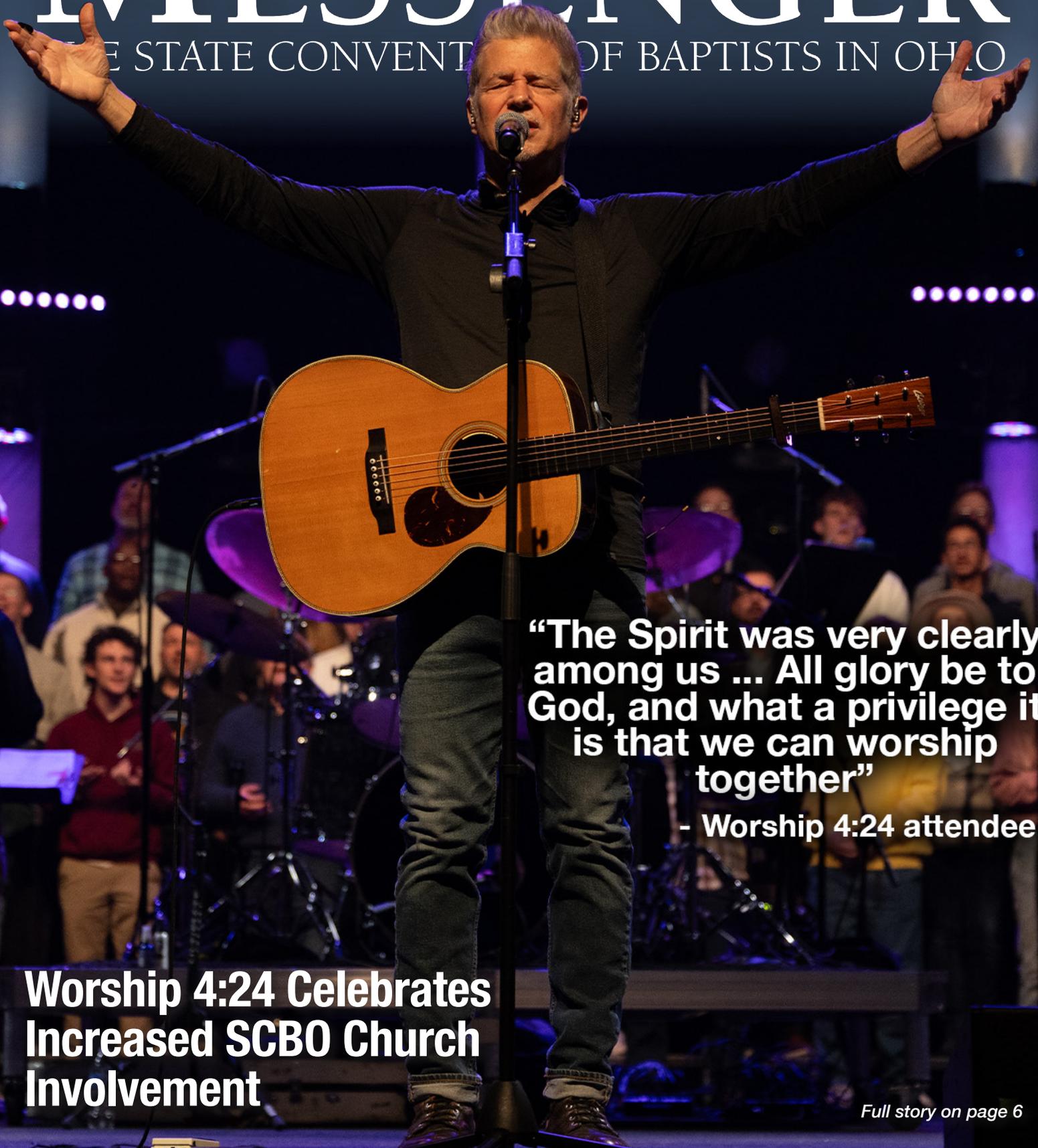


MARCH 2026
VOLUME 74 ISSUE 03

Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENT OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



“The Spirit was very clearly among us ... All glory be to God, and what a privilege it is that we can worship together”

- Worship 4:24 attendee

Worship 4:24 Celebrates Increased SCBO Church Involvement

Full story on page 6

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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.

For more information, please contact Stephanie Heading at messenger@scbo.org.

Welcome to Ohio! You Are the Heart of Ministry

One of my favorite meetings of the year, New Pastor & Staff Orientation (NPSO), is coming up on Wednesday, March 10.

The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO) is delighted to welcome you—our newest pastors and staff—to the harvest field of Ohio! We are profoundly thankful for the laborers the Lord is sending here. The SCBO values its pastors and staff so greatly because you are the very heart of ministry throughout our state, and our mission is to help you and your church thrive.

