

JUNE 2026  
VOLUME 74 ISSUE 06

# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



**Two Collegiate Ministries  
Impact Ohio State University  
with the Gospel**

Stories on pages 8-9

# Featured This Month

<b>Building a Generous People by Dr. Jeremy Westbrook</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>God's Power and Presence Through Prayer</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Twenty-Year Echo of God's Transformation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What will we Build? AI and the local church</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Salt Company Celebrates Year of Explosive Growth at OSU</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>College Church Plant Reaches OSU Students with the Gospel</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>First Pastor Fit Cohort Now Over 200 Pounds Lighter</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Working Together to Bring Serve Tour Toledo to Ohio</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Ohio Pastors Urged to Participate in SBC Church Compensation Survey</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Take Your Next Step in Sharing the Gospel at the Women's Evangelism Conference</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Family Fun Day Brings Ministry Families Together</b>	<b>14</b>

## *The Ohio Baptist Messenger Staff*

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

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

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

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

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

## Building a Generous People

You are never more like Jesus than when you give.

Remember, Jesus once said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Over the past two years, I have received more requests to come preach on biblical tithing and stewardship than I ever have in my preaching ministry.

I believe we have a generation of church members who are not opposed to giving; they are just biblically unaware of God’s command for kingdom generosity. John Bunyan once said, “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” It is with that spirit and conviction that I write this call to generosity.

As church planters and pastors, we are constantly exhorting and encouraging those around us to live and to give generously. After all, we do have a biblical mandate as the Scriptures remind us in 2 Corinthians 9:11, “Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.”

I want to offer some practical reminders to help us create and cultivate a spirit of gratitude and generosity in our hearts, through our lives, and among our people:

### **We are Blessed to be a Blessing**

None of us would be where we are without the grace and generosity of the Lord and his people. Therefore, we must financially fuel the mission to ensure others have the opportunity to hear the good news of Christ.

The Cooperative Program is the partnership that enables those who have never heard to do so. I am simply asking us to remember what Christ said in Luke 12:48, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

### **We are Conduits not Reservoirs**

It is wise and prudent for every local church, association, state convention, and organization to have financial

reserves. The book of Proverbs provides instruction for investing, diversity, and biblical stewardship.

However, there needs to be a balance, as we are not banks. Someone once said that the Gospel is only good news if it gets there in time. Let’s do our best to make sure that happens through our giving and going.

### **We are to Give not just Live**

Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

It does not matter if you are planting a new church or pastoring an existing church; we must prioritize generous giving. I love hearing couples say they are waiting to have children until they can afford it...good luck with that!

In the same way, we as leaders can have the same mindset — waiting to live a generous life until we earn a certain income, or leading our churches to give generously until the budget reaches a certain percentage.

If you want to build a culture of generosity among your people, you must set an example and model generosity. As you strive to love Jesus more every day and understand that you can never outgive God, generosity will naturally overflow from your spiritual life into your practical life.

Remember, you are never more like Jesus than when you give.

Moving Forward,



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




OHIO BAPTIST FOUNDATION

# INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

09 • 28 • 2025 | The Club at Tartan Fields | [go.scbo.org/golf](https://go.scbo.org/golf)

Tee up for a purpose at the OBF Golf Outing! Enjoy a great day on the course while supporting CampUCan and learning how OBF investing can help your church grow funds and strengthen ministry impact across Ohio.

# President's Pen

## *God's Power and Presence Through Prayer*

Prayer is one of the most foundational parts of the Christian life, yet it is often one of the most neglected. Most pastors and ministry leaders would admit that we do not pray as much as we should. We preach on prayer, encourage our churches to pray, and know its importance, yet many of us still struggle to make it the priority it ought to be.

In Luke 11, the disciples watched Jesus pray and then came to him with a simple request: "Lord, teach us to pray." What strikes me about that passage is that these men already knew how to pray. As faithful Jews, they had prayed their entire lives. Yet, after observing Jesus, they realized there was something deeper and more intimate about his communion with the Father. They wanted to learn to pray like him. That ought to be the desire of every pastor and ministry leader.

One of the dangers in ministry is that we can become so busy doing the work of God that we neglect spending time with God. Sermons must be prepared, meetings attended, counseling sessions scheduled, and events planned. None of those things are wrong, but if we are not careful, prayer becomes something we squeeze into the margins rather than the center of ministry.

