

SEPTEMBER 2024  
VOLUME 72 ISSUE 9

# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



## Sixty-five Urban Youth Accept Christ, Twenty-eight Baptized at CampUCAN

Full story on page 6

**RAY ROBERTS** *State Missions Offering Special Edition*

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### *-- 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).

# Ohio – A Field Ripe for Harvest

*“It is my deep conviction that the ripest field for Southern Baptist work in the USA lies within the boundaries of the state of Ohio. This conviction has not been formed by hearsay but as I have come face to face with undeniable facts. Every preacher who has been privileged to come into contact with the work in Ohio shares my conviction.”*

*-- Dr. Ray E. Roberts, SCBO first executive director- treasurer, 1954-1979*

What was true in Dr. Roberts’ time is still true to this day. Seventy years later, I believe with deep conviction that Ohio continues to be the ripest field in the United States for an awakening.

We have witnessed a stirring in recent days that I want to share with you in greater detail. Why? Because I want you to not only be encouraged, but also reminded of how the Lord wants to use you and your church family to engage the neighborhoods across Ohio with the gospel!

**Super Summer 2024** – 450 students and adults, a near record number, descended once again on the campus of Cedarville University in late June and the Spirit of God was palpable throughout the week.

There were ten decisions for salvation, twenty-two for baptism, thirty-five decisions for full-time ministry and sixty decisions from students to enter the mission field! Praise the Lord for this movement among the next generation.

**CampUCAN 2024** – What began with a moment five years ago is slowly shifting towards a movement. Our vision

for this camp is to invite young men from across the urban cities of Ohio to hear the gospel. They are more than likely to be living in impoverished areas without the presence of a father in the home.

I am thrilled to share with you that just a couple of weeks ago, there were a RECORD number of campers...ninety-four to be exact. Sixty-five of them put their faith in Jesus Christ and twenty-seven of them were baptized there at the lake...even an adult counselor was baptized!

Let us thank the Lord for this harvest and let us continue to pray for a spiritual awakening in Ohio. I believe, with deep conviction, Ohio is still the ripest field in America.

Moving Forward,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



## OHIO BAPTIST FOUNDATION INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

**SEPT 23, 2024**

FOURSOME SCRAMBLE  
GOLF TOURNAMENT

NEW LOCATION FOR 2024  
**NCR COUNTRY CLUB!**

USGA & PGA CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE - KETTERING, OHIO



# President's Pen

## *He is Worthy of Our Praise*

*15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. 16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Heb 13:15–16). (2016). Crossway Bibles.*

Let us offer. Do not neglect. Let us offer. Do not neglect.

Life is full of joy and sorrow. Sometimes we feel like we're wrung out...thin...like too little butter scraped over too much bread. Whether you're in a season of great joy or sorrow and fatigue, this passage reminds us that we always have something to offer.

What do we have to offer? Praise! In our highs and lows, we have come to know God. We know that He is worthy of our praise. When life is tough, He is worthy. When life is wonderful, He is worthy. He is worthy! Let us then continually offer up praise to Him!

And how can we offer this praise? With lips that acknowledge His Name and lives that share what we have.

As we enter into this Fall season, let's redouble our commitment to praising God and sharing the gospel. He is worthy, but some people don't know it yet. God has chosen to spread His gifts and His gospel through His Spirit working in and through His people!

Let us offer. Do not neglect.

One of the great things about being an Ohio Baptist is the support. Help is just an email or phone call away. There are amazing resources in our state to help church leaders. We can help you proclaim the Word of Christ in your community so that lost people can hear and respond to the gospel! You can always reach me at [president@scbo.org](mailto:president@scbo.org).

Grace and Peace,

Adam Pursel  
SCBO President





## Better Together: Partnership with Florida Baptist Convention

By Rick Williams, SCBO Central Ohio Region catalyst

One of the highlights of my year has undoubtedly been the partnership with the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC). Earlier this year, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Patrick Coats in Jacksonville, Florida. As the East Region Catalyst for FBC, Patrick and I met with several associational missionary strategists and pastors to explore potential collaboration. It quickly became clear to me that God is actively at work through the various associations in Florida's East Region.

During my discussions with three of the Associational Mission Strategists—Bob Bumgarner, Chris Reynolds, and Glenn Rodgers—I was deeply encouraged by their strategic vision, missional priorities, and prayerful focus. One of our meetings was particularly powerful, as we gathered in prayer, seeking God's leadership and direction for our partnership. Glenn Rogers aptly stated, "This can be a great opportunity for us to reach souls both there and here." Chris Reynolds added, "It's all about supporting each other and making the kingdom stronger."

Attending the Florida Baptist Convention's Challenge 2025 was another source of encouragement for me. I witnessed first-hand the evangelistic fervor of FBC! As I traveled back to Ohio, my excitement for collaborating with pastors and leaders in the East Region grew. It was abundantly clear that God was moving within this partnership.

On May 13-14, Patrick traveled to Columbus with a group of Florida pastors eager to engage in ministry and mission work alongside us. We organized a dinner at Violet Baptist Church on May 13, providing a space for Ohio and Florida pastors to connect. The chemistry and collaboration that unfolded that night were remarkable, as meaningful conversations and connections flourished through shared prayers and planning.

The following day, we gathered at Living Hope Church, Columbus, where Pastor Aaron Taylor facilitated a meeting for Central Ohio Send Network church planters to share their visions with the Florida pastors and leaders. The opportunity for one-on-one discussions allowed for the exchange of ideas and potential next steps.

