

Southern Pennsylvania District Church of the Brethren



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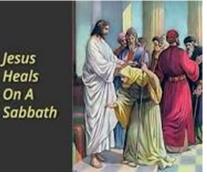
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Nov./Dec. 2023 Volume 40, Issue 6

<u>A Message from our District Executive</u>

JESUS' TEACHINGS Verses OUR UNDERSTANDING

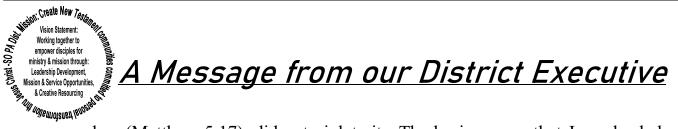
In my days in school, teachers were present in the classroom to guide and direct the student in grasping and learning how to handle problems/ situations in life, i.e. in math, we have



formulas to help work out certain problems, but what about the problems of life? Does the Bible give us the answers? Yes, I certainly believe it does; however situations occur where we each interpret things accordingly to our upbringing and understandings. Sometimes, that gets complicated and gets us into conflict. Well, during this season of THANKSGIVING, let us first of all give thanks to God for His WORD and all the blessings that can bring us in life.

In an effort to work at this article's title...*Teaching verses Understanding*, we sometimes attempt to utilize our understanding of a situation over and above God's viewpoint. Take for example the text from Luke 13:10-13, where we find Jesus teaching in the synagogue. There was a woman present who had been crippled so severally from possibly arthritis, that she could not stand straight. When Jesus saw her he called her to him and said, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." As He touched her, she was free of her crippling situation. The scripture goes on to tell us that the religious leaders condemned Jesus for breaking the religious law about working on the Sabbath. Let us chew on this situation a bit and what that means to us today.

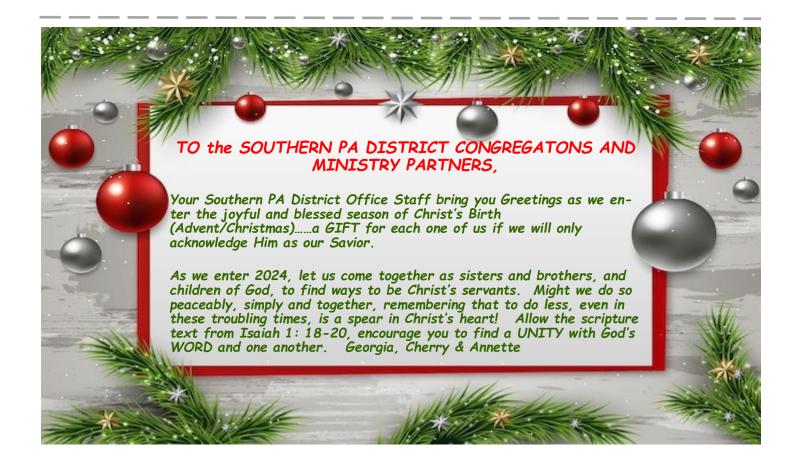
In what ways do we interpret the Bible's guardrails differently than they are intended? It is important to note that Jesus was not violating the law of God when he healed on the Sabbath. Certainly, he was acting against the Pharisaical interpretation of the law and against their man-added rules. But, Jesus who came to fulfill the



law (Matthew 5:17), did not violate it. The basic reason that Jesus healed on the Sabbath was that people needed His help. Need has no calendar. The Sabbath was made for men/women to find rest, comfort and peace.

Jesus references working on the Sabbath when he referenced the Jews, who on the Sabbath took care of their animals by feeding and watering them. He questions who would not pull their animal out of a pit if it had fallen into one on the Sabbath. Again, the Sabbath was made for us. Of course, if we misuse the Sabbath Rest concept, that is another matter. However, the point of doing good and saving life is lawful, even on the Sabbath; whereas using the Sabbath rule to do evil or skirt around it just to make our own human exceptions bends the guardrail that God established for us. It certainly seems that we do bend those guardrails maybe all too often. Let us **Give Thanks** for God's guardrails, while at the same time watching our Pharisaical inferences on our journey

God's Blessing to each of you, Georgia







SOPA District Office is open Mondays through Friday from 9:00 AM—4:00 PM Office Phone: (717) 778-2264 Email: sopadistrict@brethren.org Georgia Markey, Interim District Executive Email: gmarkey@brethren.org Cell: (717) 887-3905 IDE Office (717) 778-2254

These congregations are currently looking for pastoral or additional staff

Search Process

Gettysburg COB - Sr. Pastor (currently being served by Interim Pastor Bob Krouse) York Second COB - Pastor

West York COB - Sr. Pastor (currently being served by Interim Pastor Richard Godfrey)

Waynesboro COB - Sr. Pastor (currently being served by Interim Pastor Andrew Paterno)

Wolgamuth - Pastor

Mechanicsburg COB - Sr. Pastor (currently being served by Interim Pastor, James Benedict)

District Executive Search Process

Your District Executive Committer has begun the job of discerning appropriate Leadership for our smaller congregational base as well as appropriate support staff.