Jesus modeled something very different. Throughout the Gospels, we repeatedly find him withdrawing to pray. Sometimes he would spend the entire night in prayer before major moments of ministry. If the sinless Son of God prioritized prayer, how much more should we? Many times we fail to pray because, if we are honest, we are not fully convinced anything will happen. We believe in the doctrine of prayer, but we often struggle to believe in the power of prayer. Prayer is not a magical force. It is simply coming before the all-powerful God of the universe and asking him to act.

I remember during one summer in college traveling as a youth evangelist. One week we arrived at a tiny church in the mountains of Pennsylvania. The pastor warned me that only two teenagers were expected because many were away at band camp. That afternoon I slipped away and prayed specifically that God would bring ten students that night. Right before we started, two unexpected teenagers walked through the doors after a last-minute change in plans. We had exactly ten. It was not a large crowd, but it taught me something I have never forgotten: God works through prayer.

Pastors and ministry leaders need that reminder. We need more than strategies and programs. We need the power of God. And one of the primary ways we experience his power and presence is through prayer.



In Christ,

Dave Welsch  
SCBO President

# A Twenty-Year Echo of God's Transformation

Matt Pardi, Northwest Region catalyst

Much has been said over the years about the sovereignty of God and his providence. The more we see his hand at work and give him praise, the more our hearts are filled with worship. God's providential work is evident in many of our churches and ministries throughout the Northwest Region. With each story I hear—and I never grow tired of hearing them—I am reminded of God's faithfulness. We are simply blessed to be along for the ride.

I heard another one of these wonderful stories recently when I sat down for lunch with my friend Yuepeng Deng. Pastor Deng is a church planter in Perrysburg. Four years ago, he planted All-Nations Bible Church, which meets at First Baptist Church, Perrysburg, where Jeff Woolum serves as pastor.

As Yuepeng and I talked over lunch, he reminded me how the Southern Baptist Convention has been part of his story from the very beginning. He described it as a "20-year echo of God's transformation."

He shared:

"I first encountered the gospel in 2002 as an international PhD student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A group of Christians shared Jesus with me and my girlfriend, who later became my wife. They continued visiting us and caring for us, even though we showed little interest in Jesus. Their love left a deep impression on me.

In 2008, after marriage and children had come along, I was on a flight and became deeply worried about the safety of my wife and young children. Suddenly, I saw a vivid image of one of those Christian friends praying for me. For the first time in my life, I prayed. God's peace and comfort immediately came upon me in a powerful way. I knew God was real.

In 2010, my wife and I placed our faith in Jesus Christ and were baptized. Our friends who shared with us in Knoxville rejoiced with us, praising the Lord for saving us.

After becoming Christians, we actively served in the church. In 2016, the Holy Spirit led me to attend seminary and equipped me to share the gospel with nonbelievers. After five years of part-time study while working full-time and raising three young children, I completed seminary.

One month before graduation, God called me to plant a church and even gave me the exact name: All-Nations Bible Church. I resisted at first, wanting to rest instead. But God reminded me through Romans 12:11: 'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.'

Soon afterward, God opened doors through First Baptist Church, Perrysburg. When I met Pastor Jeff Woolum, he

told me God had already revealed to him that I was coming to discuss church planting. They offered us a place to worship for free. I was amazed by how clearly God paved the way.

Later, during the church planting process, I realized that the church where I first heard the gospel twenty years earlier—First Baptist Church Concord—was also an SBC church. One church shared the gospel with me; another helped send me out to share it with others. What a 20-year echo of gospel transformation!

As All-Nations Bible Church enters its fourth year, 24 people have accepted Christ and been baptized by God's grace. My prayer is that we never grow weary in sharing the gospel, trusting that God alone brings the kingdom growth." - Yuepeng Deng.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."

—1 Corinthians 3:6

Thank the Lord for his sovereignty and his patient work as he pursues us over the years. I love that the SBC was there for Yuepeng at the very beginning, and now 20 years later, as a church planter! May we and the churches we serve continue to flourish as we trust him to bring the growth.



Northwest Region  
Catalyst Matt Pardi

**SCBO** ➤

*Annual  
Celebration*

—  
*IMB Sending  
Celebration*

**November 9-10, 2026**

# WHAT WILL WE BUILD?

## AI and the local church

**Ray Umphrey**

lead pastor,  
Pillar Church, Columbus

Somewhere in your congregation right now, someone is asking ChatGPT to explain a Bible passage. Someone else used Claude this week to write a note to their small group, plan a Sunday school lesson, or look up what Christians believe about a question their teenager asked at dinner. And at least one person is quietly wondering whether their pastor did something similar before Sunday's sermon.