As Pastor Aaron spoke about the Finding Hope Center, which provides essential furniture for financially struggling families, the Florida pastors were genuinely moved. One Florida pastor led us in a heartfelt prayer, asking God to do an even greater work in and through us. It was a powerful moment where we felt God's presence in a profound way.

Before returning to Florida, we took our guests on a tour of the OSU football stadium. We enjoyed lively conversations about the Buckeyes and various Florida teams, creating bonds of camaraderie. The two days we spent together were incredibly meaningful, laying the groundwork for future partnership.

Looking ahead, Patrick and I have tentatively planned for a group of Ohio pastors to travel to Florida in late January 2025. This will be a wonderful opportunity for Central Ohio pastors to explore mission and ministry possibilities with their Florida counterparts.

I am immensely grateful for Patrick Coats' leadership. He is a true champion of collaboration and partnership, and his humility and willingness to serve are a blessing to us here in Central Ohio. I feel privileged to be on this journey alongside him, and with the churches in both Central Ohio and Florida's East Region.

God is always at work around us. Let's join Him in fulfilling the Great Commission.

We are truly Better Together!

# Sixty-five Urban Youth Accept Christ, Twenty-eight Baptized at CampUCAN

By Kirby Mitchell, CampUCAN director



Ninety-four urban youth attended CampUCAN in early August.

Life for many urban Ohio youth is bleak.

Growing up in mostly female-led homes and living below the poverty line in Ohio's inner cities, they are fatherless, hopeless, frustrated, and hostile. To many they seem unreachable, unwilling, fed up, lost, broken, hurting, alone, and struggling.

CampUCAN, SCBOs outreach to urban young men, ages 9-15, aims to combat the challenges these young men face with the gospel through mentoring from adult Christian men.

Ninety-four young men gathered at Round Lake Christian Camp, Lakeville, August 5-8 for CampUCAN. There they met 25 Christian adult male mentors and Christian speakers who rallied around them.

They were loved, reassured, strengthened, and encouraged to believe that they can do all things through Jesus Christ.

Transformation happened at CampUCAN as 65 attendees prayed to receive Jesus as their Savior. That alone would have been enough to rejoice about. But God had more blessings in store as 37 young men who accepted Jesus Christ asked to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Ultimately twenty-seven youth and one adult mentor were baptized in Round Lake. Parental consent was given for the youth who were baptized.

Senior Mentor, Pastor John Maze, Agape Bible Fellowship, Dayton, said, "God is always willing if we just turn to him in our time of need."

As Camp Director I've never seen chains removed, shackles broken, burdens lifted, and the spirit of defeat overcome like we saw this year. To God be the glory for the great things he has done.

Since CampUCAN started five years ago all campers have attended free of charge.

"No urban youth is ever charged for attending the retreat," said Pastor Reginald Hayes, SCBO senior staff and CampUCAN founder. "Every dollar is raised from churches and organizations that believe every person, no matter who they are, has a plan from God for good if given the opportunity to realize their purpose."

If you are interested in contributing to CampUCAN 2025 please give at: CampUCAN/SCBO, 9000 Antares Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43240 or visit <https://www.scbo.org/give>.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**24**

**SCBO**

**ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

**JERSEY CHURCH**  
13260 MORSE ROAD SW  
NEW ALBANY, OH 43054

**MONDAY & TUESDAY**  
NOVEMBER 11 & 12

[scbo.org/celebration](https://www.scbo.org/celebration)

# TOGETHER FOR THE NATIONS



**SEPTEMBER 14**  
**FIRST BAPTIST KETTERING**  
**DAYTON, OHIO**

The International Mission Board (IMB) serves Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission, as together we make disciples of all nations.

**Together for the Nations** is a unique one-day event to learn more about how you and your church can begin or strengthen your partnership with your International Mission Board (IMB).

Learn more at [imb.org/together](https://imb.org/together).

## WHY SHOULD YOU COME?

- › Interact with IMB senior leadership and missionaries from each of the global regions we serve
- › Deepen your understanding of missions and your connections with missionaries
- › Network with other pastors and missions leaders from churches in your area
- › Learn more about how the IMB can help you in planning for short-term and long-term mission trips
- › Discover specific ways for your church to partner with the IMB in Great Commission work among the nations

**REGISTER AT**  
**IMB.ORG/TOGETHER/**  
**OHIO**

If you have questions,  
please send an email to  
[info@imb.org](mailto:info@imb.org) or  
call **800-999-3113**.



**INTERNATIONAL**  
MISSION BOARD

# RAY ROBERTS

State Missions Offering

## Prayer Guide September 22-29, 2024

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: On the following pages you will find testimonies and prayer requests from seven different ministries who have received support through the Ray Roberts State Missions Offering. Each day, be encouraged by one of their stories and pray specifically for that ministry. Southern Baptists from all over Ohio will join with you in unity as we pray September 22-29, 2024.



Brent Beck

### BRENT BECK Steel Valley Church, Youngstown

The Ray Roberts Offering has empowered Steel Valley Church to secure a facility next door to the church that will expand mercy ministry in Youngstown. The Steel Valley Outreach Center will strengthen associational churches by serving as a central hub to meet needs and change lives. Residents will have access to a food pantry, clothing and furniture assistance, daycare services, special needs programs, veteran & trauma counseling, and after-school programs.

