

AUGUST 2025  
VOLUME 73 ISSUE 8

# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



## Super Summer Experiences Record Growth

Full story on page 8



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## *The Ohio Baptist Messenger Staff*

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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).*

# The Blessing of Seasons in Life and Ministry

One of the blessings of living here in the great state of Ohio is the changing of the seasons.

Everyone has their favorite, and I am aware of the many opinions regarding the winters here, but even the winter months have a purpose...hopefully a few deep freezes to kill those mosquitoes! I know the normal harvest season is not here yet, but the summer months have been a harvest of blessings for the SCBO.

## Cooperative Program giving continues to remain strong.

We are halfway through the fiscal year with a near-record budget. I am happy to share that six months into 2025, we have met the budget and are operating in the black.

Thank you, Ohio Baptists, for supporting missions not only among the neighborhoods here in Ohio but also worldwide missions among the nations. I often speak with our IMB missionaries who are from SCBO churches, and they always say thank you for supporting them through your CP giving.

## Super Summer 2025 was a resounding success.

To the glory of God, we had a RECORD attendance of 475 students and leaders on campus at Cedarville University. I am thrilled to share that 21 students gave their lives to Christ, 35 were called into full-time ministry, and 72 students indicated their desire to pursue full-time

missions! I am so thankful the Lord still saves and calls out the next generation. Thank you, Ohio Baptists, for your generous support to help make these opportunities possible.

## SCBO welcomes a new Senior Staff Member.

I am eager to share with you that Dr. Ryan Strother joined the SCBO team on August 1. He will replace Steve Hopkins on our Senior Staff, serving as Director of Convention Support.

Since 2021, Ryan has served as the Executive Director-Treasurer for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. He has Ohio roots, serving as the Senior Pastor of Central Baptist in Marion and also as SCBO President in 2019 and 2020. Please join me in welcoming the Strother family back to Ohio and thanking the Lord for his blessing of seasons in our lives and ministries.

Moving Forward,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



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(بمنهجية وإستراتيجية فعالة - ٢ تي ٢:٢)



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook



Dr. James Combs



Pastor Ibrahim Zabaneh



Pastor Amer Safadi

Arabic Church Pastors  
and Potential Planters

# Training Gathering

"Disciples Making Disciples, Multiplication" 2 Timothy 2:2



Dr. Ram'on Osorio



Rev. Amgad Beshai



Dr. Tony Lynn

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# President's Pen

## *Keep Making Disciples for Jesus*

*And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Mt 28:17–20). (2016). Crossway Bibles.*

The Bible is sometimes shockingly honest. Jesus has just conquered sin and death. He's invited His disciples to touch His side and eat along with Him. Rightly, they worship Him...but some doubted. They doubted?!?!?! They're literally face to face with the risen King...and some doubted.

Like the disciples, we worship Jesus. Like the disciples, we have come to know and believe that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He has the Words of Life; where else would we go? And like the disciples, sometimes we have doubts.

Are you in a season of doubt? Of faith-filled worship? Of struggle? Of joyful victory?

No matter what season you are in, remember the Lord's command to make disciples. Baptize them. Train them to observe all of the Lord's commands...including the one to make disciples! Tell them to remember Jesus; He's with His people, all the time, no matter what, until the end.

He loves His people.

One of the great things about being an Ohio Baptist is the support. Are you going through a tough time? Help is just an email or phone call away. There are amazing resources in our state to help church leaders who are struggling. We can help you remember the mercy of the Lord, and 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





# The Common Call That Binds Us Together

By Stephen Owens, SCBO Northeast Region catalyst

Hey Northeast family. I pray that you are enjoying the warm weather because in northeast Ohio, we only get a few months of it. I hope you have been able to take a break and refresh for a little bit.

This is also the time when many churches ramp up their outreach efforts with sports camps, back-to-school bashes, and car washes. I'm praying the Lord is blessing your effort as you share the love and gospel of Jesus with your community.

As we seek to connect with our local community, I believe it's also important for us to connect with other churches to encourage one another, especially those who are a part of our local Baptist associations.

I had the privilege of connecting and serving with a group of pastors from the Cleveland Hope Association for the ordination council of the new Senior Pastor Joe Valenti at Cuyahoga Valley Church, Broadview Heights. This moment was truly special and encouraging.

The council was led by CVC founding pastor, Rick Duncan, and he assembled an amazingly diverse group of pastors from the association to serve. These were pastors who served in smaller and larger congregations, pastors who served different ethnic churches, as well as pastors of older established churches, and pastors of church plants. In the midst of all of this diversity, there was unity around the Lord Jesus as we encouraged Pastor Joe.

This moment reminded me of Philippians 1, where the Apostle Paul wrote about "fellowship in the gospel" (1:5). We are in fellowship with one another in the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

On a very foundational level, everyone in the room had one thing in common that superseded any difference we had – our faith in the risen Lord Jesus.

Then, on a vocational level, we have a common call of the Lord to serve his church, no matter the size or location. The Lord has chosen us to serve in the vineyard, reaching people for Jesus, and helping Christians become more like Jesus while leading a local church —a task that is no easy endeavor.