Artificial intelligence has arrived in the local church, whether we invited it or not, and is already shaping how the people in our pews read scripture, approach theology, and think about their faith. Pastors and churches need to lean into this moment so that we can engage this new technology wisely.

Scripture gives us a theology of technology that can help us think about artificial intelligence. In Genesis 4, Jubal is the father of music, and Tubal-Cain the forger of bronze and iron. The arts and crafts are born east of Eden, in the lineage of Cain, which is marked by escalating wickedness culminating in Lamech's boast.

Later, in Exodus 31, a man named Bezalel is filled with the Spirit of God to work in gold, silver, and bronze — the very same materials and skills, to construct God's dwelling, the tabernacle. The same technology can be directed toward Babel or the Tabernacle, toward a golden calf

or a mercy seat. This is the oldest question technology puts to human beings, and AI provides a new opportunity to ask: toward what end will we direct this?

That question has a practical answer and a theological one. The practical answer is that AI offers genuine and significant opportunities for ministry. Many of our churches are led by bivocational or solo pastors whose administrative burdens compete directly with the work they were called to do. AI can absorb substantial portions of that burden — drafting correspondence, developing curricula, summarizing documents, creating content — and the time recovered may be returned to prayer, to hospital visits, to the planning and preparation of faithful sermons.

The missiological reach is equally significant. Organizations like Wycliffe are already using AI to accelerate Bible translation for more than 1,500 language groups still without Scripture, compressing a fifteen-year process into five to seven years. The same technology that processes ancient languages can help a pastor turn a sermon series into a small group guide, a series of articles, or even a book that can extend his ministry beyond the pulpit.

However, Bezalel did not simply make pragmatic use of available tools for spiritual ends. He was filled with the



Spirit, working under divine instruction, and fulfilling a specific, God-given purpose. Our usage of any technology must also be rightly employed in a way that pleases the Lord. We need to seriously consider the kind of people who will be using it.

The pulpit is the clearest example. AI can generate a theologically coherent sermon or turn my rough draft into a polished piece of rhetoric. I am convinced that AI tools can be helpfully and responsibly employed in the sermon preparation process. However, what it cannot generate is the struggle that comes when a pastor wrestles with a text, bearing in mind his congregation's unique context, and the embodied perspective and personality of the pastor. The integrity of the pulpit depends on the integrity of the process behind it.

The same principle extends to discernment. A church member who asks an AI about the resurrection, the nature of baptism, or what the Bible says about marriage may receive a response that sounds authoritative, regardless of whether those answers are orthodox or simply wrong. Hallucinations are not rare anomalies — they are a structural feature of how these large language models like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini work. A person who has not been taught to receive AI outputs critically is being catechized by a system with no theology, no accountability, and no stake in his or her soul. Church leaders who understand the technology have a responsibility to help others develop necessary discernment.

The theological conversation surrounding artificial intelligence is ultimately a theological question about what human beings are. The anxiety many Christians feel about AI runs deeper than job displacement or economic impact. It is that our concept of human dignity that has been grounded in what we can do — our rationality, our creativity, our capacity to produce — is suddenly confronted with a machine that does all of those things faster and without human weakness.

A machine may outperform a human being in every measurable domain, but the Imago Dei transcends our capacities and competencies. An artificial intelligence cannot be addressed by God, held accountable before God, or redeemed by God. That distinction is ontological, and it belongs to every image-bearer without exception, not because of what we do, but because of who we are before God. So, as we think about our relationship to these new and rapidly developing technologies, let's bear in mind who we are before God and then rightly appropriate the tools He has placed in our hands.

Ray Umphrey is Lead Pastor of Pillar Church in Columbus, an adjunct professor at the University of the Cumberlands, and a former president of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. He holds a PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and writes on AI, biblical studies, and ministry at [rayumphrey.substack.com](http://rayumphrey.substack.com).

# SOUTHWEST

# OHIO

## LEADERS CONFERENCE



## SCBO >>

# REGISTER TODAY >

September 10, 2026  
First Baptist Kettering  
The Church at Sugarcreek  
[go.scbo.org/SWOL](http://go.scbo.org/SWOL)

# The Salt Company Celebrates Year of Explosive Growth at OSU

Stephanie Heading, managing editor



2025-2026 was a year of explosive growth for The Salt Company at Ohio State University.

Approximately 400 students attended its weekly Thursday night service, up from 250 last year, and over three hundred students participated in 22 men's and women's weekly small groups.

The collegiate ministry, part of The Capital Church, a five-year-old church plant near the OSU campus, has a clear purpose – to see a movement of college students in Columbus who follow Jesus for the rest of their lives.