*Before the doors of the Steel Valley Outreach Center can open, additional funding is needed. Please pray for resources to make essential renovations including a new roof, HVAC system, electrical work, painting, a ceiling, and furnishings. Every prayer counts! With God's help and your continued support, Pastor Brent Beck believes the Steel Valley Outreach Center will be a beacon of hope in the Youngstown community.*

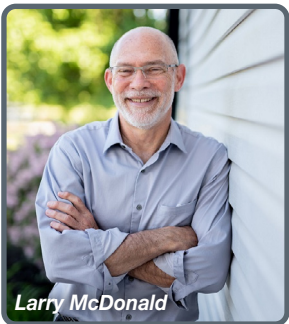


Ohio DR Chaplain Sarah Jo Wright and Millie in Guam.

### OHIO DISASTER RELIEF International Relief, Guam, Typhoon Response

In August and September 2023, Ohio Disaster Relief (DR) teams served in Guam alongside DR volunteers from Hawaii/Pacific, California, and Missouri at the invitation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The mission was for DR volunteers to repair houses damaged by Typhoon Mawar, a devastating storm with hurricane force winds that struck the island in May 2023. During their time in Guam, DR volunteers repaired homes and helped a local Southern Baptist church. More importantly, they shared the gospel with a woman named Millie and she accepted Jesus as her Savior. While FEMA sponsored the work of DR in Guam, the Ray Roberts Offering provided the funds for building supplies that FEMA did not cover.

*Please pray for the Lord to give all of our DR volunteers opportunities to share the gospel and the courage to step up when the opportunities arise. Also pray for local churches to continue to follow-up with those who have heard the gospel from DR volunteers.*



Larry McDonald

### LARRY MCDONALD First Baptist Church, Marysville

FBC Marysville is in the process of revitalization. Over the past three years the church has grown from an average attendance of 25 to the current average of 49. FBC Marysville meets in a building that was acquired in 1967 and needs refreshing. A generous gift from the Ray Roberts Offering is being used for new flooring in the church fellowship hall. FBC Marysville is grateful for the Ray Roberts Offering and looks forward to seeing how God uses this offering for other churches in the future.

*We would appreciate your prayers as we finish the renovation projects and shift gears toward more efforts to reach Marysville with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We have seen baptisms and growth through the combined efforts of Southern Baptist churches. Please pray for us as we encourage one another in our walk with the Lord and continue to reach out to those who need Jesus.*





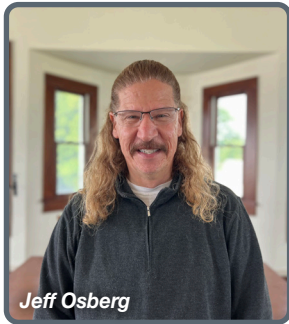
Ohio DR volunteers cleaned out basements in the flooded Barre, Vermont.

## OHIO DISASTER RELIEF National Outreach, Vermont Flooding, Summer 2024

Ohio Disaster Relief (DR) responded to Barre, Vermont. The area experienced significant flooding due to the remnants of Hurricane Beryl in July. One out of five homes impacted in the region also flooded in July 2023 due to catastrophic rains.

While “mudding out” the basements of flooded homes, DR volunteers shared the gospel. Susan is an 80 year old woman who lives alone. DR teams cleaned out, power washed, and sprayed for mold in her small basement. Susan heard the gospel and was open. She didn’t make a profession of faith, but she accepted a Bible and prayed with DR volunteers. Seven people have made professions of faith so far in Vermont.

*Please pray for Barre, Vermont. The area is heavily LGBTQ+ affirming and some people refused DR help because they believe that the SBC “hates them.” Many homeless people live in the area and drug use is rampant. Overdoses occur daily. Please pray that people will open their hearts to the gospel and accept Jesus, the true hope of all mankind.*



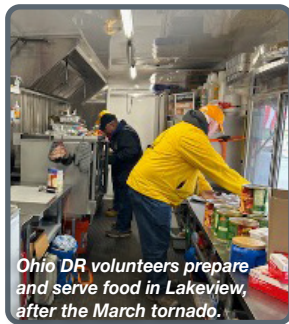
Jeff Osberg

## JEFF OSBERG Sovereign Word Baptist Church, Wooster

Sovereign Word Baptist Church, Wooster, is grateful for the financial help it received from the Ray Roberts Offering. The church spent the funds to purchase tables and chairs which are used during Wednesday night Bible study, weekly discipleship classes, and monthly fellowship meals.

“We appreciate and agree with how SCBO often shares that we’re better together than apart. God can be glorified and served so much more when we’re together. Thank you for your support,” said Pastor Jeff Osberg.

*Please pray for God to continue to use our church to glorify him, equip the saints, provide fellowship opportunities for the saints, and reach the lost.*



Ohio DR volunteers prepare and serve food in Lakeview, after the March tornado.

## OHIO DISASTER RELIEF Lakeview, Ohio, Tornado Response

In March 2024, tornadoes torn through Logan County, Ohio, causing significant damage in the town of Lakeview. The Logan County Emergency Manager requested that Ohio Disaster Relief deploy its Quick Response Feeding Unit. Ohio DR answered the request and sent the Feeding Unit and chaplains to the scene. During their time in Lakeview, Ohio DR volunteers served 1632 meals to residents and recovery workers who visited the feeding site. In addition, they also provided food to the American Red Cross which distributed it to those who were unable to visit the feeding site. DR chaplains had 130 face-to-face contacts, 20 gospel conversations, two professions of faith and one Bible distributed. Ohio DR receives fifty percent of the Ray Roberts Offering and those funds help DR minister to victims of disaster.