We invite you to please join us for a special **New Pastor & Staff Orientation Meeting**, designed to equip and encourage you as you begin your ministry here in the Buckeye State. Here are some important details:

When and Where

- **Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 2026
- **Time:** 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- **Location:** State Convention Offices, 9000 Antares Avenue, Columbus, OH 43240

What to Expect

This orientation, held once each year, is a valuable opportunity for you to connect and gain vital resources:

- **Meet State Leadership:** You will have the chance to meet key leaders of the SCBO who are ready to serve and partner with you.
- **Learn About Available Resources:** Discover the valuable tools, training, and support the SCBO provides to local churches to help maximize your impact.
- **Warm Hospitality:** You will be treated to warm hospitality and a good meal as a small token of our appreciation for your commitment to ministry.

The harvest in Ohio is plentiful, but the laborers are few. We are excited for what the Lord will do through you and look forward to partnering with you to impact your local church and community. For more information and an opportunity to sign up, please visit go.scbo.org/npsso.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Moving Forward,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



SCBO

NEW PASTORS & STAFF ORIENTATION

March 10, 2026
go.scbo.org/npsso
Columbus, Ohio



President's Pen

Our Mission Requires Urgency, Commitment and Togetherness

No time is wasted in showing us what Jesus' mission is in the Gospel of Mark.

He writes, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" - Mark 1:14-15

Jesus preaches with great urgency, showing us that the time to believe in the gospel is now! This means followers of Jesus should have the same urgency.

Jesus also shows us what our task is, how the kingdom of God grows. It does so through the preaching of the gospel. There are over 700 SCBO churches in Ohio, and every single one of them exists to advance the kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. All of our churches may look different, have different contexts, and have unique histories and stories, but we all have the same mission.

If we are committed to preaching the gospel, it means we cannot allow distractions to take our focus off our mission. There are good things that a church can do, but for every one of them, we should ask, "Is this helping us accomplish our mission of preaching the gospel, or is this distracting us from the mission?"

Our primary allegiance must always be to the kingdom of God. We live in a culture of tribalism today, and we must reject the temptation to give our allegiance to the tribes of our culture, whether they be political, societal, or agenda-driven, and instead maintain our primary allegiance to Jesus and Jesus alone.

We best accomplish the mission together. We must avoid the temptation to constantly divide and tear each other apart (Gal. 5:15) and instead seek to work together for the gospel. As pastors, we often imagine what could be accomplished for the kingdom of God if every member of our church faithfully tithed. Imagine what could be done for the kingdom of God if every SCBO church gave generously to the Cooperative Program and worked together for the gospel.

We truly are better together.



In Christ,

Dave Welsch
SCBO President
president@scbo.org

One Body, One Spirit: A Story Only God Could Write

By Rick Williams, Central Region catalyst



Pastor Brad Dews and Pastor Gary Dehart

Recently, Brad Dews, pastor of Orrville Baptist Church (OBC), shared the remarkable story of how God has woven together two congregations into one unified church family. With his permission, I am sharing his testimony in his own words and heart.

Pastor Brad writes:

“We met more than fifteen years ago when my wife and I purchased carpet from a man named Gary Dehart. Little did I know that years later, God would place Gary and me side by side, serving as pastors in the same church.

During those early years, the Lord kept allowing our paths to cross. God was at work in Gary’s life, turning him away from the world and drawing him back to himself. In time, Gary sensed a call to ministry. When he was licensed to preach, I was invited to participate in that special service.

In 2021, Gary was serving as associate pastor of Smithville Independent Missionary Baptist Church (IMBC). After they sold their building, Gary asked if he could use our building to have a Bible study. He began teaching an online Bible study at OBC with some of his congregation in attendance.

Later, when IMBC’s lead pastor passed away, Pastor Gary became lead pastor. In October 2023, IMBC began meeting at OBC each Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

A life-changing event happened on March 23, 2024, when God called my wife, Linda, unexpectedly home following an injury in our home. In that single moment, the Lord revealed a faith in me that He had sovereignly planned to use. Revival stirred in my own heart and spread through the church. People were coming to Christ, and people were joining the church. We baptized more and added more to our membership than at any time in the past.

In August of 2024, Pastor Gary asked me about using a sermon series OBC does every summer, entitled “Because You Asked,” where we answer (questions about) biblical and cultural issues. I told him he could not use it, but he could join us for the series (and I would let him preach the hard questions, and I would preach the easy ones). The series went so well that the two congregations never separated.

Then, in March of 2025, after much prayer and waiting on the Lord, IMBC members joined Orrville Baptist Church as one church.

Pastor Gary and I often say:

“God has brought a remarkable unity to us, and we are now striving to bring that same unity of spirit to our people. We admit we are not there yet. We have two different cultures, two different races, and two different backgrounds. Our worship styles differ. Our preaching styles differ. Our personalities differ. We have so many differences, but we firmly believe our worship of God transcends all the differences between us. God has made us one church for His glory.”