"I think it's different for everybody," said Guetzko. "Any ministry that's growing is going to have different factors."

Two factors are fueling the growth of Salt Company: a strong emphasis on prayer and a passionate student leadership team.

"First and foremost, we put a high emphasis on prayer this year, going into things. Obviously, that's always going to be a central thing inside of any church, in any ministry, but we talked about it a lot more. We incorporated it into things that we do in a more public way," Guetzko noted.

Salt Company sponsored a Monday morning prayer meeting in the Ohio Union on campus.

"It started with about five people going, and it ended with about 50 people going," he said.

A student-led prayer team also launched during weekly services, giving attendees an opportunity to pray with someone in response to the Thursday night message in a public setting.

"At first, I thought, what are people going to do? Are they going to feel awkward about it? They definitely did at first. But I watched students feel a little bit more undignified and be prayerful, openly and boldly," he said.

Over time, Salt Company saw the impact of its emphasis

on prayer.

"It wasn't something you talk about, and then you move on and hope it's happening. We check in on it. It was central inside of our groups, and I think God answered a lot of those prayers," Guetzko stated.

A passionate student leadership team of 60 with a heart for the campus community is a second factor in the ministry's growth, according to Guetzko.

"We had a student leadership team this year that really cared about campus – the environments that they were uniquely positioned in to be able to go and be intentional inside of those places, and actually adopted the mindset that their words and their behavior might be one of the greatest ways to actually share who Jesus is and what he's done for them."

Guetzko says his team worked hard to convince students that the classes, workplaces, and living spaces they have aren't coincidental but intentionally chosen by God for this particular season.

"They had to just ask the question, why? And through that, we had a lot of leaders inviting people on a weekly basis," he said.

As a result, many small groups grew throughout the year instead of declining. One group grew so large that they had to leave their apartment clubhouse and meet at the OSU Oval, when weather permitted.

Guetzko is looking forward to the next school year, anticipating 110 student leaders and 600 students in the weekly worship service.

"What's so interesting about each year is we don't really know what we have until we kick off," he said. "You can do all the things, but we could go to our kickoff and have far less than we expect. We could go to our kickoff and have far more. And ultimately, it's all right. We totally trust his sovereignty inside of that."

# College Church Plant Reaches OSU Students with the Gospel

Stephanie Heading, managing editor



Nearly 100 OSU students attended Sunday afternoon services at Revive College Church during the 2025-2026 school year.

Over 60,000 undergraduate and graduate students from across America and around the world attend The Ohio State University (OSU) in Columbus.

The vast majority don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Revive Student, a ministry of Revive College Church, is working on the OSU campus with a singular focus – reaching college students with the gospel.

Pastor Will Wu, along with his wife, Chris, and a core team of 10, planted Revive College Church on the OSU campus in 2021 as the Covid pandemic was winding down.

Wu has a heart for college students and is an experienced church planter, having started churches at Berkeley in California, as well as at Pitt and Carnegie Mellon in Pennsylvania.

“OSU was the next big campus, nearby in a big city,” Wu said. “We did a couple visits, once during Covid, actually, and just fell in love with the city.”

Upon arriving at OSU, the Revive core team focused on meeting students and getting to know them.

“In the beginning, we're just on campus a lot. We play sports on campus. Just make friends, start to tell people what it is we're doing,” he recalled.

Mid-week men's dinners and women's dinners quickly followed, and then a weekly church service and a Friday Bible study.

“We were just missionaries on campus for the first couple months. We're just meeting people left and right, doing whatever we could. Then, at a certain point, people started to actually come, both non-believers and some believers. We had a few contacts here that helped us get the student group started,” Wu recalled.

Five years later, Wu sees the hand of God on Revive Col-

lege Church and Revive Students.

“Year by year, God has been faithful, slowly adding some faithful people – people who came to church, people who became Christians. I think one of the big turning points was when we started to raise up student leaders who could help lead their own peers and reach out to their own friends.”

The 2025-2026 school year was a productive year on campus. Revive had 4-5 men's life groups and 4-5 women's life groups with 70-80 students participating weekly. Between 80 and 100 students attended the weekly worship service at 4 pm on Sundays.

Student leaders are more experienced in reaching their friends, and Revive is seeing more retention from its fall outreach efforts.

“The way it works in most collegiate ministries is you meet tons of people in the fall, the first three weeks, and then probably 75% of them drop off, which is okay, you cast the big, wide net, but then really try to get people into community,” Wu said. “I think the student leaders did a good job, along with our volunteer staff members.”