And this common vocational calling had me thinking about Philippians 3:10, which speaks about the "fellowship of his (Jesus') sufferings". As pastors, we will experience hardship and trials as we seek to serve the Lord and his church. But, praise God, the Lord encourages us because Philippians 2:1 tells us we have the "fellowship of the Spirit" to comfort us in Christ during those difficult moments.

Our time together highlights two values of the SCBO: "prioritizing the pastor" and "welcoming kingdom diversity." The pastors came together to encourage the next lead pastor of a church in the Cleveland area. And the pastors on the council showed the diversity that is already among us, which we need if we are going to reach our neighborhood and nations for Jesus. Let us continue to encourage one another and reach our diverse communities for King Jesus.

If I can be of assistance, feel free to reach out. [sowens@gmail.com](mailto:sowens@gmail.com)



The poster features a green background with a golf course scene. In the center, the Ohio Baptist Foundation logo (a shield with a leaf and the letters OBF) is positioned above the text "OHIO BAPTIST FOUNDATION". Below this, the words "INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT" are written in large, bold, white capital letters. In the bottom right corner, the dates "09 • 15 • 2025" are displayed, followed by the venue information: "The Lakes Golf & Country Club, 6740 Worthington Rd, Westerville, OH 43082".



## SCBO Welcomes New Senior Staff Member

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor

A familiar face is returning to Ohio, bringing his ministry experience to benefit SCBO and Ohio Baptists.

On August 1, Dr. Ryan Strother joined the SCBO team as Director of Convention Support. He previously served as the Executive Director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

As the pastor of Central Baptist Church, Marion, Ohio, for 12 years, Strother also served SCBO from 2016-2020 in three leadership positions – President, 1st Vice President, and 2nd Vice President.

Since 2009, Strother, his wife, Nikki, and their five children, ages 16-12, have called Ohio home, and he is excited to minister again in the Buckeye State.

“We’ve lived in Marion since 2009,” Strother said. “That’s where I started in a lead pastoral role.”

Both Ryan and Nikki grew up in Maryland and lived outside of Baltimore before moving to Ohio.

“We were not Midwesterners. We were East Coast people, but when we came here, it didn’t take long for us to say ‘We are Midwesterners.’”

Returning to ministry in Ohio feels special to Strother and his family.

“Every place you’ve ever served, there are always memories there. There are always things that you’ll cherish. And so in a lot of ways, this is a homecoming for us.”

“The Lord’s timing is always perfect,” said Dr. Jeremy Westbrook, SCBO executive director. “What a joy it is to



Dr. Ryan Strother, SCBO director of convention support. Photo Courtesy of State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

welcome back Dr. Ryan Strother to SCBO. His title will be the Director of Convention Support, and he will serve on the Senior Staff, but Ryan has been doing that for years in his previous roles serving Ohio Baptists. Please join me in welcoming back the Strother family.”

In his new role, Strother’s ministry focus will be on Ohio’s pastors and churches.

“I will support anything in the area of pastoral wellness, church support, and church health initiatives,” he said.

In addition, he will also work with SCBO Prayer and Association Consultant Steve Hopkins.

*Story continues on the next page...*

Annual

WOMEN'S

Event

Register today

Encouragement and Strength  
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> SEPTEMBER  
13, 2025

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
GENOA BAPTIST CHURCH

SCBO



"I'll be blessed to work alongside Steve Hopkins still for a little while at least," he said. "I talked to him and I said, 'I hope you still do this for 20 more years.' He didn't commit to that, but I'll work with him on prayer initiatives and associational relationships. I'm really looking forward to jumping in there."

Strother is also looking forward to bringing his experience, skills, and abilities to support the SCBO staff and Dr. Jeremy Westbrook's vision for Ohio.

"I know one of the things he's charged me with is how to provide counseling services to pastors in the state. That's in my wheelhouse. That'll be a fun project to tackle in the first few months – just how do we serve pastors best?"

Strother is in a unique position to understand the needs of pastors in the local church since he grew up in a pastor's home, and his grandfather was also a pastor.

"I'm a third-generation minister, which was not my choice," he recalled. "I wanted to have a real job and be a normal church member."

After a year as a middle school social studies teacher, he realized the Lord was calling him to ministry.

His grandfather, who fought in World War II, served churches into his nineties, and his father is still ministering today in his seventies.

"He pastored the same church all of my childhood. He was there until I moved out and married. So I saw longevity. I saw what the fruit of that could be."

These examples influence the goals he has for his ministry at SCBO.

"I want to see pastors in the pulpit longer. I want to see churches actually baptizing, seeing people saved, doing what we're doing on mission, and not becoming so self-focused.

"We celebrate that baptism rates have been up in Ohio; they were up in Indiana last year, too. We're celebrating that for sure. I want to see that number go up. We need to see more churches. We need all of this, and we can work together, and we can see so much of this happen."

In addition, he hopes to help meet the emotional needs of pastors, giving them the freedom to acknowledge the struggles of ministry.

"I just hope no pastor feels alone. There are people with them, and they know there's support. They know that brothers and sisters will lock arms and say, 'No, we're with you in this. Let's keep going.'"

## Upcoming Opportunities to Seek a Deeper Relationship with Jesus

By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization consultant

This month, I want to simply make you aware of upcoming opportunities and free resources to help you seek a deeper relationship with Jesus.