Conversations will be held with current congregation's Pastoral Staff for input in this matter. In addition, with the loss of congregations, District Leadership is examining the rezoning of the District in an effort to have appropriate congregational leadership for our congregations.

Information in this newsletter is accurate as of the date of publication.



The Brethren Press

Brethren Press offers next series of Advent and Lent devotionals, ideas for Christmas gifts

By Jeff Lennard

Our next series of seasonal devotionals from Brethren Press are offered for Advent 2023 and Lent 2024. These paperback, pocket-sized books are suitable for individual use and for churches to give to their members: *All Things New* by Kevin Kessler (Advent 2023) and *Through Thick and Thin* by Beth Sollenberger (Lent 2024).

The latest releases from Brethren Press will make great Christmas gifts for family and friends: *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* by Chrissie Muecke, Jasmin Pittman Morrell, and Teresa Kim Pecinovsky; *A Year of Living Differently: How Brethren Volunteer Service Changed Our Lives Forever* by Jim Lehman; and *Luke and Acts: Turning the World Upside Down* by Christina Bucher and Robert W. Neff

Read more at <u>www.brethren.org/news/2023/brethren-press-offers-next-devotionals</u>



MEAT CANNING 2024

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED T TO PROVIDE MEALS

For the 46th year, the Mid-Atlantic and SO PA Districts are co-sponsoring a Meat Canning project which previously has enjoyed a generous response and enthusiastic support. The project is scheduled for April 1 - 4, 2024 at the Christian Aid Ministries

facility. The 2024 Meat Canning goal is to can

approximately 17,000 pounds of chicken in 4 days of processing.

The Mid-Atlantic District and the SO PA District congregations are asking for congregations who are willing to prepare a meal for approximately 30 people for lunch with a light snack.

Please contact your district office if your congregation is willing to provide a meal or funds.

Daily Work Schedule & Responsibilities:

Shift #1 - 7:15 a.m. to NOON Assist in starting the day's process, participate in the cutting, canning and labeling. (15 volunteers needed)

Shift #2 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Participate in the total process of the program. (15 volunteers needed)

UP-COMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 3, District-wide Evening of Praise and Praying thru Hymns, 6:00 - 7:00 PM at the Carlisle Church of the Brethren sponsored by the District Church Development Commission

Monday, December 4, District Executive Committee ZOOM Meeting – 6:00 – 7:00 PM

Tuesday, December 5, Central Zone Pastor's Gathering at Carlisle COB, 9AM – 10:30 AM

Thursday, December 7, Eastern Zone Pastor's Meeting at Madison Avenue COB – 12:00 PM Noon

Friday and Saturday, December 8th, and 9th Camp Eder Christmas Tree Festival: *A Celebration of the Birth of Jesus.* Daily 5 PM—9 PM. If you wish to be a sponsor, see the enclosed Camp Eder Sponsorship Form

Tuesday, December 12, District Stewards Commission,6:30 PMAll Zoom meetings unless otherwise noted6:30 PM

Wednesday, December 13, 12:00 Noon – The Brethren Home @ Cross Keys will hold a Ground Breaking Ceremony for a Senior Living facility

Tuesday, December 21, District Ministry Commission (if need is determined)

Monday, January 1, 2024, District Office Closed

Tuesday, January 2, 2024, Central Zone Pastor's Meeting at Carlisle COB 9:00 – 10:30 AM

Thursday, January 4, Eastern Zone Pastor's Meeting at TBD12:00 NoonSaturday, January 13, 2024, District Board Meeting.at Newville COB 16 CarlisleRoad, Newville, PAGathering 8:30 - 9:00 AM Meeting 9:00 AM

Monday, January 15, 2024, District Office Closed (Dr. Martin Luther King Day)

January 19-25, 2024, Council of District Executives Meeting, Florida (SOPA DE in attendance)