Collegiate ministry has brought both blessings and challenges for Revive.

“I would say OSU has been one of the most open campuses I've done collegiate ministry at,” Wu said.

He credits the openness to the presence of other faithful collegiate ministries on campus, which created a good environment for new groups to launch. In addition, the evangelistic outreach of the OSU football team in the past few years has been a tremendous boost to Christian efforts on campus.

However, the challenges of ministry at OSU are the same as on other campuses. Wu notes that in the past decade, he's seen more mental health issues among students.

“A lot more young people are wrestling with mental health, isolation, loneliness,” Wu noted. “I think there’s probably a large proportion of the campus that doesn’t even exit their rooms, so we never even see them to be able to meet them in the first place. We hear stories of students who will, because we meet on campus for service, check out our service, walk around it for almost a semester before they feel comfortable joining in our service.”



Revive College Students share the gospel on the campus of Ohio State University.

While Revive promotes a friendly environment, and students have a good time, some students feel anxious unless they know someone in advance.

In this anxious generation, Revive encourages relational evangelism among the students.

“It usually starts with one friend inviting them,” Wu said. “But I think when they see a community of love where people are very different, that seems to be one of the biggest drawing points for a lot of the students, more so than ‘Oh, you convinced me God is real.’”

Wu is looking forward to the 2026-2027 school year, and plans to continue raising up student leaders to be missionaries on their campus.

“I’m really excited for this group of student leaders, because I think now that we’ve had a culture established of students serving, we have more younger students this year who are actually in the dorms as they are serving,” Wu said.

“So, I think one of the prayers that we have is that some of these students will be able to start dorm Bible studies and reach a lot more of their friends.”

## First Pastor Fit Cohort Now Over 200 Pounds Lighter

Ryan Strother, director of convention support

The SCBO’s Pastor Fit Initiative began in January. Quarterly webinars and 6-month cohorts make up the initiative with the goal of helping pastors take one step toward better health. The first cohort of six pastors is finishing this month. Pastor Austin Mathis, Grace Church Harrison, leads the cohort.

Since the beginning of the cohort, members have cumulatively lost over 200 pounds. According to Mathis, “Even more important than the weight loss, are the reports of lifestyle changes and enjoyment many are experiencing. Improved energy, increased focus, and discipline carrying over into other areas of life. It’s been an honor to walk with these men for the past few months, and I’m excited to keep it going and start new cohorts in the future.”

Time in the cohort impacted the members in multiple ways.

“Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that, ‘As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. This verse has been a reminder to me of the importance of being in community with others who will challenge me to be a better follower of Christ,’” said Brian Naess, Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington.

Naess continued, “We often discuss the importance of being sharpened spiritually, but as pastors, we do not

often have the same level of sharpening in our health journeys. I have been thankful for the health cohort I am currently in and for how it has sharpened me into a better vessel of who God has called me to be.

“Austin has been such an encouragement, and the others in the cohort have as well. I have been eating better, have lost weight, have been walking more, and have started doing more weight training, but more importantly, it has helped me grow in my walk with Jesus. I highly recommend this to anyone who wants to be a better servant for Christ.”

Rick Williams, pastor, Violet Baptist Church, Pickerington, said, “The Pastor Fit Initiative has been a tremendous help to me personally. Austin worked with me to develop a customized plan for both exercise and nutrition that has helped me lose weight, build strength, and stay consistent. I would highly recommend the Pastor Fit Initiative to any pastor looking for a practical, sustainable, and effective approach to improving their health and fitness.”

The second Pastor Fit Cohort began in May, and a third one launches on July 27. See more information, Pastoral Wellness resources, and events at [SCBO.org/PastorHealth](https://www.scbo.org/PastorHealth).

# Working Together to Bring Serve Tour Toledo to Ohio

John Heading, Ohio DR director

What happens when Send Relief, SCBO, Ohio Disaster Relief, associations, and local churches come together for a unified effort to reach a city for the gospel?

You get Serve Tour Toledo.

Serve Tour is a compassion ministry through SEND Relief, funded by the Cooperative Program.

Send Relief Toledo marks the second time Ohio has hosted this event after hosting Serve Tour Dayton in 2022. During two days in Dayton, 600 volunteers worked together to tackle 35 projects. Project sites included seven schools, nine churches, and 19 community locations. Churches were revitalized, 345 people heard the gospel, and 2600 people were served.

Once again, Ohio Disaster Relief will be involved at Serve Tour Toledo, September 25-26, bringing a citywide focus on serving while sharing the gospel.