*Please pray for Lakeview and other Ohio communities that have been impacted by the 69 tornadoes that have hit Ohio communities this year. Please pray for the Lord to continue to call out new volunteers in all areas of DR so we can help provide help, hope, and healing to those in Ohio who are impacted by natural disasters.*



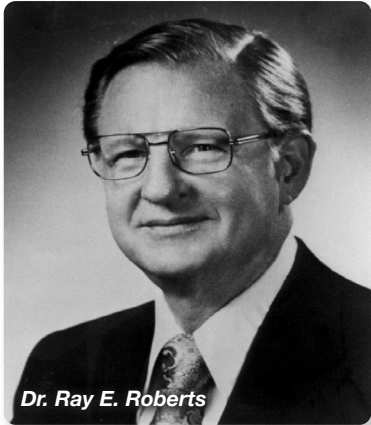
Sam Romine

## SAM ROMINE Redemption Church, Johnstown

Launched this summer, Redemption Church, Johnstown, used funds from the Ray Roberts Offering to update its facility in order to prepare for Sunday gatherings. They furnished children’s spaces, created a welcoming lobby, and updated things in the sanctuary for Sunday morning worship. “The funds were truly a blessings,” said Pastor Sam Romine.

The mission statement of our church is “We exist to exalt Christ, equip the saints, and engage the lost.”

*Please pray that we can be faithful to Christ and his word above all else; that we can love, disciple, and equip the believers who are a part of our church; that we would be a powerful gospel presence in the Johnstown community; and that the Lord would use Redemption Church to bring many to faith in the Lord Jesus.*

**RAY ROBERTS** State Missions Offering**Mr. Ohio Baptist – The Legacy of Dr. Ray E. Roberts**

Dr. Ray E. Roberts

“The story of Southern Baptists in Ohio cannot be told apart from the life and ministry of Ray E. Roberts, transplanted North Carolinian whom God brought to Ohio by the way of Kentucky,” former Ohio Baptist Messenger Editor L.H. Moore in his 1979 book, *The History of Southern Baptists in Ohio*.

The Ray Roberts State Missions Offering is a fund supported by Ohio Southern Baptists and managed by the SCBO to further God’s Kingdom in the state of Ohio. It is named after one of the earliest pioneers of Southern Baptist Cooperation in Ohio who also served as the first Executive Director of the SCBO.

Dr. Ray Roberts first visited Ohio in 1951. In July of 1952, he began serving as a missionary in Ohio for the Home Mission Board, Kentucky Baptist Convention, and White Water Baptist Association.

Upon his arrival, Roberts shared his burden for Ohio and its lost population.

“It is my deep conviction,” Roberts said. “That the ripest field for Southern Baptist work in the USA lies within the boundaries of the state of Ohio. This conviction has not been formed by hearsay but as I have come face to face with undeniable facts. Every preacher who has been privileged to come in contact with the work in Ohio shares my conviction.”

On January 8, 1954, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio was organized under Dr. Roberts’ supervision with thirty-nine churches representing ten thousand members.

Roberts served the SCBO as Executive Secretary for twenty-five years, during which time the convention grew to include fourteen associations and 449 churches.

Upon his retirement, the SCBO State Missions Offering was renamed the Ray Roberts State Missions Offering in his honor.

Throughout his tenure, Roberts kept the goal of SCBO in mind. “There are no geographical boundaries on the great commission and it would certainly be a gross sin if we fail God in this ripe field of opportunity,” he said. “The goal for our work is a Southern Baptist church in every community in Ohio.”

The vision of Ray Roberts continues in today’s SCBO. Funds from the Ray Roberts State Mission Offering are split 50/50 between church planting efforts in Ohio and Ohio Disaster Relief.

Churches and individuals can contribute financially to state missions any time, but one week of September is set aside each year to emphasize the importance of mission work in Ohio. Many churches around the state will take this opportunity to join together in prayer, to share stories and testimonies of God’s continued work in Ohio, and to collect financial gifts in support of the Ray Roberts Offering. To contribute online visit <https://www.scbo.org/give>.

**ASSOCIATION MEETINGS**

COMING SOON   
Mark Your Calendar

Sept  
16**Cincinnati Area Baptist Association**

6:45pm @ New Hope, Loveland

Oct  
5**Buckeye Central/Erie Baptist Association**

10:00am @ Lincoln Heights

Oct  
7**Northwest Ohio Baptist Association**

6:00pm @ Haven Heights, Wauseon

Oct  
8**Greater Dayton Association of Baptists**

4:00pm @ The Bridge Church, Miamisburg

Oct  
12**West Central Baptist Association**

9:00am @ Sydney Baptist

Oct  
15**Ohio Valley Baptist Association**

7:00pm @ The Valley Church, Cincinnati

Oct  
19**Steel Valley Baptist Association**

9:00am @ Steel Valley Church, Youngstown

Oct  
20**Cleveland Hope**

5:30pm @ Erieside, Willowick

Oct  
20**Muskingum Valley Baptist Association**

6:00pm @ Faith, Belle Valley

Oct  
20**Summit Baptist Association**

6:00pm @ Freedom Hill, Stowe

Oct  
21**Northcoast Baptist Association**

7:00pm @ First Baptist Church Vermillion

Oct  
24**Southwest Baptist Association**

7:00pm @ East River Road, Fairfield

Oct  
28**Strategic Church Network**

11:30am @ SCN Ministry Hub

**RAY ROBERTS** State Missions Offering**Through Waters Deep – Barre, Vermont**

By John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director

“Lightning never strikes twice,” is a phrase that doesn’t apply to Barre, Vermont. The city and the surrounding communities flooded on July 10, 2023, and then again on July 10, 2024.