This Saturday, August 2, the West Central Association's Hillcrest Baptist Church in Bellefontaine will host a Pastor's Conference for a time of preaching, praying, and praising.

Centered on the theme of 2 Corinthians 4:1, highlights will include a message by Jeff Mixon on the persevering pastor. Pastor Jeff has served as the senior pastor of New Life Church in Cincinnati since 2017. He received his doctorate from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Our very own Steve Hopkins will bring a message on the praying pastor. [www.scbo.org/events](http://www.scbo.org/events)

On Friday and Saturday, September 19-20, join us in Lancaster for two powerful days of spiritual renewal and encouragement designed for pastors, church leaders, and congregants ready for a fresh season of gospel-centered ministry.

Mark Clifton, NAMB's Replant Director, will guide us through intentional sessions filled with prayer, hope, and renewed focus on Jesus. You'll walk away with practical resources, renewed energy, and tools to lead

your church into a healthier future. There is a bonus session on Saturday with SCBO Revitalization Consultant Mark Jones and Pastor Scott Gibson, The Bridge Church, Lancaster. Worship led by SCBO Worship Consultant Zac James. <http://go.scbo.org/refresh>

How is your relationship with Jesus? How about that of your congregation? Renewal and revitalization begin by having a right relationship with Jesus. It is easy to go through the motions and become more involved in what I call "man-istry" rather than true ministry.

A first step is the free resource made available by the NAMB Replant Team in hard copy and PDF format entitled, "Falling in Love with Jesus Again," a tool they have compiled to take your congregation on a journey back to Jesus. I have just taken my congregation in Stow through it and it has been wonderful. Find out more here - <https://replanthub.com/fallinginlovewithjesusagain/>

My hope and prayer are that you will realize the resources and possibilities available at your fingertips. All of this is made available by your faithful Cooperative Program giving. Connect with me at [www.scbo.org/revitalize](http://www.scbo.org/revitalize).



# Super Summer Experiences Record Growth

By Keith Hurt, SCBO director of next gen



*Super Summer is an intense week of study and spiritual challenge.*

Another record Super Summer is in the books!

Held at Cedarville University during the last week of June, Super Summer had record involvement with 475 students and staff in attendance.

To accommodate the large number, two worship services were held each night – one for older students and one for younger students. This allowed the Dean Inserra, lead pastor, City Church, Tallahassee, Florida, to tailor his nightly messages to each age group. TakeHeart led worship for both services nightly.

Throughout the week, Inserra spoke on “Permanent Things” that are “Unending.” His messages encouraged students to build their houses on the rock of Christ’s teaching, to stay anchored to God and his Word, and to live from a place of intimacy with Jesus. He also led our

students in an extended time of prayer each evening.

In addition to evening worship, Super Summer uses biblical truth to develop Christian leaders for kingdom impact.

Students who have just finished seventh grade through their freshman year in college receive training that is specific to their grade level. Some of the top pastors and leaders in the SCBO come together to invest in our student leaders.

At each grade level, students worship together, hear teaching from gifted SCBO pastors, and then discuss the application of the lessons in small groups.

The students choose a total of six elective classes to attend during the week, including topics like Responding to the Call to Ministry, Character Matters, Church Planting, Mental Health and Leadership, and Understanding How You Are Wired to Worship, as well as many others.

The intense week of study and spiritual challenge led to students making a variety of decisions in their walk with the Lord: Twenty-one students made professions of faith; thirty-five students were called to full-time ministry; and seventy-two students were called to missions.

Please pray that each of our Super Summer students would continue to pursue Jesus and the specific kingdom contribution that God has for them.

Also, please click the Super Summer video graphic below to see the Super Summer Recap video and to learn more about developing your student leaders through Super Summer. God Bless!

**340 Students  
& 135 Adults**

**21 professions of faith**

**35 called to full time ministry**

**72 called to missions**

**SCBO**



**WATCH THE 2025 RECAP VIDEO**  
[SuperSummerOhio.com](https://www.SuperSummerOhio.com)



# Super Summer: An Investment that Yields Profound Benefits

By Mark Wimbish, student and family life pastor, FBC Grove City

Super Summer is not just another event; it's a powerful opportunity for churches to significantly impact their youth.

As pastors and ministry leaders, we know the importance of cultivating effective leadership pipelines. We often consider crucial questions about the right age to start leadership training and the best environments for it.

The process of identifying and nurturing potential leaders during their time in student ministry can profoundly change the course of a local ministry, and Super Summer Ohio is the ultimate launchpad for this essential development.

At Super Summer, students engage in a dynamic and immersive educational environment with their peers, focusing on biblical truths and sharpening their leadership skills. They can choose from six targeted electives specifically designed to empower their leadership journey.

In addition, group sessions provide an invaluable opportunity for students to process what they've learned and tackle challenges with the support of experienced adult leaders who guide them effectively.

With over 20 years of service at Super Summer, I have witnessed countless students transform from middle and high schoolers into influential Sunday school teachers, deacons, pastors, ministry leaders, and dedicated servants of the kingdom. The excitement of watching their growth is unmatched.

What truly distinguishes Super Summer is its unwavering commitment to innovation. We don't cling to outdated traditions or rely solely on past successes. Instead, we actively develop leaders equipped to excel in their contemporary context and culture, all while steadfastly teaching God's truth.