## FEEDING VOLUNTEERS

Ohio DR is providing lunches for all volunteers on Friday and Saturday, and preparing and serving the rally dinner on Saturday night. The Mobile Feeding Unit will also be available for use in a target area to serve food.

Currently, Serve Tour Toledo has 1045 early access volunteers from 71 churches and six states registered to participate. If they all serve on both days, that's over 2,000 packed lunches, and if most of them come to the



*The Ohio DR Quick Response Feeding Unit (QRU) was used to feed people during Serve Tour Dayton and will be deployed again during Serve Tour Toledo.*

rally dinner, that's 1000 hot meals. Our Ohio DR volunteers will be manning the feeding operations.

## SHOWER UNITS

Ohio DR will provide four shower trailers to support four churches that will be housing volunteers during the event. We currently have one shower unit in service. New Mexico DR gave us an older shower trailer, and Violet Baptist Church in Pickerington is rebuilding that unit with a grant from the Southern Baptist DR Home Depot Fund.

SEND RELIEF  
**SERVE TOUR**  
TOLEDO

**JOIN US TO  
SERVE OUR CITY**

**September 25-26,  
2026**

To meet the remaining need, we will borrow one or two units from Indiana DR. Ohio DR volunteers will serve at each location to clean the unit daily.

### CHAPLAINCY ON THE GROUND

The intent of Serve Tour is to serve in compassion ministry while sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. One way to keep that in the forefront is to deploy a DR Chaplain team of two to every project site to facilitate gospel conversations. Ohio DR chaplains will fill these roles.

### HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Community cleanup projects will be much more efficient if volunteers don't have to lift everything by hand. Having Ohio DR heavy equipment and the operators to run it makes community projects more manageable.

If you want to be involved in Serve Tour Toledo through Ohio Disaster Relief, register for the September 12 DR training at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Logan and get your credentials. Here's the link: <https://scbo.org/drnewvolunteer>

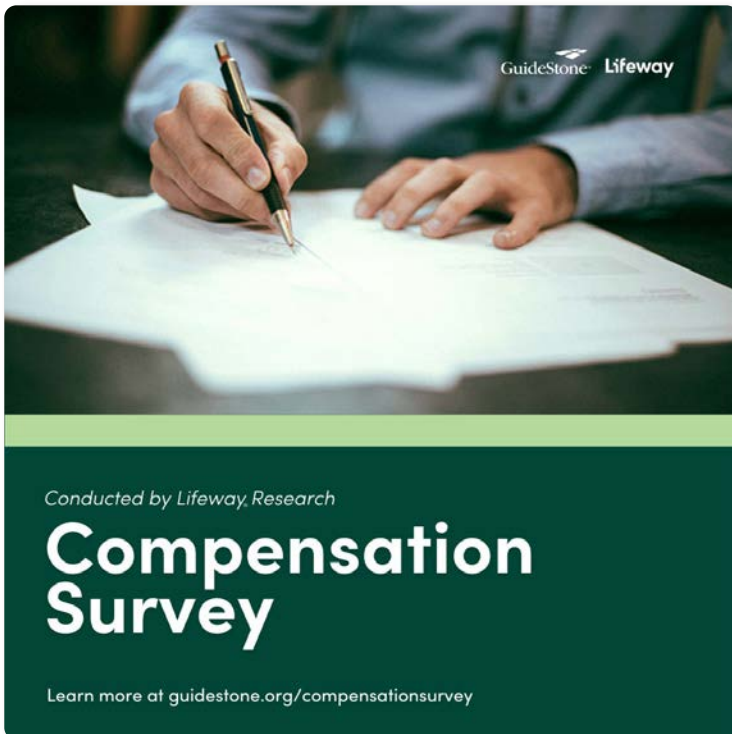
If you want to get involved in Serve Tour Toledo as an early access volunteer, you can register here: <https://www.sendrelief.org/serve-tour/toledo-serve-tour/>

For churches, schools, and ministries in Toledo, if you have a project recommendation, please submit it ASAP by emailing [jheading@scbo.org](mailto:jheading@scbo.org).



DR teams will be packing sack lunches for volunteers at Serve Tour Toledo in September.

## Ohio Pastors Urged to Participate in SBC Church Compensation Survey



Every two years, Guidestone, Lifeway Research, and State Conventions work together to conduct the SBC Church Compensation Survey, the largest free study focused on church pay and benefits in the United States.