Their testimony beautifully reflects the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians 4:4–6:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

As I listened to Pastor Brad recount this journey, I was reminded once again: this is not a story of human planning. It is a story of God’s sovereignty. Only He could weave together relationships, seasons of loss, revival, and unity into one testimony of his grace. It is a story only God could write.

PRAYER
AT THE STATEHOUSE

**Wednesday,
March 11
10:00 am**

JOIN US
for a special prayer and worship experience
featuring Jeremy Westbrook

ccv.org/pray

Worship 4:24 Celebrates Increased SCBO Church Involvement

By Zac James, Worship consultant

The dust has settled on another Worship 4:24 Conference, and I'm thrilled to share that it was very successful! This year, our SBC footprint expanded, while God allowed us to serve and influence hundreds of churches across the larger kingdom.

We celebrated 1,134 conference registrations, plus 123 high school students who came early for Cedarville University's Weekend of Worship and stayed through the conference. We hosted 113 speakers, vendors, and their crews.

The total registered conference attendance was 1370!*

Additionally, 295 people bought tickets for the Paul Balloche / Meredith Andrews worship concert with the 4:24 Worship Choir. In total, we had 1,668 people registered for Worship 4:24 this year.

This year, we hosted 347 students. Our attendees came from 23 states and 293 churches. To serve this many attendees, our speakers hosted 131 breakout sessions this weekend – a new record!

We also offered ten free counseling sessions for the first time, thanks to the SCBO Director of Convention Support, Ryan Strother! The health of worship leaders in their ministries and families is important. We appreciate Lifeway Worship for covering the cost of the sessions for attendees.

Our SCBO engagement was significantly higher, even after a record year last year! I challenged us to get to 300 people from SCBO, and you knocked it out of the park! This year, 354 SCBO attendees from 78 churches participated, up from 258 attendees from 70 SCBO churches last year.

Thank you to all who sent your worship teams and engaged with Worship 4:24 this year. **My goal next year is to have over 100 SCBO churches engage with Worship 4:24!**

Each attendee represents a real worship leader or worship team member who serves the local church in their gifting and calling. It's about the mission: equipping our worship leaders and teams to lead worship with passion and excellence so our churches grow in their love for Jesus and reach their community with the gospel.

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

Here's the secret: registration opens up at a steep discount in August or September. Early registration can make it much more affordable.

Why am I so confident that attending Worship 4:24 will

help your worship ministry become more effective?

Because I hear it **directly** from our conference attendees.

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

This year, we received 207 feedback submissions, **with an average event rating of 4.6 out of 5.**

Story continues on the next page...

SBCMC Partnership Benefits Worship 4:24 Attendees



The 2026 Southern Baptist Church Music Conference (SBCMC) is April 19-22 at First Baptist, Jacksonville, Florida, and there's a great incentive for Worship 4:24 attendees to go.

SCBO has a new partnership with the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, benefiting attendees of Worship 4:24 and SBCMC.

Everyone who attended Worship 4:24 this year is eligible for a \$100 discount on regular conference pricing for SBCMC.

And, if individuals attend SBCMC, they can get super early bird pricing for Worship 4:24 2027 (\$50 vs. \$90 at the door) when they register. The promo code for SBCMC was directly emailed to this year's Worship 4:24 attendees.

For questions about SBCMC or to verify a lost promo code, contact Zac James at zjames@scbo.org.

For more information about SBCMC and to register, visit <https://sbcmc.org/2026-conference/>.

Here are a few of the comments we received this year:

“I especially love all the individual classes. I also want to add that I really appreciated the counseling session, and I highly recommend you offer it again next year for those in the thick of things.”

“Well-defined tracks with knowledgeable speakers. Applicable to anyone in that track. Christ focused. Signs for directions. Lots of vendors. So much time to worship and soak in the presence of God.”

“It is genuine, not overly produced. I always feel that the goal and purpose are for the worship teams to get better.”

Southern Baptists of Ohio, **you are sponsoring one of the largest and most effective worship conferences**

in the country, and you are impacting a huge number of churches for the glory of God through Worship 4:24. Thank you for your generosity to the Cooperative Program so that we can continue to lead this conference year after year.

We are setting our sights higher every year to the glory of God and the good of our churches, and we can't wait to share more about Worship 4:24 next year.

Save the date for January 29-30, 2027, and we hope to see you in person next year.