I strongly encourage you to join us at Super Summer in 2026. Send three or four students and experience the transformative impact for yourself.

I understand that church schedules can be demanding, but we cannot afford to miss this critical opportunity to equip the leaders of today and tomorrow.

This is an investment that will yield profound and lasting benefits for your ministry and community.



SEND NETWORK  
**ONE DAY**  
— I>> —

**ONE DAY.  
ONE MISSION.  
JOIN US.**

## Guide Church

September 11, 2025 | Hilliard, Ohio

**Register at [SendNetwork.com/oneday](https://SendNetwork.com/oneday)**



# Lifeway's 2026 VBS Theme, 'Illumination Station,' Counters Confusion about Jesus with Biblical Clarity

By Marissa Postell Sullivan, Lifeway Christian Resources, writer



BRENTWOOD, Tenn — Culture claims to know about Jesus, but many people are in the dark about who He really is. Lifeway Christian Resources' 2026 Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme—"Illumination Station: Shining a Light on Who Jesus Really Is"—prepares churches to help kids discover Jesus is the Light of the world.

"I'm so excited that VBS 2026 is all about Jesus," said Melita Thomas, VBS specialist for Lifeway. "There's so much confusion in today's culture about who Jesus is. Some people say Jesus was just a man who lived a long time ago. Some might acknowledge Him as a good teacher or even a miracle worker. But He's so much more. He's the perfect, proven and powerful Son of God—the only One who can rescue us from sin and bring hope and light to a dark world."

Shining a light on Jesus, "Illumination Station" VBS introduces Jesus's question to Peter— "Who do you say I am?"—and helps kids answer this question based on what the Bible says about Him.

"Every church will bring 'Illumination Station' to life differently. Some may opt to create an immersive world of

a light exploration center, while others may choose to decorate each room with a different type of light source. You really can't go wrong with a theme like this that's going to be so much fun to decorate for," said Thomas. "We just want to encourage churches to not turn out the lights and make their churches dark places but to create a celebratory atmosphere of light on top of light on top of light."

From Spotlight Bible Study and Suncatcher Rec to Mirror Ball Music, Kaleidoscope Crafts, Neon Snacks and Glow-in-the-dark Missions, Thomas said "Illumination Station" is designed to allow kids to explore all the ways light brightens, illuminates, reflects, and reveals while discovering Jesus is who Scripture says He is.

More information about "Illumination Station"—including Bible stories, the theme song and the theme reveal video—can be found at [Lifeway.com/VBS](https://www.lifeway.com/VBS).



# SCBO Evangelism Grants Fuel VBS, Outreach Projects



## VBS Follow Up, Bethany Baptist Church, Liberty Township

**Family Celebration** - At our VBS Family Celebration, we rented inflatables, had cotton candy and snow cones, and served families who came. It was a lot of fun with many conversations throughout the event as we connected with new families. Some of the best stuff was watching our volunteers connect with each other.

**Pancakes with the Pastors** - However, the most exciting thing happened on the next Sunday. We held Pancakes with the Pastors and invited all the children and parents to have breakfast with our pastoral staff. We also invited other adults with whom we wanted to share the gospel. We ate and shared the gospel using Three Circles. Several students raised their hands seeking further follow-up. I'm glad to share that a few weeks later, we were able to have a second conversation, and at least two of those students gave their lives to Christ and were baptized in late July.

– Pastor Wayne Yeager, Bethany Baptist Church



## Vacation Bible School, Fellowship Baptist Church, Maineville

Our VBS was fantastic this year! We had over 130 kids in attendance, and we were able to share with them all about God's great love through sending his son! Every child that came through our doors learned that God sees them, God cares for them, God loves them, God forgives them, and God keeps His promises! What great truths for children to memorize! We also had so much fun at our Vacation Bible School! The kids ate yummy snacks, played games outside, and made an awesome craft! We believe that because of events like VBS, the kids in our community know they are loved by our church and by Jesus!

– Darcy Land, children's minister, Fellowship Baptist Church



## Blaze and VBS Camps, Waynesville Community Church, Waynesville

Thank you for your generous support of our Blaze and VBS camps! With your help, we reached over 25,000 people through social media during camp week and connected with 250 homes through canvassing the week prior. We served 150+ kids and students each day, supported by more than 100 volunteers from our church and Blue Springs Church in Tennessee. The week culminated in a special Sunday gathering with over 250 in attendance, who stayed for a meal and time of fellowship. Most importantly, we saw seven professions of faith during the week, and we are actively following up with each one. Lives were truly impacted, and we are deeply grateful for SBCO's role in making it all possible.

– Pastor Todd Cyphers, Waynesville Community Church





## Sports Camp and Block Party, Redemption Hill Church, Columbus

This year's sports camp and block party went great! Thirty-four people from Park Baptist Church, Rock Hill, South Carolina, came and did ministry with us. There is talk of them bringing more people next year and helping another SBC church.

The sports camp averaged 49 kids a day, and we saw a total of 66 different children throughout the week. This represented 48 families in our community. Each day, the campers enjoyed sports and built relationships with their coaches. They also learned that Jesus is our king, our shepherd, he seeks us, and he died in our place.

One family has been attending sports camp for the last few summers. The parents are atheists, but their twin boys are reading their Bibles and want to learn more about Jesus. The parents heard the gospel, and on Sunday, they attended our worship service. We will continue to follow up, and we pray they will agree to study God's word with us and come to faith in Christ.

