or check out [www.scbo.org/revitalize](http://www.scbo.org/revitalize).

SCBO

## CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

WITH

NC BAPTISTS

REGISTER TODAY

MARCH 13 2025

10AM-12PM

VIA ZOOM

## 21 Days of Prayer More Than a Religious Exercise for Sandusky Church

By Pastor Bobbie Garrett, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Sandusky

Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church in Sandusky actively participated in the “21 Days of Prayer” initiative. This period of prayer was both inspirational and instructional.

As a church family, we were able to identify some blind spots and clarify some misconceptions regarding the gospel, faith, and prayer.

As a result of these discoveries, we aligned our prayer lives with God’s desires. In preparation for these 21 days of prayer, I requested a special prayer for our initiative. I referred to this as a time of “praying for the PRAYER.”

Consequently, we prayed individually for 40 days that our 21 days of prayer would be eye-opening and fruitful.

As we systematically began to explore Dave Earley’s book *21 Keys to Answered Prayer*, it became evident that this would not be just another religious exercise. Not only were the churches within the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO) reading this book and praying daily, but believers worldwide were also participating in this endeavor.

Given the wonderful possibilities of answered prayers, our prayer lives transitioned from being selfish to selfless with our requests becoming more God-centered and kingdom-focused.

While this proved to be monumental, others on this spiritual journey declared that they would continue to P.U.S.H. (Pray Until Something Happens) no matter the outcome.



Pastor Bobbie Garrett, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Sandusky

However, a major concern that resounded is praying through our spiritual deserts. Although we tend to change course or do an about-face when we find ourselves in stagnant places, faith is the key! We must trust God and believe He is working “things” out for the good, even though we cannot trace what He is doing behind the scenes.

Upon completing these special “21 Days of Prayer” our desire was for everyone to cultivate an unquenchable thirst for God, develop a stronger prayer life that produces an abundance of fruit, and enjoy a more intimate faith walk with Him.

# MEDICAL MISSIONS

## 1-DAY CONFERENCE

Sat. March 8, 9am-4pm  
FIRST BAPTIST KETTERING  
DAYTON, OH

TOGETHER FOR  
THE NATIONS

Medical  
Missions



# Over Two Years Later, Serve Tour Continues Gospel Impact in Dayton and Beyond

By Send Relief Staff

There were a million reasons Julie couldn't address the roofing issues in her home. Being widowed made house repairs difficult. Then there was her age and declining health. And with kids constantly scurrying around her house—two grandchildren she was raising on her own—roofing repairs felt as far out of reach as the sky.

When neighbors reported that Julie's roof was falling apart, the city code officer knew just who to call. Since the 2022 Send Relief Serve Tour in Dayton, Ohio, Grace Point Fellowship has earned a reputation for serving the community. The officer contacted the church, and last fall, they repaired Julie's roof, opening the door to building a relationship with her.

Eventually, Paul Bilunka, the local missions pastor at Grace Point, learned that Julie wanted to reconnect with God but believed she had committed the unpardonable sin.

"She said, 'I'm Catholic, and when my 21-year-old son died 12 years ago, I yelled at God, and I haven't been able to talk to him since,'" Paul recounts her words. "I told her, 'Julie, that can be forgiven.' We prayed right then on her doorstep, and she just started bawling. It was like a burden was lifted from her."

Julie started regularly attending Grace Point Fellowship, and on a Sunday not long ago, she was baptized, with several of her family members joining the service to celebrate.

"She has been almost like the Samaritan woman," Paul

shares. "She has been telling everyone about her story and how she found forgiveness. In fact, one person she's impacted the most is the city code officer. But none of that could have happened without the Serve Tour and us having the resources to fix her roof."

Now, the city code manager directs Grace Point to three or four houses a month where people in difficult circumstances need help taking care of their homes, just like Julie did. And watching a church step up to serve their community, seeking nothing in return, has touched his heart, too.

"I don't understand why you guys do what you do," he told Paul several months ago, to which Paul responded, "Because of the gospel."

But helping people take care of their properties is just one of the ways that the 2022 Serve Tour came to stay in Dayton. During the Serve Tour, Grace Point Fellowship also hosted a ministry that builds beds for families in need by gathering volunteers in their church parking lot. Since then, one church member—a UPS driver from a neighboring county—has started a new chapter of the ministry for his area.

"Now, close to 1500 kids who would have been sleeping on the floor have beds," Paul says. "So, the Serve Tour just spawned a continuation of those ministries. Two years later, we're still seeing the lasting effects, and it's still going strong—which is a pretty good track record, I would say."

*Story continues on the next page...*

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Grace Point Fellowship was planted just nine years ago by Thompson Station Church in Tennessee. Since then, Grace Point Fellowship has helped start several church plants by leveraging a church residency to develop planters and send people out with them. By engaging their city, the church has grown to 750 strong.

Seeing how Serve Tour helped accelerate gospel inroads into their community, the church decided to volunteer at the Serve Tour stop in Flint, Michigan, this past summer.

“We were so blessed by people coming to our city to help that we wanted to give back and go to another town,” shares Paul. “And we’re planning on doing it next year as well.”

The highlight for Grace Point church members who volunteered in Flint was witnessing local churches form relationships with the people in their communities, much like they were able to do two years ago.

To find out how your church can reach communities for the gospel through Serve Tour, visit our [Serve Tour Page](#). Explore Serve Tour stops for 2025 and register today.