** Reported attendance reflects registrations; actual attendance may be up to 10% lower due to no-shows.*



SCBO  **MT. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH**

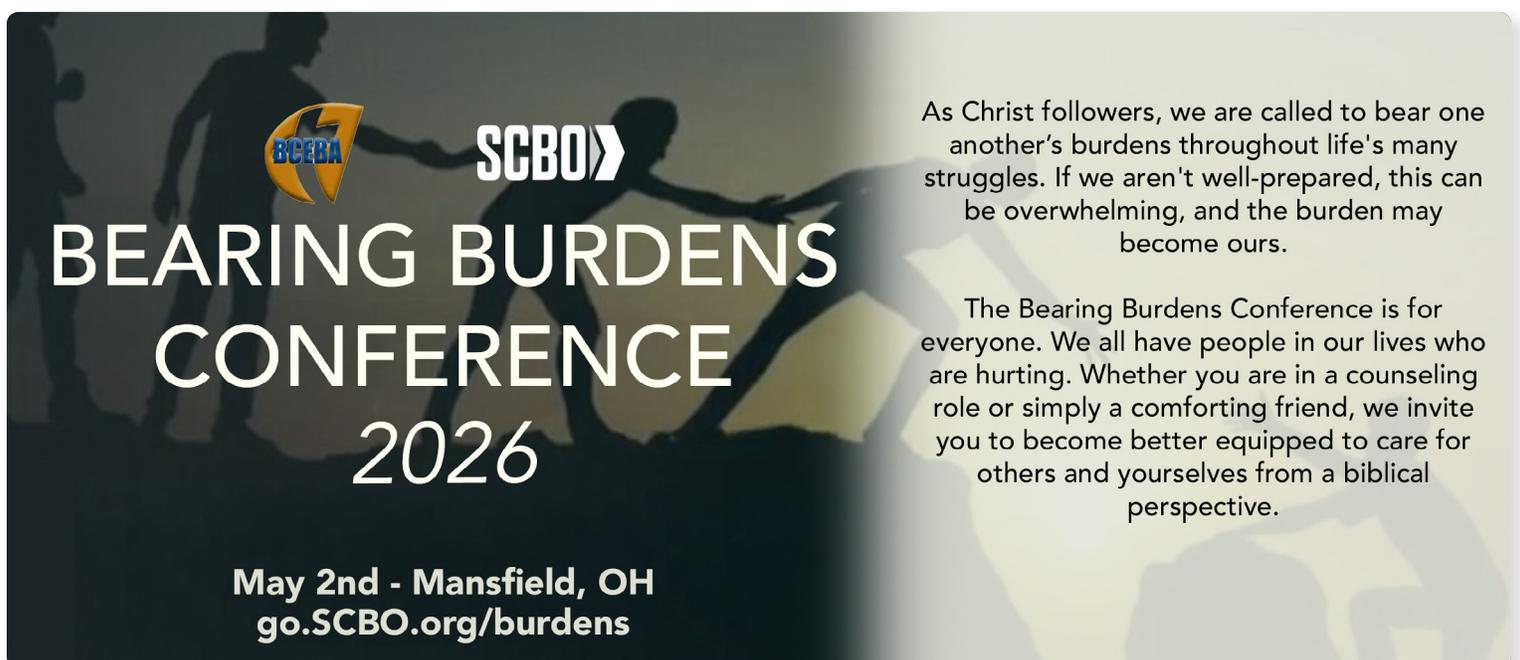
LEAD WELL

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Bedford, OH
May 15-16
go.scbo.org/leadwell

Lead Well is a gathering for pastors and church leaders who want to lead with conviction—for the name and fame of Jesus—right where God has placed them. With this year's theme, “Breaking Barriers,” we'll challenge what's holding leaders back and point the way forward with biblical clarity, practical wisdom, and fresh encouragement.

You'll walk away inspired to lead well in the local church, equipped with real tools you can use, and strengthened by practitioners who are actively doing ministry and willing to share what's working. Expect meaningful worship, helpful teaching, and the kind of fellowship that reminds you: you're not leading alone.



 **SCBO**

BEARING BURDENS

CONFERENCE

2026

May 2nd - Mansfield, OH
go.SCBO.org/burdens

As Christ followers, we are called to bear one another's burdens throughout life's many struggles. If we aren't well-prepared, this can be overwhelming, and the burden may become ours.

The Bearing Burdens Conference is for everyone. We all have people in our lives who are hurting. Whether you are in a counseling role or simply a comforting friend, we invite you to become better equipped to care for others and yourselves from a biblical perspective.

Ohio Couple Manages Send Relief Hurricane Response

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor



Matt and Sue Stickel

When God asked, they said, “Yes.”

On October 28, 2025, Hurricane Melissa unleashed its fury on the Caribbean. The category 5 storm slammed into Jamaica with wind speeds of 190 mph, making it the first category 5 hurricane ever to hit the island nation.

Four months later, the recovery work continues.

Immediately after the storm, Send Relief and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) sent a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Jamaica to assess the needs and develop a plan. What they saw was large-scale devastation.