We also saw two other women attend our church for the first time as a result of the missions week. One overheard my invitation to church on the loudspeaker from her home, and the other was invited as the team was distributing door-hangers.

The block party had 180 attendees, and most RHC members were able to have at least one positive gospel conversation. We added a free prayer booth, which went really well and helped our more introverted folks start conversations.

Overall, it was another great week! We could not have done it without the evangelism grant!

– Pastor Josh Rosentreter, Redemption Hill Church



## Pickerington Community Festival, Change City Church, Pickerington

Our event was the culmination of a week of community engagement. We held a three-day Youth Sports Camp and concluded the week by marching in the local parade and hosting an outreach event complete with food trucks, games, face painter, and bounce houses. As a result of our efforts, we had several families come to church on Sunday, and several others plan visits for this coming Sunday. Lastly, several have decided to come to our Exploration Class this month, where we explain salvation, church membership, and serving opportunities. We're expecting salvations, baptisms, and new members in coming days and weeks as a result of these events!

– Pastor Darryl Baker, Change City Church





## Magnified VBS, Bridge City Church, Cincinnati

We had a great week of VBS, and our daily attendance grew each day. The gospel was front and center throughout the week. On Thursday, we made a clear and specific presentation of the gospel to each age group. In response, we had numerous gospel conversations that evening, and one profession of faith!

On Friday, we invited the families to stay for the evening to enjoy the rally, food, and bouncy houses. The gospel was presented during the rally time. We were able to connect with many of the families present and have conversations about Bridge City and the gospel message they had just heard.

We're also excited for the kingdom impact through church planting that will go beyond our week of VBS. During the week, we collected 48 bottles of laundry detergent that will go to a church plant, Goshen Community Church, which will distribute them to families in need through Goshen Community Cares. The kids donated \$223 which will be given to the Way Church, Kansas City, a church plant partner.

Thank you, SCBO, for investing in our event so we could plant seeds of the gospel and witness kingdom impact. To God be the glory!

– Pastor Jonathan Howard, Bridge City Church



## Vacation Bible Church, The Valley Church, Cincinnati

VBS 2025 was our favorite so far! Over 100 children attended one of our nights, and many of them are unchurched.

We had the chance to engage in meaningful conversations with parents, and several have expressed a desire to join us for worship on Sunday.

Thank you so much for your kingdom partnership with our church!

– Pastor Chuck Smith, The Valley Church



## July 4th Community Outreach Day, Goshen Community Church, Goshen

This has truly become a community event. We get support from local churches and businesses, who all help us put on this event. This year, we had around 1000 people attend. We were able to have 50+ gospel conversations. God has used this event to draw lost people unto himself in the past, and we have faith he will do it again this year.

– Pastor Aaron Ellerman, Goshen Community Church





## Vacation Bible School, Redemption Church, Johnstown

We wrapped up our three-day Vacation Bible School last night, which was our first VBS since our church first met one year ago!

We had 50 children register and over 25 volunteers. It was so encouraging to see our church body come together to serve in this way, and it was a great way to bring our people together.

We also had many children come who were not connected to our church before. Actually, more than half who came had never come to our church before! We were able to share the gospel with each child in a variety of settings - large group, small group, and individually. I was personally able to have many great conversations about sin, Christ, and the gospel, and was able to clearly explain to them what they must do to be saved.

We were also able to make some good connections with the parents and are hopeful some will come check out our church on a Sunday morning. We are hopeful and praying that the Lord will bear much fruit from this even in the weeks and months to come!

– Pastor Sam Romine, Redemption Church



## Vacation Bible School, Citizens Church, Westerville

It was our little church's first time doing VBS, so there were plenty of learning curves. But it was very encouraging! We had 20+ kids and about a dozen or so volunteers. We had LOTS of gospel interactions with the kids – conversations, songs, lessons, etc. And our final day cookout was a huge hit with the kids and the rest of the church! Thank you again for your help with everything!

– Pastor Rob Kane, Citizens Church



## Vacation Bible School, Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown

We had a great VBS this year! We had about 35-40 children each night. The grant from the SCBO helped to provide meals for the children. This is important because we live in an economically depressed area. Many have food insecurity.

We shared the gospel each night through the Bible lesson, and on the third and final night, we shared it during the assembly.

There were no decisions for Christ among the children; however, one of the teen volunteers professed faith and is being baptized. Additionally, a family that brought their son has started attending our Sunday worship service.

Many of the members served vital roles in the success of our event.

God was glorified, the gospel was preached, and the body of Christ was drawn together in unity.

– Pastor Bink Garbutt, Georgetown Baptist Church





# PRAYER AT THE STATEHOUSE

Prayer at the Statehouse is an opportunity for pastors and other Christians to gather for prayer and praise, as well as to connect with state lawmakers.

On Thursday, August 14, 10 am-11:30 am, Christians from all over Ohio will gather at the Statehouse, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, to pray. The 90-minute experience will include singing worship music in the heart of our Ohio government, a keynote message, and praying together with pastors and leaders. We'll be lifting up prayers for wisdom in our government, protection for families, revival in our churches, and courage for believers in public service—and we hope you can join us!