Conducted every two years, the survey helps churches of all sizes understand current compensation practices

and make informed decisions about salaries and benefits for pastors and church staff. The 2026 survey is now live and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete at [Guidestone.org/CompensationSurvey](https://www.guidestone.org/compensation-survey). (LINK NEEDED)

The survey is open through July 15.

“I want to encourage all of our SCBO pastors to participate in the Church Compensation Survey offered by Guidestone,” said Dr. Jeremy Westbrook, SCBO executive director. “The more data that can be compared from all-size churches, urban and rural, the better we can advocate and encourage our churches to adequately compensate our leaders.”

Survey results will be released this fall, in time to assist most churches as they prepare 2027 budgets. Results are compiled and reported in aggregate; individual church or employee information is never disclosed.

The survey is administered by Lifeway Research once it closes on July 15. Survey respondents will receive advance notice when results are available.

To complete the survey, respondents should have the following information readily available: average weekly attendance and church membership; annual church budget; employee salaries and housing allowances; church contributions to retirement plans; church-paid insurance premiums; and Social Security offset, if applicable.

Editor's Note: Article adapted from information provided by Guidestone.

# Take Your Next Step in Sharing the Gospel at the Women's Evangelism Conference

SCBO Staff

## Are you ready to take your next step in evangelism?

Whether you're a seasoned leader or new to sharing the gospel, the [Women's Evangelism Conference](#) on Saturday, September 26, from 9 am to 4 pm is your opportunity to learn how to create a culture of evangelism in your life and ministry context. This one-day event at Genoa Baptist Church in Westerville, Ohio is designed for women who are passionate about sharing the gospel and equipping others to do the same.

## Why attend?

Have you ever asked yourself: How do I start a gospel conversation? What if I get it wrong? How can I teach other women to share their faith?

Then, this gathering is for you. We'll examine, engage, and embrace evangelism together so you leave equipped, encouraged, and empowered to share the gospel.

## What to expect:

**Inspiring speakers:** Be challenged and equipped by speakers Catherine Renfro and Missie Branch.

**Catherine Renfro** is a church planter's wife, mom, and the National Director of Women's Evangelism at the North American Mission Board. She graduated from the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master's Degree in Christian Education and Biblical Counseling. She is passionate about seeing lost people come to know Jesus and saved people live out their purpose of making Jesus known.

**Missie Branch** is a speaker, Bible teacher, podcast host, and author who is currently CEO/ED of My BLVD Co. She has an M.A. in Ethics and is passionate about discipleship, leadership, theology, and culture. Missie is married to Duce Branch and together, they have four children. Missie is serving on the SBC's Racial Reconciliation Steering Committee and as a trustee for CSU and Lifeway Christian Resources.

**Encouragement and community:** Connect with like-minded women who share your desire to spread the gospel.

**Practical tools:** Learn how to confidently start gospel conversations and help others do the same.

## Join us!

Register now and commit to sharing the good news with those around you. A \$50 deposit is required at registration to secure your spot, and it will be refunded after you attend the conference.

**Learn more and reserve your spot today!**

WOMEN'S  
**EVANGELISM**  
CONFERENCE

**SPEAKERS**

**CATHERINE RENFRO**

**MISSIE BRANCH**

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 | COLUMBUS, OHIO

[go.scbo.org/women](https://go.scbo.org/women)

# Family Fun Day Brings Ministry Families Together

Rick Williams, Central Region catalyst



Ministry families in the Central Region enjoyed a day of fun and fellowship at Rule 3 in Pickerington.

The SCBO Family Fun Day at Rule 3 in Pickerington was a wonderful time for pastors, church staff, and ministry families from across central Ohio to step away from the normal pace of ministry and simply enjoy being together.

From the moment families arrived, a relaxed and joyful atmosphere permeated the building. Lanes were filled with friendly competition; kids were racing from one arcade game to another; and conversations were underway everywhere you turned. Some people were bowling strikes while others were laughing at gutter balls, but everyone seemed to enjoy the chance to connect in a setting that was focused on fun, fellowship, and family.

One of the best parts of the day was seeing ministry families spending quality time together without an agenda, schedule, or pressure. Ministry can often move at a nonstop pace, so opportunities like this matter. It was encouraging to watch pastors connecting with other pastors, spouses building friendships, and children making memories together over pizza, arcade games, and a little healthy competition on the bowling lanes.

Events like this remind us how important relationships are within our SCBO family. The conversations shared

around tables and between bowling frames were just as meaningful as the activities themselves. There was plenty of laughter throughout the morning, but also genuine encouragement as ministry families had the chance to relax and enjoy community with one another.