Approximately 70 percent of the island was left without electricity. Roofing on homes and businesses was damaged or blown away. Mudslides covered roads and cut off areas of the country, and dozens of Jamaicans lost their lives in the storm.

It became clear that the recovery work would be a long-term project.

SBDR needed someone on the ground to coordinate these efforts, and Coy Webb, Send Relief Crisis Response director, knew exactly who to recruit.

“Coy asked us to come down for a couple of months and do what we are doing right now, manage the teams,” said Matt Stickel.

Ohio Baptists Matt and Sue Stickel are members of Guide Church North Campus in Hilliard and have long been involved in mission projects in Ohio and around the world.

Matt served with Baptist Global Response, which eventually became Send Relief, managing teams working to bring clean water to areas of the world without access to it. Sue served in Ohio WMU as vice president and then

president. They also work with Ohio Changers and Kentucky Changers.

It might seem unusual for a couple to leave the comforts of home to spend eight weeks in a disaster zone, but for the Stickels, the reason is clear.

“The simple answer is God asked us, and we prayed about it. There wasn’t any reason why we couldn’t, so we did,” Matt said.

As the Project Coordinators for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts in Jamaica, the Stickels are managing 15 DR teams from multiple states and coordinating the logistics.

They do all this while relocating the operation every other week.

“We’re changing locations every two weeks, which means changing suppliers of material, changing transportation, changing locations, changing staff that are going to help us with meals and laundry. That’s a big challenge,” Matt said.

“And we also need to meet the Jamaican Baptist Union,” said Sue. “They’re really the ones who are directing where they want us to go, as far as location.”

Jamaica is a sovereign nation, so Send Relief and SBDR follow the lead of the Jamaican Baptist Union (JBU), the Southern Baptist organization in the country.

“That’s why we’re moving every two weeks, because they want to share the blessing,” Matt noted.

SBDR teams deploy to Jamaica each Saturday and spend the following week working on projects, including replacing and repairing the roofing on churches and parsonages. The groups leave the following Saturday as new teams arrive.

“It’s mostly church roofs, but we are working on some schools as well,” Matt said.

A team of eight from Ohio DR partnered with teams from California and North Carolina during the week of February 14-22. The teams replaced the roof on a school and a parsonage.

While the work is hard, the Stickels have been blessed by meeting and working with the people of Jamaica.

“I think one of the things that I try to keep in mind is we see the damage that the churches have had, but the people’s lives, their own personal well-being – mentally, physically, spiritually – have been affected far worse than the buildings have been,” Sue commented. “They’re used to living with electricity and water, and all the things. They’re used to that, and now they don’t have it,” Sue said.

Story continues on the next page...

Despite the trauma the people have experienced, they are thankful to have SBDR in their country.

“They want to make sure that we experience their culture,” Sue said. “So they want us to make sure we have their Jamaican food.”

At one location, a man from the church where teams were working brought a couple of coconuts to share.

“He cut the end off of it, and poured some coconut water right out of the coconut,” Sue said. “And he’s like, ‘Here you have to have this.’ It’s very fresh, and so he was excited to do that for us.”

In addition to experiencing the thankfulness of the Jamaican people, Matt and Sue have also been blessed as they see God’s work in this effort.

“Just seeing the things God’s doing, like finding locations for the teams to stay,” Sue said.

While traveling to a job site and a church where the Ohio DR team served, Sue realized there was no place for 16 people to stay. The locals said the teams could stay in the church parsonage and escorted them to the house.

“Sure enough, it’s plenty big enough,” Sue marveled. “And the best thing about it is the jobs are right there on the property. It’s those things where we’re driving there, going, ‘This isn’t even going to be possible, because



Four months after the disaster, Jamaicans are still living in severely damaged homes.

there’s no place around here for people to stay.’ And God just said, ‘Oh no, wait, I got this for you.’”

As the Stickels finish their part in rebuilding Jamaica, they know that this project belongs to the Lord.

“This is a God-sized task,” Matt said. “And he’s the one doing it. He’s allowing us to be a part of it a little bit. And, yeah, there’s been some pretty stressful things, but he miraculously intervened, and that’s what it takes.”



DISASTER RELIEF UNIT TRAINING

REGISTER
TODAY
scbo.org/dr

April 11, 2026
8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Reynoldsburg Baptist
887 Rosehill Rd.
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

April 18, 2026
8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Urbancrest Baptist
2634 Drake Rd.
Lebanon, OH 45036

September 12, 2026
8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Ebenezer Baptist
6935 Township Rd. #234
Logan, OH 43138

October 17, 2026
8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Freedom Hill Community
3943 Fishcreek Rd.
Stow, OH 44224



scbo.org/dr

Ohio DR Teams Continue Hurricane Relief in Jamaica

By John Heading, Ohio Disaster Relief director



Ohio DR replaced the roof on the Maldon Baptist Basic School.