Sponsored by the [Center for Christian Virtues](#), you will hear from leaders about the issues being debated at the Statehouse. As the state government's work continues through the summer, so must our prayers and praise! In addition to inviting legislators and their staff, statewide officeholders and state agency directors are invited to join us. We're seizing the summer season to press in spiritually. Join us for Prayer at the Statehouse as we seek God's continued favor over our state and our government.

Visit [ccv.org/pray](https://ccv.org/pray) to register for Prayer at the Statehouse.

As Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization, the Center for Christian Virtue seeks the good of our neighbors by advocating for public policy that reflects the truth of the gospel.



## Celebrating the Cooperative Program Episode Four: CP100 - Travis Smalley and Amer Safadi

Throughout 2025, SCBO is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Cooperative Program with "CP100," a series of interviews highlighting the impact of the Cooperative Program on churches and individuals in each of Ohio's six regions.

This month, CP100 is visiting Ohio's Southwest Region.

The nations are moving into the Cincinnati area, and Travis Smalley and Amer Safadi are on a mission to reach them with the gospel.

Smalley, pastor, Lakota Hills Baptist Church, and NAMB Send Cincinnati missionary, and Amer Safadi, lead pastor, Kingdom Family Arabic Church, and Arabic church planter, believe the Cooperative Program plays a vital role in fulfilling the mission. "We can do more together than we can apart. When we come together, we're the largest missionary protestant force in history," Smalley said.

Safadi agrees. "You can't do it by yourself. Southern Baptists are a family. When you give, you don't just give for church planting, you give for multiplication."

Don't miss CP100 – Episode four: Travis Smalley and Amer Safadi.





# Meet The New Regional Worship Consultants

By Zac James, SCBO worship consultant

As I shared with you last month, I'm thrilled that we are rolling out regional worship consultants in four of our six regions!! These are high-capacity leaders who serve in our SCBO churches and have been helping our churches as volunteers behind the scenes.

These leaders will be driving new regional worship gatherings, and pastors, I urge you to require your worship leader to attend. It will encourage them, sharpen them, and give them people they can call for help when they get stuck. If you don't have a worship leader, come yourself or send whoever is leading as a volunteer. We deeply care about helping the people doing the work, no matter their title, church size, or pay status.

## Meet the SCBO Regional Worship Catalysts:



**Northeast Region:** Kevin Lorow is a Worship Leader in Northeast Ohio and has been on staff at Cuyahoga Valley Church for ten years, serving as a Worship Pastor and in several other roles. He and his wife, Carolyn, have been married for seven years and are enjoying the adventure of parenting their two young sons, Josiah and Benjamin. Kevin has yet to encounter a food he won't try and has a deep love for dogs, Tolkien, classic Nintendo games, and LEGO. Kevin is passionate about seeing healthy churches served by healthy leaders as they make much of Jesus in their communities. Contact Kevin at [klorow@cvconline.org](mailto:klorow@cvconline.org).



**Central Region:** Joe Kibbey was born in Marysville, Ohio, where he grew up in a Christian home with three other siblings. He was saved at the age of seven and raised to serve the local church. Joe met his wife Erin in high school, and the two were married in June of 2008. They have one son, Marcus, who keeps them busy playing multiple sports. Joe has served in multiple areas within the local church in choir, youth praise team, grounds crew, etc. He started leading worship in 2009 and, in January of 2018, helped start a church plant in Powell, Ohio, where he continues to serve as the Worship Pastor.

Joe is currently pursuing a degree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Over the last five years, he has had a growing desire to help churches develop a God-honoring worship ministry that exalts the name of Jesus through song. Joe is also serving the new partnership between Worship Initiative and SBC Worship, [sbworship.com](http://sbworship.com), as a member of their advisory committee! Contact Joe at [Joe@livinghopecolumbus.com](mailto:Joe@livinghopecolumbus.com).



# REGIONAL WORSHIP EVENTS

## NORTHEAST REGION

**SEPTEMBER 20 | NOVEMBER 8, 2025**  
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
Cuyahoga Valley Church,  
Broadview Heights

## CENTRAL REGION

**SEPTEMBER 13 | NOVEMBER 15, 2025**  
12:00 PM  
Living Hope Columbus,  
70 Village Pointe Drive, Powell, OH 43065

## SOUTHWEST REGION

<b>AUGUST 8, 2025</b> 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM Panera Bread, 11033 Reed Hartman Hwy, Blue Ash, OH 45242	<b>OCTOBER 25, 2025</b> 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lakota Hills Baptist Church, 6300 Tylersville Rd., West Chester, OH
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## SOUTHEAST REGION

**AUGUST 9 | NOVEMBER 1, 2025**  
11:30 AM  
FBC Logan,  
399 Norwood Ave, Logan, Ohio 43138



Story continues on the next page...





**Southwest Region:** David Anderson is the worship pastor at Lakota Hills Baptist Church just north of Cincinnati, where he's served for nine years. He is married to his wife Jillissa and they now have three children, Chloe, Asher and Micah. David graduated from Cedarville University with a degree in worship and music, and he is also an alumnus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he completed his M.Div. Growing up as an MK, David has a heart for multicultural and multilingual worship and for seeing the Church worship God in various ways. Contact David at [david@lakotahillsbaptist.com](mailto:david@lakotahillsbaptist.com).