In July Ohio DR served 15 families cleaning up homes that had 12 inches of water and/or eight to ten inches of mud in the basements and crawl spaces. The water could be pumped out, but the dirt and mud had to be carried out in five gallon buckets.

**Ministry to an Atheist** - Barre is home to many proud atheists. An SBDR team from South Carolina served Peter, a vocal atheist. His interaction with the DR team made a difference.

On Facebook Peter wrote, “Two gentlemen and a woman fogged our freshly mucked basement against mold. As it became obvious they were done, I approached them to thank them again and they said, ‘you’re welcome.’

“Then they asked if I would say a prayer with them and receive this Bible as an additional gift. He showed me the title page with their signatures and good wishes, which promised to pray for me in my recovery in the future.

“I could feel my default reaction to evangelicals rising in my gorge. A younger me wanting to belittle them for their belief in a vain Sky Fairy and a 6000 year old planet but, and maybe THIS is proof of God -- somehow I held my tongue. I said yes to it all. How could I not? They had just provided a key part of getting this house back up on its feet. We held hands in a circle on Hudson Avenue and prayed.

“They never asked me about my beliefs. They never asked for a donation. They would have baptized my basement whether I had prayed or not. Unconditional love or service or something I don’t have a name for and thank God this godless heathen kept his mouth shut for once.”

Compassion ministry has an effect on all people. DR is there to serve, regardless of beliefs or practices.

**Ministry to Believers** - Barre is home to Vicky who is a believer. Vicky’s brother passed away in April 2024, and his home flooded in July. The water seeped under the foundation filling the basement with water and mud leaving a huge hole outside the house. Vicky called multiple organizations but no one responded. Then Ohio DR showed up.



An Ohio DR team removed mud from 15 houses in Barre, Vermont, following massive flooding.

We assured her we would dig out the basement and fill in the hole out front. The team got to work and over several hours removed the mud from the basement, one 5-gallon bucket at a time, and filled the gaping hole outside.

Vicky started the day feeling discouraged because no one would help her. When we called her and said we were coming, she was excited. When the project was finished, she was so excited she turned up the gospel music in her car and danced in the front yard, praising Jesus for the answered prayer.

Later that day she texted, “Thank you all again! Having an emotional moment and realizing this was the first time I felt taken care of throughout this whole tragic experience. I’m feeling an abundance of gratitude and relief. Thank you!”

All people struggle through the effects of disaster situations. In Ohio DR we have the opportunity to serve believers and nonbelievers impacted by disaster.

Thanks to funding from the Cooperative Program and the Ray Roberts Offering, Ohio DR is able to bring help, hope, and healing. Thank you, Ohio Baptists, for your support.

# What Are You Sowing in Your Church? By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization catalyst

It is no surprise that more than 4,000 churches close their doors each year.

We blame the culture, the current generation, and sports teams. But the truth of the matter is that many of us are reaping what we have sown.

Many of us raised our congregants in church, but not in Christ. We preached expositional sermons, held Sunday School and weekly worship services, participated in visitation, held revivals, and our VBS weeks were phenomenal, but our motivation was growing our churches more than impacting the kingdom. We told them how to practice what was preached, but rarely emulated what was expected.

Over the years our programs have become our preferred traditions and now we treat them as biblical truths. The motive is gaining attendees at church rather than seeing souls become a part of the biblical church. This motivation leads to tragedy.

Here's the real problem. We have sown a possessive mentality. The building you meet in and the pew you sit in are not yours and they never were. They are God's and we need to surrender it all to Him--especially our possessive mindset.

Change is not a bad thing when it is to bring God glory. Start with changing your mind, then change some methods, but never change the enduring gospel message.

Assess the reality of the programs that have become sacred cows and adjust. Ask people in the community what their impression is of the church you attend without telling them you attend. Don't get angry or defensive. Simply listen, take notes, and share with the rest of the church family. Remember, the first church in Acts had favor among all the people.

We are commanded to go into all the world. Start by going across the street to your neighbor. What else can you sow differently?

There are many possibilities for struggling congregations. Let us help. Contact [mjones@scbo.org](mailto:mjones@scbo.org) for a revitalization conversation. Or visit [www.scbo.org/revitalize](http://www.scbo.org/revitalize).

## Recurring Factors in Declining Churches:

Many want younger families to attend but have no real strategy to reach them. We seek ways to bring them to our buildings yet never visit them in the parks. It is easier to complain about them not attending strategizing ways to love and lead them to the kingdom.

Pastors who have no vision for the congregation or have a goal of retirement hold their sheep hostage and starved for direction. They have lost the love they had at first and have become comfortable and complacent, ignoring their initial calling.

Many fear the change necessary and would rather decline and die than try to thrive. They will say "over my dead body" and not even consider the importance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

We say we want to have baptisms, but clutter blocks the stairway to the baptistry. Clutter possibly closes off the changing rooms all together. If you want baptisms, prepare the baptistry to prove it.

## What are you sowing?

Here is a simple aesthetic question, how many storage spaces are there in your building? Of those storage areas, how many used to be classrooms? When is the last time you utilized the stuff in "storage."