It will take years for Jamaica to recover from Hurricane Melissa, the first category 5 hurricane to ever hit the island. Some people may never fully recover.

Ohio Disaster Relief deployed to Jamaica in November 2025 and again the week of February 14-21.

This time, our team stayed in the St. James area, just south of Montego Bay. We stayed at Maldon Baptist Church and worked next door on the church parsonage, a primary school, and a building that had been used as a computer training facility.

Maldon Baptist Church is interesting. The church is one of three churches in a circuit led by a single pastor. This means each church hears a sermon by the pastor every third Sunday. On the other Sundays, a deacon leads the service.

Our week in Jamaica was also an example of the cooperation in Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. The Jamaican Baptist Union (JBU) partners with Send Relief, which organizes DR jobs through the Jamaican Baptist Union with the help of Project Coordinators Matt and Sue Stickel. The Stickels are Ohio Baptists who attend Guide Church North in Hilliard.

Our team of eight worked with a second SBDR team of eight from California and North Carolina. Both teams worked together to complete the work at Maldon Baptist.

We repaired the primary school, removing the damaged metal roof, replacing the missing roof framing, and installing new metal.

However, we were in Jamaica to do more than replace the roof on a school building. We were also there to share the love of Christ.

Our chaplain, David Bonnell, University Baptist Church, Beavercreek, had the opportunity to meet Sharon. She's a helper at the primary school and a sweet-spirited believer. Of all the things she could ask for, she only wanted a large-print Bible because her Bible was destroyed when the hurricane slammed into her home. We gave her an Ohio DR Bible.



Sharon and DR Chaplain David Bonnell.

Story continues on the next page...

We also met Banga, and he's a member of Maldon Baptist Church. Since the hurricane hit on October 28, 2025, he's been working to repair the damage to the church's building. During our time here, he's come every day to work alongside us as we repair the school.

While Banga faithfully works to repair the church and school, his own home sits in shambles. He is staying in the home of a church family, and his very elderly mother is staying with a different church family. His mother spends most of her days crying because she can't go home.

In another example of SBDR cooperation, the DR teams who came after us repaired Banga's house, and he and his mom have moved back home.

The damage from Hurricane Melissa was enormous, but the support of SCBO churches and the Ray Roberts State Missions Offering enabled Ohio Disaster Relief to make a huge impact on residents, Maldon Baptist Church, and students at the primary school.



By the way, the hurricane removed the swings on the school's swing set. We replaced those, too! Thank you, Ohio Baptists.

Free Biblical Counseling Program Sees Encouraging Interest

By Ryan Strother, director of Convention Support

SCBO 
**COUNSELING
PLATFORM**

At our Annual Celebration in November, I announced the SCBO's new strategy for providing biblical counseling to staff ministers and their immediate family members from our cooperating churches.

Offering accessible, free counseling is a significant victory for our ministers and an encouragement to our churches, as Cooperative Program giving supports ministers across the state.

Since launching, we've seen encouraging interest. Twelve individuals have created profiles on our website, demonstrating a recognition that counseling could be beneficial. However, only four of these registrants have actually scheduled appointments.

This gap between interest and action reflects a common pattern in accessing counseling.

Research shows that even when people recognize they could benefit from help, several barriers often prevent them from taking that final step. Some struggle with the vulnerability required to share their deepest struggles. Others wrestle with busy schedules or wonder if their challenges are "serious enough" to warrant support.

Some who have never had a counseling session before might wonder how counseling could actually help them. Within Christian communities specifically, there can be misconceptions that seeking counseling reflects weak faith or that prayer alone should be sufficient, when in reality, godly counsel has always been a biblical model for care (Proverbs 11:14).

The SCBO established scbocounseling.org specifically to remove two of the most common obstacles: cost and accessibility. This website makes it simple to know exactly where to turn when help is needed, and I hope you'll utilize this great resource when you need support.

I'm grateful for each person who has created a profile, and I want you to know that taking that step—whether or not you've scheduled yet—reflects wisdom and courage.

If you've registered but haven't scheduled, I encourage you to take that next step. If you haven't explored this resource yet, visit scbocounseling.org to learn more about how this ministry can support you in your calling. Thank you, SCBO churches. Your faithful giving through the Cooperative Program funds our counseling strategy.

SCBO Launches First Pastor Fit Cohort with Six Participants

By Ryan Strother, director of Convention Support

In February, SCBO announced the launch of the Pastor Fit Initiative, a comprehensive program designed to provide Ohio pastors with the tools, accountability, and community needed to thrive physically.

The first Pastor Fit Cohort began on February 2, 2026, with six pastors embarking on a six-month virtual journey focused on greater consistency in their physical wellness.

Led by Austin Mathis, the Pastor Fit cohort provides pastors with clarity, encouragement, and accountability—three essential ingredients often missing when trying to make lasting health changes alone. The cohort meets once a month, setting a sustainable rhythm that accommodates a busy pastoral schedule.