**Southeast Region:** Hey there! I'm Sarah, and I am the worship director at The Bridge Ministries in Lancaster. My husband, Ashton, and I are currently planting The Bridge Logan as NAMB/SEND Network church planters. We have two wonderful kiddos, and I get the pleasure of homeschooling them. Serving together as a ministry family has been so rewarding, and although sometimes challenging, I love it so much.

I think connecting other worship leaders for the purpose of learning from one another and community is so important. Those relationships were vital for me when I first started as worship director, so I'm super excited to begin this role of doing just that. Contact Sarah at [swalton@thebridgeohio.org](mailto:swalton@thebridgeohio.org).

I am still looking for leaders for the West and Northwest Regions. This is not a paid position, but resources will be provided to fund regional events. Applicants must be willing to plan and lead quarterly worship gatherings, meet quarterly on Zoom with me and our team, and engage in Worship 4:24. Training will be provided. If you are interested or have a killer, kingdom-minded worship leader who would be interested, email me at [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org).

Ministry is a team sport. You and I can't do this alone. And neither can your worship leader.



## CABA Celebrates Evangelism Opportunities

The Cincinnati Area Baptist Association (CABA) is having a fruitful season with multiple outreach opportunities for sharing the gospel.

**Soccer camps:** Three international soccer camps kicked off this summer, involving many children who have had no exposure to Bible characters or terms, let alone the gospel message. During soccer camp, students rotated through three stations, including an indoor Bible story and activity session.

Soccer camps took place at Liberty Heights, Liberty Twp; First Baptist Church, South Lebanon; and Beacon of Christ Church, Dent.

Ray Taw, church planter, International Fellowship Church, mobilized 162 Southern Baptist volunteers, including 130 students from Dawson Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Taw also serves as International Partnership Consultant for CABA.

**CABA Block Party Trailers:** Since the 2024-2025 CABA financial year began last fall, the association's five block party trailers have been in use frequently. One hundred thirty-four reservations have been made for the year, 83 events for CABA churches and 51 events for non-CABA churches.

According to evangelism reports, seeds of faith were planted in the lives of 19,501 people, and there were 6,658 evangelism encounters and 15 professions of faith.



# Global Hunger Relief – It's About More Than Food

By Dr. John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director

According to a recent national study, one in seven Americans relies on food pantries for resources to feed themselves and their families. That number seems to be growing every year.

That's why Send Relief, a collaboration between NAMB and IMB, established Global Hunger Relief and the Global Hunger Fund. The money in this fund comes from local Southern Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program, as well as from those who give directly to the fund.

Your giving to the Global Hunger Fund makes a big difference. Last year, 174,188 food packages were distributed, 2.5 million hot meals were served, and 18,137 individuals found salvation in Christ.

In 2025, Ohio qualified for \$20,000 from the fund. These dollars are currently divided between eight church pantries in Ohio to help meet food needs.

However, the heart of the Global Hunger Fund is about more than feeding people. It's about feeding souls with the eternal, life-giving hope found in Jesus Christ.

In the first six months of 2025, Ohio's eight agencies have given food to 51,200 individuals. These distributions include hot meals, sack lunches, and grocery-filled bags.

Meeting physical needs is a biblical directive, but the food is also a means to open a door to the gospel.

Central Community Mission, Akron, is one of the eight feeding centers. The church has struggled this year – their pastor passed away, two elderly church mem-

bers passed away, and two feeding ministry volunteers passed away.

However, even during its losses, the church stayed on mission, serving 3,100 people through compassion ministry and seeing one person come to faith in Christ.

A ministry like this doesn't happen without a team. Three hundred volunteers from these agencies have had 2,516 gospel conversations and seen 39 professions of faith in the past six months. What an amazing opportunity for members of the local church to feed their local communities and also share Christ.

You and your church can get involved in feeding your community. The first way is to give to the Global Hunger Fund weekly, through your church or as a one-time gift on Global Hunger Day, Sunday, August 24.

The other is to let the Global Hunger Fund help your church feed your community. One of the eight Ohio agencies is no longer receiving funds, so that means SCBO is looking for a feeding ministry in Ohio that could use additional funding for the second half of 2025.

We only have room for one more agency in 2025, so if your church is interested in financial assistance for your feeding ministry, contact me at [jheading@scbo.org](mailto:jheading@scbo.org).



## Global Hunger Relief

# REFRESH & SCBO RENEWAL



**MARK CLIFTON**  
NAMB Replant Director

Other Speakers: **MARK JONES** & **SCOTT GIBSON**  
Worship Leader: **ZAC JAMES**

Sep 19-20 Lancaster, OH [go.scbo.org/Refresh](https://go.scbo.org/Refresh)



# Partnerships Bring “Muddy Bear” to Ohio DR

By Dr. John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director

Partnerships are key to the work of Ohio Disaster Relief.

In December 2023, Rumford, Maine, experienced terrible flooding. Much of the town, including the fire station, was damaged by floodwaters.

A 12-person Ohio DR team led by Josh Wright, Urbancrest Baptist Church, deployed to Rumford. The team was supposed to do both flood and chainsaw recovery, but little did they know that God had other plans.

Upon arrival, the entire team was needed for flood recovery, and one of the homes affected belonged to John and Nancy. Their home and shop, which housed their business, were under several feet of water.