This may seem harsh, but it is meant to be a helpful reality. If you want younger families, more baptisms, and new life, change must happen. Ironically, many of us will bend over backwards for our grandchildren except when it comes to what happens at "our" church.

## Cincinnati Area Pastor Finds Love Again

Congratulations to Pastor Jerome Byrd and his new wife Brenda Bryd on their marriage July 13, 2024. Jerome is pastor of Good News Baptist Church in the Cincinnati area. He and Brenda met for the first time in the exhibition hall of the 2023 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. To read the beautiful story of how the Lord brought them together, click the link below to the Baptist Press article "Love on Exhibit."



Pastor Jerome and Brenda Byrd  
Photo courtesy of BP and Byrd Family

## Need Better Health Care Options? By Kevin Heaton, SCBO financial administrator

Are you looking for a more affordable health care option? Perhaps you want to lower the cost or offer a wider range of benefits?

In partnership with GuideStone, The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio is offering a way for churches who are affiliated with the SCBO to provide an employer sponsored “association” health plan (AHP) for their pastors and/or staff.

AHP’s can be advantageous for churches that may struggle to provide competitive health benefits to their ministers and staff.

Through an AHP, churches can collectively enhance their ability to offer comprehensive health coverage as part of their pastoral and staff compensation.

AHP’s can potentially offer lower premiums and administrative costs compared to individual health insurance plans.

AHP’s can provide access to a wider range of health insurance plans and benefits that may include comprehensive coverage options tailored to the needs of the church’s pastoral and administrative staff.

In summary, AHP’s provide a valuable option for churches and self-employed individuals to access

more affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage by leveraging the collective bargaining power and administrative efficiencies through membership in an association of churches and their staff.

If you are interested in learning more about AHP’s, please follow the link to complete the online survey.: <https://wkf.ms/3ythL4F>

GuideStone will provide insurance cost estimates based on the information collected. For those who respond to this initial request, a follow up survey from GuideStone will take place in September to gather more specific data in order to formulate specifics about the type of health plan and to provide a detailed cost.

The final step will take place in November which will allow for open enrollment. For those who enroll, the plan start date will be January 1st, 2025.

If you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Heaton via [kheaton@scbo.org](mailto:kheaton@scbo.org) or phone the SCBO office for more information about this process and the plan.



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# Church Plant Engages Multicultural Community Through Sports

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

A Columbus area church plant is using the international love of sports to share the love of Christ in its multicultural community.

Redemption Hill Church, Galloway is on the westside of Columbus. Pastor Josh Rosentreter planted the church there two and a half years ago with the unique make-up of the population in mind.

“One of the things about our particular community is it’s very diverse,” Rosentreter said. “We have a large Ukrainian population here. We have a large Islamic population in our area.”

In addition to the Ukrainian and Islamic populations, Galloway is also home to a Hispanic community and rural Caucasian residents.

“If I go on a run, I turn left and I jog a mile, I run into a very large mosque,” Rosentreter said. “If I turn right and I run a mile, I run into a biker bar tavern. So, we have both of those worlds happening all around us.”

For the past three summers, Redemption Hill has sponsored sports camps to reach the different ethnic groups in the community. “Football and soccer are must-haves in our community. We’re still in Columbus so kids love football,” Rosentreter said.

“The first year we did sports camp, we didn’t have soccer, and kids showed up in cleats and shin guards anyway,” he said. “When they hear sports, they only know one. It is the world sport.”

For the past two years a team from Park Baptist Church in Rock Hills, South Carolina, has come to facilitate sports camps. “It’s been a really great partnership.”

This year Redemption Hill held two sports camps. The first was in June and participants could choose from football, soccer, baseball, and badminton.

“Badminton always starts small, but it always becomes a bigger one by the end of the week,” Rosentreter noted. “The people who do it are really great and they recruit the kids and it’s a lot of fun.”

The second sports camp was in late July and featured football, soccer, and pickleball. The church set up a pickleball court in the parking lot of the Galloway sports complex.

Sports like badminton and pickleball are interesting to kids who are hesitant about participating, according to Rosentreter.

“So that helps us again, when kids are like, ‘I don’t really like sports,’ we say, ‘but have you ever tried this one? It’s not as much running and sweating,’” he said.



Baseball was featured during two sports camps sponsored by Redemption Hill Church, Galloway.

Sports aren’t the only focus during the 4-day camp. “We ask the kids if they want to learn the whole Bible in about four days.” Attendees learn about creation, the fall, Jesus, and Jesus’ return during camp.

The Bible lessons are reinforced during small groups. “They take them back to their sports and then in those smaller groups, they sit them in a circle and review the story for the day,” Rosentreter said.

Block parties are also a vital outreach tool during sports camps. The first camp ended with a block party and the second camp started with one.

Both sports camps and block parties have given Redemption Hill an opportunity to connect with its community. “We get a lot of addresses and where people are and then we share the gospel with them,” Rosentreter said.

On “Witnessing Wednesdays,” church members and staff go out to visit people at their homes and invite them to church. “We just make a little goodie bag for them. We say to them, ‘We want you to know you are welcome at Redemption Hill Church,’ and then we engage them and try to share the gospel with them,” Rosentreter said.

Six weeks after last year’s block party, a man and his wife showed up at church. He grew up Catholic and over the course of six months, he came to faith in Christ. He was baptized at Redemption Hill in March 2024.