We are grateful to everyone who attended and helped make the day such a success. Thank you to the families who came ready to have fun, encourage one another, and enjoy the time together. We are also thankful for the opportunity to host events that support and encourage those who faithfully serve their churches and communities week after week.

The morning at Rule 3 was more than just bowling and arcade games. It was a reminder that ministry families need moments to recharge, connect, and simply enjoy life together. Seeing children laugh, parents relax, and friendships deepened made the event incredibly meaningful.

Thank you again to everyone who joined us for the SCBO Family Fun Day. We loved every minute of it and are already looking forward to future opportunities to gather together as families.

## SCBO ADVANCED WORSHIP LEADER TRAINING RETREAT

September 10-12 | [go.scbo.org/worshipRetreat](https://go.scbo.org/worshipRetreat) | Columbus Ohio

Is your worship ministry growing or just going through the motions? The Advanced Worship Leader Training Retreat is an intensive 3-day experience designed to equip worship leaders at every level — from volunteers to full-time pastors. Join us and walk away with biblical foundations, practical skills, and a renewed vision for leading your congregation in transformational worship.



# Harvest

Investing  
in teen  
girls with  
a heart for  
missions?

Yes!

*The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few—Matthew 9:37*

## What is Harvest?

A retreat for leaders and potential leaders of teen girls who are interested in living on mission.

Adult leaders will enjoy worship, Bible study, small group breakouts, and more!

Friday, October 23–Saturday, October 24, 2026

Location: National WMU | 100 Missionary Ridge | Birmingham, AL

Register now at [wmu.com/harvest](http://wmu.com/harvest)



**WMU**® God's mission.  
Our passion.

# Job Postings

## **ASSOCIATION MISSION STRATEGIST |** Buckeye Central/Erie Baptist Association

The BCEBA is seeking a man to serve as our new AMS (formerly DOM). The compensation for the position is \$12,000 per year. The primary responsibility of the AMS is to provide leadership, vision, and oversight to the association with the goal of creating value and cultivating growth not only within the BCEBA but also within the individual churches of the association. Questions and resumés can be sent to [chadberry522@gmail.com](mailto:chadberry522@gmail.com). We will receive resumés through June 30.

## **FULL-TIME DIRECTOR |** King's Kids Day Care, FBC, Grove City

First Baptist Church, Grove City, is seeking a full-time director for its King's Kids Day Care. The Director will be responsible for the daily operation of our Christian childcare facility in accordance with state licensing regulations and KKDC operating policies. He/she will help oversee the biblically based curriculum, market the program, manage personnel, and maintain high standards of excellence in childcare in the community. For more information on qualifications and job description, and to submit a resume, please respond to [info@firstgc.org](mailto:info@firstgc.org).

## **FULL-TIME PASTOR |** Grace Baptist Fellowship, Wellston

Grace Baptist Fellowship, Wellston, is seeking a full-time pastor who is a faithful shepherd, gifted teacher, and compassionate leader. The ideal candidate will prioritize pastoral care, biblical teaching, and community engagement while helping us grow in outreach and connection. The church has a strong foundation of faithful members and a deep commitment to community. Our church family is rooted in tradition but recognizes the need to grow, especially in reaching younger generations, expanding our volunteer base, and strengthening our outreach to the surrounding community. For more information or to submit a resume, contact Deacon Tom Leach at 740-583-4100.

## **DISCIPLESHIP PASTOR/DIRECTOR |** Covenant Church, Grove City

Covenant Church, Grove City, is seeking a full-time Discipleship Pastor/Director who oversees the small groups ministry and care within that structure. This position is a full-time role. Responsibilities include: working closely with the lead pastor; providing resources/training and encouragement to small group leaders; helping champion the importance of small groups and increase participation; and ensuring there are healthy leaders and apprentices.

For a full job description, questions, or to apply, email [David@covenantchurch.us](mailto:David@covenantchurch.us).

## **LEAD PASTOR |** First Baptist Church of Mt. Healthy

First Baptist Church of Mt. Healthy, near Cincinnati, is seeking our next Lead Pastor. We are a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-generational Southern Baptist church with a long history of faithful ministry. Our congregation desires a pastor who preaches biblically faithful, Christ-centered sermons; shepherds with compassion, presence, and relational warmth; invests in discipleship and leadership development; strengthens multi-cultural and multi-generational unity; leads with humility, clarity, and a servant's heart; and possesses a strong biblical foundation and seminary training. Interested candidates may submit resumes to: [fbc-mt-hpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:fbc-mt-hpastorsearch@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@scoo.org](mailto:classifieds@scoo.org)