Thursday, January 25, 2024 District Ministry Commission6:30 PMCarlisle COB6:30 PM

Monday, February 5, 2024 District Nurture Commission Zoom meeting 6:30 PM Tuesday, February 6, 2024, Central Zone Pastor's Gathering at Carlisle COB, 9AM – 10:30 AM

Tuesday, February 6, 2024, District Witness Commission Zoom meeting- 6:30 PM

Thursday, February 8, Eastern Zone Pastor's Meeting at TBD 12:00 Noon

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 District Stewards Commission, Zoom meeting 6:30 PM

Thursday, February 15, 2024, District Executive Committee meeting 6:30 PM, Carlisle COB

Monday, February 19, 2024 Church Development and Revitalization Commission Zoom meeting 6:30 PM

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Thursday, February 22,	District Ministry Commission, Carlisle COB	6:30 PM

Saturday, March 23, 2024, District Board Meeting	
Gathering, 8:30 AM, Danish/Beverage,	9:00 AM Meeting begins
Knobsville COB 221 Knobsville Road, Hustontown, PA	
Thursday, March 28, District Ministry Commission	6:30 PM
Carlisle COB	

<u>2023</u>	DECEMBER		_	_		
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UP-COMING EVENTS Continued

Monday, April 01, 2024 – April 4, 2024 – District Meat Canning Project at Christian Aid Ministries

Tuesday, April 2, 2024, District Stewards Commission ZOOM Meeting 6:30 PM Tuesday, April 2, 2024, Central Zone Pastor's Meeting at Carlisle COB 9:00 - 10:30 AM Thursday, April 4, 2024, District Witness Commission ZOOM Meeting 6:30 PM Thursday, April 4, Eastern Zone Pastor's Meeting at TBD 2:00 Noon Tuesday, April 9, 2024, District Nurture Commission ZOOM Meeting 6:30 PM Monday, April 15, 2024, District Church Development & Revitalization Commission ZOOM Meeting 6:30 PM Monday, April 15, 2024 RENDER UNTO CAESAR Day Thursday, April 18, 2024 District Executive Committee Meeting, Carlisle COB -6:30 PM Thursday, April 25, 2024, District Ministry Commission Meeting, Carlisle COB-6:30 PM

HOLD IN PRAYER

- Deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Macy Treger, who passed away 9/28/23. He was the husband of former SOPA Secretary, Cindy Treger.
- Best wishes for a speedy recovery for Ellen Yoder, Nurture Commission Chair, after a run-in with an errant tree branch. She is improving daily.
- John Shelly had surgery 11/27 to replace his pacemaker. Keep John and Sandy in you prayers for a speedy recover.
- District Board member, Ron Bell's daughter, Erin, will be having foot surgery on 12/1. Remember her in prayer and her medical team for wisdom as they perform the surgery.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES -CEU'S

Clergy Tax Seminar 2024

The Clergy Tax Seminar 2024 is scheduled for January 27, 2024

Online seminar is planned for **January 27, 2024**, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern time) for students, clergy, and anyone who deals with clergy finances. Cost is \$40 per person. The **reg-istration deadline is January 19, 2024**.

Register at https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/clergy-tax-seminar

Read more at www.brethren.org/news/2023/clergy-tax-seminar-2024

Introduction to Pastoral Care

In-person course at Bethany Theological Seminary (Richmond, IN) **January 16-19** with an additional Zoom session late January/early February. Debbie Eisenbise will be the instructor. **Deadline** to register has been extended to **December 12, 2023.** Please see the attached brochure for more details and the specific schedule. Questions may be directed to Audrey Hollenberg-Duffy at holleau@bethanyseminary.edu, or call (765) 983-1810

From Reformation to Today

This is an 8 week course focusing on the history of Christianity fro the 1500's up to the present day. See the attached brochure for more information

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Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership proudly offers: From Reformation to Today

JANUARY 24 - MARCH 19, 2024

REGISTER ONLINE



8-WEEK ONLINE COURSE

This course is available to:

- TRIM/EFSM studentsfulfills:
 - ✓ 1 Biblical/ Historical/ Theological
 - ✓ Curricular Requirement
- Those seeking Continuing Education Units (2.0 CEU)
- Anyone seeking personal and spiritual enrichment

Essentially, this course is open to ALL!