*Story continues on the next page...*

“Obviously, I think that one of the best things that happens for our church is it gives our people an opportunity to connect with more people in our community,” he notes. This summer, Redemption Hill has connected with 139 children and over 400 people at block parties.

Connecting with the community is costly, but the Lord has provided. Gifts from two churches and an SCBO evangelism grant helped provide the resources for sports camps and block parties.

“That was a huge help,” Rosentreter said. The donated funds provided sports equipment, permits to use the local park, and inflatables for block parties.

As Redemption Hill continues its community outreach, Ohio Baptists can specifically pray for this church plant, according to Rosentreter. He asks for prayer for the follow up efforts.

“We’ve definitely experienced that the best fruit really comes from those one on one conversations. And so just pray that we’re bold enough to just take that next step to knock on the door and that the Lord would open it. Then we would walk through and share the gospel, and that the Lord would use that to call people to himself.”

## Charity Gayle to be Guest Artist for Worship 4:24 2025

By Zac James, SCBO worship consultant



Charity Gayle

Today I’m excited to announce that Charity Gayle will be our guest artist for Worship 4:24 on January 24-25, 2025.

According to Charity’s website:

“Focusing on bridging the gap between worship and gospel music, she has authored songs like ‘Amen’ ‘Psalm 100 (Enter In),’ ‘Cleansed’ and ‘New Name Written Down in Glory.’ Her first record, ‘Lord, You are my Song,’ debuted at #1 in the Christian and gospel genre in January 2018. She recently released her sophomore album ‘Endless Praise’ in Sept. 2021, featuring the song ‘Thank You Jesus for the Blood’ also debuting at #1.

Most recently, Charity received a Dove Award for the song ‘Benediction (As You Go)’ on Selah’s record, ‘Firm Foundation.’

Charity lives with and leads worship with her husband, Ryan Kennedy. They are cultivating a movement for 24-hour prayer and worship called GatherHouse and are continuing to write and spread the gospel in the US and globally.”

In my own church at FBC Lancaster, we sing her song “I Speak Jesus” and love it. We recently introduced her song, “Thank You Jesus For the Blood,” and it has been a powerful song of confession and thanksgiving that illuminates the saving power of Jesus for our people. Everything I have seen and heard and discussed with her team suggests that Charity is focused on unifying the church around the gospel of Jesus Christ and exalting Jesus through worship.

Pastors, I’m really excited for you, your worship leaders, and your worship team to learn about best practices in worship ministry from Charity and her team, and for us to worship together this January.

Now, here’s the secret: if you register your team today, it will only cost \$50/ticket per adult and \$25 per student. This is an incredible price for what you’re going to get. We expect our conference expenses to go up this year, but we are trying not to pass them on to you. We want to do everything possible to not increase prices so church plants and churches struggling financially can still send their teams.

Also, for your 14-18 year olds, please encourage them to attend the Weekend of Worship on Thursday! It adds a bonus day to the conference! You’ll meet guest artists for Worship 4:24, spend time with worship bands from Cedarville, and select bands will get a chance to play and receive feedback from worship professionals.

Cedarville University will host Worship 4:24 again. Cedarville has been an incredible partner for this conference, and I just want to say thank you to the Cedarville Worship Department and leadership for making this possible year after year.

Register your team today <https://www.cedarville.edu/events/worship424>, and lock in a great price for an incredible conference for your whole worship team.

## World Changers Meet Needs, Share Gospel in Cleveland

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

For teenagers, summertime means lounging by the pool, hanging out with friends, and maybe working a part-time job.

However, for a week in early July, youth from across the country gave up their summer activities to do construction projects and community outreach while sharing the gospel.

Two hundred and eighty teens and their chaperones gathered to work with Cleveland Hope, formerly known as the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association, where 47.5 percent of the population are unaffiliated with any religious organization.

“There were groups from California that flew in from San Francisco Bay,” said Beth Loseto, mobilization coordinator, Cleveland Hope. “There were groups from Oklahoma that took two days to drive up here. All kinds of different states came to Cleveland for a week.”

The group came to serve in a World Changers construction/community project. The ministry describes itself as “a hands-on mission experience, engaging students in meeting the needs of people in communities across North America. Students are able to put their faith into action by serving others and sharing the gospel.”

After arriving in Cleveland, the group was divided into twenty-four teams that tackled twenty-four projects. “Primarily it was construction, but there were also ministry sites as well,” Loseto noted. “For construction, sometimes they’re helping churches with their buildings.”



Two hundred eighty youth from across the U.S. gathered in Cleveland to participate in a World Changers project.

Construction projects included installing drywall, building ramps, and knocking down walls, to name a few.

In addition, students had the unique opportunity to work in Cleveland’s Old Brooklyn neighborhood rehabilitating houses. The local development corporation provided the names of elderly residents who needed maintenance on their dilapidated homes.

The elderly homeowners are having problems with the city because their homes do not meet current city codes. “It’s really hard for these elderly residents,” Loseto said. “The city sends them fines and takes them to court if they don’t fix them.”

*Story continues on the next page...*

## Christian Alliance for Orphans Summit

Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) Summit is a global hub of connection, learning and action – convening more than 2,000 Christian leaders, advocates, pastors and parents from every U.S. state and more than 50+ countries each year – to see God’s people care effectively for vulnerable children and families, rooted always in Christian discipleship and the life of the local church.

This year’s event, CAFO2024, will be held September 18-20 at Brentwood Baptist Church in Nashville. In addition to workshops, plenary sessions, and worship, CAFO2024

features more than 50 booths and exhibits, a bookstore, a marketplace for global arts and crafts and a host of other connection and learning opportunities - including CEU credits.