The program goes beyond simple accountability. Participants receive personalized workout and eating suggestions tailored to help them move forward with confidence. During monthly meetings, pastors share honest updates on their progress, discuss what they committed to the previous month, ask questions, and identify one clear action step to work on before the next gathering.

“Accountability fuels growth,” said Austin Mathis. “This cohort is for pastors who want to take meaningful steps toward losing weight, getting stronger, and building healthier rhythms—but don’t want to do it alone.”



The first Pastor Fit online cohort began on February 2, 2026.

The SCBO plans to launch four Pastor Fit cohorts throughout 2026, with multiple opportunities for Ohio pastors to join this transformative journey. If you’ve been wanting accountability, a practical plan, and a group that will help you stay consistent, consider joining an upcoming cohort. The next one will start in April. Visit <http://go.scbo.org/fitness> for more information and registration details.

An aerial view of the Toledo skyline under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The text 'SEND RELIEF' is at the top in white, 'SERVE TOUR' is in large white letters in the center, and 'TOLEDO' is below it. A yellow banner on the left contains the text 'JOIN US TO SERVE OUR CITY'. At the bottom left, it says 'September 25-26, 2026'. A QR code is in the bottom right corner.

SEND RELIEF
SERVE TOUR
TOLEDO

JOIN US TO
SERVE OUR CITY

September 25-26,
2026

The Power of 21 Days of Prayer

By Pastor Todd Cyphers, Waynesville Community Church

In January, we participated in our annual 21 Days of Prayer, focused on overcoming strongholds. We provided free books purchased through SBCO, and Steve Hopkins was a tremendous kingdom help in our prayer journey.

Participants were encouraged to read a short chapter corresponding to each of the first 21 days of January. These books also supplemented our sermon series, "Overcoming Strongholds."

A group leader, who shepherds 15–20 women in a weekly small group, shared:

"1 Peter 5:8 identifies the main adversary all Christians face—Satan. He tempts us in many ways and accuses both us and our loved ones, even the body of believers where we worship. We must take this seriously. When we fail to recognize his voice and trust God's Word over the enemy's lies, we quickly find ourselves wrestling with spiritual captivity—the opposite of the abundant life Jesus offers. During these 21 days, our group became more intentional in interceding for loved ones and others facing struggles, addictions, bondage, or distance from the Lord. We witnessed Him do things only he could do."

The 21-day prayer journey aligns our hearts with God and his purposes. Each year, this practice leads to a powerful transformation: men and women confess private sins, students seek forgiveness for their attitudes, couples begin to pray together, and many testify that they see and enjoy God's glory more than ever. He is truly worth seeking in prayer!

Some Steps to Consider:

- Set clear expectations for the month. Having every age group pray together is an awesome goal. Explain how individuals and families can participate.
- Choose a transformation verse for everyone to meditate on during the 21 days. Praying God's word is powerful
- Expect God to move for his glory. Approach each day with faith. Our God honors persistent, Christ-centered prayer.

Jesus promises in John 15:7–8:

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this, my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."

SCBO 

 **LOGOS**

Logos Bible Software Training

March 19 | 10 AM - 1 PM

Columbus, Ohio

go.scbo.org/logos

The SCBO Vision Frame: Our Mission to Reach Ohio for Christ

By Dr. Jeremy Westbrook, executive director

Editor's note: This is the first of four articles on the SCBO Vision Frame. They will run monthly through June.

SCBO Vision Frame

Our Mission

Inviting Churches to Rediscover Gospel Multiplication

Six years ago, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO) embarked on an invigorating new chapter, formally articulated in the mission statement unveiled in 2022: “Inviting Churches to Rediscover Gospel Multiplication.”

This statement is the culmination of a deliberate, two-year process that began when messengers of the 2020 SCBO Annual Celebration, held at Dublin Baptist Church, approved a plan for SCBO leaders to collaborate with Denominee to implement a comprehensive new vision frame.

This strategic initiative signifies a pivotal shift, moving beyond mere growth to embrace a profound, foundational commitment to multiplication rooted in biblical conviction.

At the core of this new mission is a clear and compelling theological and practical mandate: “Churches plant churches.” The SCBO recognized that the dynamic, self-propagating nature of the early church, as described in the New Testament, remains the model for advancing the kingdom of God today.

By placing the onus and the opportunity for multiplication directly onto its member churches, the SCBO is calling for an activation of the innate potential within every local church. This is not just a call for more outreach, but for

systemic and sustainable replication of disciple-making churches.

One of my favorite ways to relax is going to the beach, hanging out in the water, and maybe catching a few waves. After about 30 minutes, I often look up and can no longer see my condo. Initially, my first thought is always, “Who moved my condo?” I had drifted and was completely unaware of my movement!