The Ohio team got to work and finished the flood recovery in about two days. It then took months for John and Nancy to get back to normal.

John and Nancy are carvers who make animal carvings from tree trunks using a chainsaw. To help them get their business going again, the members of the flood recovery team commissioned a carving of a bear for Ohio DR. The team paid for it out of their own pockets and chose the name, “Muddy Bear.”

Eighteen months later, on July 8, 2025, Muddy Bear arrived in Ohio. Why did it take so long to receive the carving?

The carving process takes time. First, a rough carving is cut, and then the item has to dry for six months. Once it dries, the fine carving of the details is completed, and the carving is stained.



Woodcarvers John and Nancy with Ohio DR's “Muddy Bear.”

While Ohio DR waited for Muddy Bear, something else happened. John joined New England Disaster Relief and deployed on a chainsaw team.

This is a great example of partnership. Ohio DR deployed to Maine through a partnership with New England Disaster Relief. The Ohio DR team partnered with John and Nancy through the commissioning of Muddy Bear, helping them restart their business, and finally, John joined New England DR and deployed to help others affected by disaster.

Partnerships are key to the work of Ohio Disaster Relief.



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

# DISASTER RELIEF UNIT TRAINING

**REGISTER  
TODAY**  
[sco.org/dr](https://sco.org/dr)

**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**

Central Baptist Church,  
2816 Marion-Waldo Rd.,  
Marion, OH 43302

**[sco.org/dr](https://sco.org/dr)**





# Job Postings

## **FULL-TIME KIDS MINISTER | Jersey Church, New Albany**

The Kids Minister at Jersey Church plays a vital role in leading children from birth through 5th grade to know and follow Jesus in age-appropriate and engaging ways. This position is responsible for creating a fun, welcoming, and spiritually rich environment where kids can grow in their faith and understanding of who God is. A key emphasis is partnering with parents in the spiritual development of their children and helping every child feel seen, known, and loved. Apply online at <https://jerseychurch.org/resources/employment/>.

## **WORSHIP MINISTER | Jersey Church, New Albany**

The Worship Minister will play a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of transformative worship within the congregation. This individual will lead by example, inspiring and guiding the congregation to engage in worship that deepens their relationship with God and fosters personal growth. The role involves coordinating and providing leadership for both in-person and online Sunday worship services, overseeing all aspects of worship rehearsals, and developing future worship leaders. To apply, please send an email to <https://jerseychurch.org/resources/employment/>.

## **BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR | Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth**

Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth (<https://ridgewoodbaptistch.org>) is seeking a bi-vocational pastor with hopes to move fully vocational in the future. We are seeking a man of God to love and lead us after the loss of our previous pastor to cancer. We are a congregation of 40-50 in average attendance in a community of approximately 25,000, with fifty percent of the population lost without Christ.

We are seeking someone preferably willing to preach from the King James Bible. We are seeking someone to love and lead us to engage our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not desire someone with a reformed persuasion. We believe scripture teaches the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. We desire a pastor who believes evangelism is important and part of the discipleship process.

If you are interested in becoming our next pastor, please send your resume to: Ridgewood Baptist Church, c/o Search Team, 7891 Ridge Rd., Wadsworth, OH 44281, or email our AMS at [summitassociationams@gmail.com](mailto:summitassociationams@gmail.com).

## **BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR | First Baptist Church, Beaver**

First Baptist Church, Beaver, Ohio, is searching for a bi-vocational pastor to shepherd God's people. If you feel God leading you to a new ministry challenge or have a desire to assist a church in completing the building of a new worship center, we would welcome your inquiry. Send resumes to the attention of David Burchett in care of First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 44, Beaver, Ohio 45613.

## **SENIOR PASTOR | Sugar Ridge Baptist Church, North Ridgeville**

Sugar Ridge Baptist Church, North Ridgeville, is seeking a senior pastor for full-time employment. Inquirers can find the Pastoral Profile at [sugarridgechurch.org](http://sugarridgechurch.org). For additional information, contact Sugar Ridge Baptist Church at (440) 327-9465.

## **BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR | Central Community Church, Akron**

Central Community Church, Akron, is an inner-city ministry center that has made an impact in its community. Our church has 50-60 congregants from multi-ethnic cultures and language groups as one united family.

Recently, our pastor passed away after a battle with cancer. We are seeking a bi-vocational pastor who is doctrinally sound, willing to love us, learn our culture, and lead us with a fresh vision to make a greater kingdom impact.

The prospective candidate will lead worship services, equip us for gospel ministry, provide discipleship opportunities, and engage the men to develop leaders. We also desire the candidate to live within 10 minutes of the church.

We are a Southern Baptist congregation committed to partnering locally with the Summit Association, SCBO, and SBC. We are proposing 20-25 hours per week at \$2,000 per month with a reimbursement account.

Please send a cover letter, ministry resume with statement of beliefs and references, as well as at least two video sermons to [centralccakron@gmail.com](mailto:centralccakron@gmail.com).

*Let the Ohio Baptist Messenger help your church find a new pastor or staff member!*

*The Messenger* is offering classified ads free of charge for Ohio churches searching for new pastors and staff members.

*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@scbo.org](mailto:classifieds@scbo.org)