This year’s Summit will also feature a series of Pre-Summit Intensives including the CAFO Research Center Symposium, Global Collaborate, sessions on the vital role of the Christian family in promoting mental health, and healthy practices for ministries and organizations! To learn more, visit <https://summit.cafo.org>





World Changers teams stepped in to do the labor at no cost to the homeowners. The development corporation provided grant money for the supplies. In four and a half days of work, teams were able to bring five homes up to code.

In addition to construction projects, a World Changer team participated in community outreach sports camps at Bridge Church at Perry. An evangelism grant from SCBO provided funds to rent the school venue for sports camp as well as other needed supplies.

“We are grateful for the generous support of our state-wide family of churches,” said Darin Avery, pastor, Bridge Church at Perry, and Cleveland Hope AMS

“Our 10-person World Changer crew helped Bridge Church at Perry host a two-day afternoon soccer clinic and a four-day morning sports camp featuring flag football, soccer, basketball, creative arts/dance, and ultimate frisbee,” Avery said.

“We shared Jesus with the Hispanic and non-Hispanic kids who came, and also took steps towards a long-term goal of establishing an ESL program for these neighbors.”

The four-day sports camp, attended by nearly 70 kids from the broader Perry community and nearby town of Madison, featured daily praise songs, memorizing John 3:16 and hearing Bible stories of Jesus’ love for people.

“It’s hard to gauge the impact of an event like a sports camp, but we know that many gospel seeds were sown in the hearts of unchurched kids and their parents each day, and our free event creates a ton of good will and name recognition for Bridge Church in our community,” Avery said.

Loseto couldn’t agree more. “People don’t have hope and peace in our city, and it’s really obvious,” she said. “So, for that many believers to literally flood our city for a week has a huge impact.

“You can’t argue with youth who have paid \$300 to come to our city to just serve,” Loseto noted. “That kind of puts all the arguments down to say ‘Wait, what’s the difference about these youth.’ It’s Jesus, and they want to know more about Jesus.”

World Changers’ youth volunteers were also impacted. During the week, 20 people accepted Christ as their Savior, and many of them were the students. “Many of these youth have the head knowledge of the gospel, but once they get to see other kids serving and see those that are lost, that head knowledge becomes heart knowledge.”

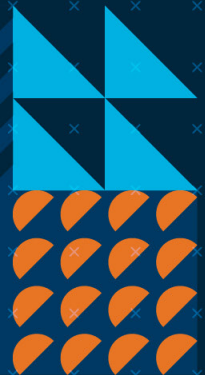
Cleveland Hope will be welcoming World Changers again July 5-12, 2025. Youth groups from Ohio are invited to be a part of this project. For more information contact [www.world-changers.net](http://www.world-changers.net).

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# Job Postings

## SENIOR PASTOR

Grace Baptist Church, Tiffin

Grace Baptist Church is seeking a full-time senior pastor to set the vision and lead the church. Grace BC is in a growing community of approximately 18,000 with two universities. Candidates should have a persistent prayer life, ability to present God's word, and an eagerness to reach those within and around the community. Candidates should also have integrity as well as some pastoral experience and a seminary degree is preferred.

Please submit the following with your application as a PDF for the committee's viewing and downloading ease: updated resume; at least 3 references who have seen you serve in ministry; links to videos/audios of the most recent preaching/teaching; recent photo of self/family; and a paragraph on why you feel called to serve at Grace. Send all information by email to: Dianna Distel [ddistel@gracetiffin.org](mailto:ddistel@gracetiffin.org) or by postal: Grace Baptist Church 161 North St. Rt. 101 Tiffin, Oh 44883, Attn: Dianna Distel.

## WORSHIP LEADER

Logan Elm Baptist Church, Circleville

Logan Elm Baptist Church (LEBC), Circleville, is seeking a part-time minister of music/worship leader. LEBC is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and runs between 120 to 150 on Sunday mornings. We affirm the regulative principle of worship and currently sing both traditional and contemporary hymns (e.g., Getty Music, Sovereign Grace Music) accompanied by piano and percussion instruments.

The position is 8-12 hours per week with compensation of \$16,000 - \$19,000, depending on experience and qualifications. To view the full job description, please visit <https://lebc.org/jobs/>. To apply, submit a cover letter, resume, and an explanation of your philosophy of worship to Bill Gibson, church administrator, at [william.gibson@lebc.org](mailto:william.gibson@lebc.org).

## OHIO DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING



**SEPT. 21**

H2O Church, Bowling Green

QRU, FR, CSR 🍷 🍷 🍷

252 S Main St., Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

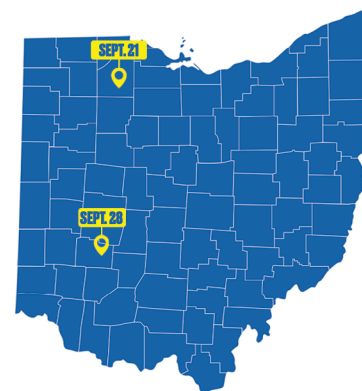


**SEPT. 28**

First Baptist Kettering, Kettering

QRU, FR, CSR 🍷 🍷 🍷

3939 Swigart Rd., Beavercreek, Ohio 45440



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🍷 QRU - Quick Response Feeding Unit 🍷 FR - Flood Recovery 🍷 CSR - Chainsaw Recovery

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