In many ways, our churches start white hot for missions and evangelism, and then over time, begin slowly drifting. What was a laser focus on outward relationships, missionally, quickly shifts to an inward focus inadvertently.

To help combat this missional drive and to facilitate this vision, the SCBO is committing to tangible, actionable investment in its congregations through the development of a “multiplication pipeline for every local church.”

This pipeline represents a strategic framework designed to equip, train, and resource churches to become sending agents. The SCBO’s role is defined as one of both invitation and investment: “We invite and invest in your church to send the saved.”

This partnership structure ensures that every local church, regardless of size or current capacity, has the resources and guidance necessary to participate in spreading the

Story continues on the next page...

gospel by planting new churches and sending out missionaries and ministers. You can learn more at www.scbo.org/pipeline.

The entire endeavor requires a dependence on divine power and a clear scriptural anchor. The vision is encapsulated by the prayer found in 2 Thessalonians 3:1: “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.”

By citing this verse, the SCBO is aligning its mission with the apostolic plea for the “Gospel to spread rapidly.” The new mission is a prayer realized in action—a commitment to removing barriers and investing resources to ensure the unimpeded and accelerated progress of the gospel across Ohio and beyond. This new direction is a powerful invitation to SCBO churches to rediscover gospel multiplication.

Churches Utilize Evangelism Grants to Reach Their Communities



Nativity Christmas Event, First Baptist Church, New Lebanon

We are so excited by how God worked through the Nativity Christmas Event at First Baptist Church, New Lebanon. Our event took place during our normal Wednesday night gathering time, and our clothes pin and food pantry were open. This gave those who came for food or clothes the chance to stay to hear about the coming of Jesus. Approximately 200 people heard about the birth of Jesus and the good news of his life, death, and resurrection. People from our church attended and were encouraged in their faith, as well as community members who don't believe in Jesus yet. We gave out hot chocolate and cookies, and family photos with the Christmas story. Campfires were set up around the nativity so people could sit and talk. Volunteers from our church brought the nativity scene to life along with the live animals we were able to get! This was a blessing for our church and our community!

– Charity Betts, FBC, New Lebanon, volunteer



Men's Summit, Urbancrest Baptist Church, Lebanon

What a weekend! Despite the threat of a massive snowstorm, over 700 men attended this year's Urbancrest Men's Summit. We heard from speakers HB Charles Jr., Herb Reavis, Johnny Nix, Emir Caner, and Brent Snook, all of whom challenged us to live boldly and faithfully as leaders in our church, community, and family. Not only was the Men's Summit a time of experiencing great worship, but we also had great fellowship during our Friday night dinner and Saturday morning breakfast. I am so thankful that men showed up for the Summit, but most of all, I am thankful God showed up and worked in the lives of so many men. I had numerous men share with me how God spoke to them and worked in their lives over the weekend. I am also grateful to all the people who helped make Men's Summit 2026 a huge success, and especially grateful to the SCBO for their help and support.

– Pastor Geoff Prows, Urbancrest Baptist Church

Job Postings

SENIOR PASTOR I Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington

Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington, is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. If interested in applying for the position, please access the job description and submit a job application at our website. <https://www.violetbaptistchurch.org/senior-pastor-job-opening>

WORSHIP TEAM LEADER I Pleasant Valley Church, Parma

Pleasant Valley Church in Parma, Ohio, is seeking a part-time Worship Team Leader, 10 hours per week, who is passionate about leading biblically faithful, theologically rich, and Spirit-filled corporate worship in partnership with our Lead Pastor. This individual will model a gospel-centered vision of worship, plan and lead Sunday gatherings, invest in and develop worship and AVL team members, and serve as a covenant member of our elder-led, congregational church family. Compensation will be discussed upon inquiry; interested candidates may email a resume and brief cover letter to jjohnson@pvcmail.org.

BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR I Hamersville Baptist Church, Hamersville

Hamersville Baptist Church is a rural congregation located about thirty miles east of Cincinnati on State Route 125. The candidate should agree with the Baptist Faith and Message and meet the biblical requirements for a pastor. The congregation appreciates expository preaching, and most of the congregation uses the KJV Bible. Please send a brief cover letter and a 1-2 page resume to: Pulpit Committee, Hamersville Baptist Church, PO Box 78, Hamersville, OH 45130. For any questions call or message David Coppedge, Interim Pastor at 513-505-2570.

SENIOR PASTOR I First Baptist Church, West Jefferson

First Baptist Church, West Jefferson, is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please send your resume with references to FirstChurchWJPastorSearch@gmail.com.

BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR I Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth

Ridgewood Baptist Church, Wadsworth (<https://ridgewoodbaptistch.org>), is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. We are seeking someone willing to preach from the King James Bible. We do not desire someone with a reformed persuasion. 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.

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.

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