Article courtesy of Send Relief

# SAVE THE DATE



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## Serve Tour Toledo

### September 25-26, 2026

more information coming soon!

## Super Summer Registration Now Open

Registration for Super Summer 2025 is now open!

Super Summer, a premier student leadership program, is back at Cedarville University June 24-28, 2025!

Super Summer is for students who have completed grades 7-12 and are serious about their faith in Jesus and want to make a difference for him.

To qualify for Super Summer, students must meet the leadership criteria as established by their church’s primary youth leader.

Pastor Dean Inserra, City Church, Tallahassee, Florida will

bring messages throughout Super Summer, and Take-Heart will lead students in worship. Students will also receive high-quality teaching at each grade level.

Super Summer early registration is now open and ends on March 27. Final Registration closes on May 1.

To register your students and for more information, please visit [supersummerohio.com](https://supersummerohio.com). Questions? Please contact Keith Hurt, SCBO next gen director, at [khurt@scbo.org](mailto:khurt@scbo.org).

Don’t let your students miss out on the leadership training available at Super Summer 2025.

# June 24-28, 2025



Registration now open!  
[supersummerohio.com](https://supersummerohio.com)

# Reaching Neighborhoods and Nations in Huber Heights

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

Early in his career, Pastor Will Massaro felt God calling him to either the pastorate or the mission field.

Today, as lead pastor of Trails Church, a young church plant in Huber Heights, Massaro gets to do both right in his own neighborhood. He leads his church and works to reach the Meskhetian Turkish community that has settled in the Dayton area.

“I just had this desire to be a pastor,” he said. “I knew that God might call me and my family to missions someday. To have the opportunity to kind of do both – be a missionary to this community and to be a pastor of this small flock that God has entrusted to me as a church planter seems like an opportunity to do both.”

The seeds for Trails Church were planted at its sending church, Forest Ridge Baptist Church, Dayton, where Massaro served as associate pastor.

“Forest Ridge is a small Southern Baptist-on-every-corner kind of church building,” he said. “We could fit 100 people, and we had 100 people.”

After deciding against building a new building or starting

an additional service, church leaders chose to send out a group of 20 people 20 minutes north of the church in the Huber Heights area.

“We had a community group that was already meeting in the Carriage Trails area. We talked to our elders about that and everyone was excited about it,” he recalled.

After a year of preparation, Trails Church launched in the spring of 2024 with a core team of 16 at the YMCA in Huber Heights.

In the past 10-11 months, Massaro says the church has experienced slow and steady growth.

“God has really blessed us. We have brought in a few members here and there. We went from 16 to 23 now with two in the membership process,” he said.

The church also witnessed the salvation of its first two new believers in December 2024.

A couple from Pennsylvania moved to Huber Heights and although they weren't believers, they visited the church at the YMCA.

*Story continues on the next page...*

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# Job Postings

## BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

### Bethel Baptist Church, Bethel

Bethel Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. We are a conservative Southern Baptist Church with a blended style of worship, located in southwest Ohio just east of Cincinnati. We have a small congregation with a desire to increase our fold by reaching the lost in our community and are seeking a like-minded pastor. Our mission is to "Go Make Disciples!" We are a Bible-believing church and prefer the King James Version of the Bible. We encourage all applicants to view our Sunday morning worship services on our Facebook page.

The church is seeking a man called to be a Southern Baptist pastor who agrees with the Baptist Faith and Message. He should also meet the requirements listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Pastoral education and experience are preferred.

Send resume to: Pastoral Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 211 E Plane St., Bethel, OH 45106, or Email to [bethelbaptist@fuse.net](mailto:bethelbaptist@fuse.net). The church's Facebook page is [Bethel Baptist Church, SBC](#). Terry Davis, Chairman of the Pastoral Search Committee can be reached at 513-354-0414.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

### Greater Orlando Baptist Association, Florida

The Greater Orlando Baptist Association (GOBA) is seeking a full-time Executive Director of Missions. GOBA is a dynamic and growing association of 130 churches and missions in the heart of one of the nation's fastest-growing regions and largest tourist/vacation areas. MDiv required (doctorate preferred) and experience in leading, training, equipping, preaching, working multi-culturally, and coaching pastors and laity. Send resumes to [resumes@goba.org](mailto:resumes@goba.org). Deadline for resumes: 6/30/25.

## MINISTER OF MUSIC

### Calvary Baptist Church, Wilmington

Calvary Baptist Church, Wilmington, is seeking a part-time minister of worship. The church uses a blended approach to worship that leans contemporary. Calvary BC has a full worship band with one Sunday morning worship service a week and a few special events throughout the year. This is a part-time position of approximately 10-20 hours per week. Reach out to Pastor Dave Frasure at [pastordave@cbcwilmington.net](mailto:pastordave@cbcwilmington.net) or 513-315-7575 for more information.

## PART-TIME PASTOR

### Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth

Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth, is seeking a part-time pastor following the retirement of its current pastor at the end of March 2025. Wadsworth is a town of 24,000 in Medina County in northeast Ohio. For more information, please call Ward Adkins at 1-216-314-4194.

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*The Messenger is read by churches and individuals in Ohio and across the country.*

To submit a classified ad, please send brief information about the position along with a return phone number or email:

[classifieds@sco.org](mailto:classifieds@sco.org)