Course fee \$300.00

Registration deadline: December 19, 2023

Course Description and Objectives

Course Description:

At the core of Christianity is the conviction that the Word of God took flesh in a particular time and place. In order to understand Christian faith and practice also means we must attend to time and place. Simply stated, the study of the past helps us comprehend what God has done and continues to do among us. This course will focus on the history of Christianity from the 1500s up to the present day. Beginning with the decades just prior to the Protestant Reformation, we will explore how Christian belief, practice, and organization took multiple forms in Western Christianity. As we move through the centuries we will see how these various systems of Christianity themselves changed in the contexts of a colonialism, world war, and globalization.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Explore the basic framework and tools of historical study;
- 2) Develop a chronological understanding of Christianity from the Reformation to today;
- 3) Encounter key theologians and ideas that shaped Christianity in each time period;
- 4) Interpret primary texts through understanding the social, political, and ecclesial contexts.

Instructor: Joshua Brockway

Joshua Brockway is the director of spiritual formation for the Church of the Brethren. He holds a PhD in early Christianity with a focus asceticism and liturgy from the Catholic University of America. He holds a Master of Arts from Bethany as well as a Masters of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology. He is a pastors' kid and has served in congregational ministries in Indiana and Georgia. He has published articles in Brethren Life and Thought, as well as an essay on the Church of the Brethren in World War II in the proceedings of the 2018 Brethren World Assembly. Most recently he has published an entry on Violence and Non-Violence in the Rowan and Littlefield Handbook of Contemporary Christianity in the United States.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership	Department Found
615 National Road W	Required Text
Richmond, IN 47374	McGrath, Alister. Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant
800-287-8822 x1824	RevolutionA History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-
765-983-1824	First (San Francisco, CA; HarperOne, 2008).
academy@	(o
bethanyseminary.edu	Primary texts will be assigned each week and posted online.
Copyright 2023	
Brethren Academy	
All Rights Reserved	
Course Withdrawal Refund Policy	Expectations
1 oney	Online learning requires students to be disciplined in their time
100% of course fee prior to	management. Students are expected to spend 10 hours per week in
registration deadline	course-related work
50% from the registration deadline to the first day	
of class	For online learning, students will need an email account, a laptop or
No refunds will be given	desktop, basic computer skills, and access to the internet using an
once the class has begun	updated web browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Edge,
Exceptions require the approval of the Director of	Google Chrome, or Mozilla Firefox. Some courses may also require Zoom
the Brethren Academy	or Skype. If your computer is four years old or less, you should have the
	capabilities for this course. If you have questions about specifics, please
	contact the Brethren Academy.
To earn CEU credit	1
Participant will - Meet the attendance	During a Brethren Academy course or event, you may be included in
requirement	photographs or sound /video recording. Such photos and recordings,
-Complete the assigned reading	including quotes from you, may be included and identified in news articles, informational brochures, or social media on behalf of the
-Engage in the course through	Brethren Academy and/or Bethany Theological Seminary. If you wish to
participation	be excluded from such publications, please contact the Brethren
-Complete reduced	Academy in writing by the start date of the course or event.
assignments as outlined in the	
syllabus	
	formation to Today, January 24-March 19, 2024
	ll out following information and return, along with payment to:
Brethren Aca	demy * 615 National Road West *Richmond, IN * 47374
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ldress:	
est contact phone:	
mail:	
vill be taking this course for:	TRIM credit EFSM credit CEUs (2) Personal Enrichment
ourse Fee: \$300 payable to Breth	

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership proudly offers:

Introduction to Pastoral Care

BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY RICHMOND, IN JANUARY 16-19, 2024 WITH ONE FOLLOW UP SESSION REGISTER ONLINE



This course is available to:

- TRIM/EFSM studentsfulfills:
 - MS unit (Preaching, Worship, Pastoral Care requirement)
 - ✓ BTS experience
- Those seeking
 Continuing Education
 Units (2.0 CEU)
- Anyone seeking personal and spiritual enrichment

Essentially, this course is open to ALL!

Course fee \$300.00

Registration deadline: December 5, 2023

Course Description and Objectives

Pastoral care is an integral part of any ministry. Just like sermon writing, worship development, and teaching, pastoral care is a gift as well as a practice that can be developed and deepened. In this course, we will develop the skills needed to engage in effective pastoral care. Coursework will include reading, reflection, discussion, role play, verbatims, papers, and journaling. This overview will emphasize the importance of formation as a pastoral caregiver, self-differentiation, scope of care, family and congregational systems, confession and forgiveness, death and grief, active listening, and prayer.

Instructor: Debbie Eisenbise

Debbie Eisenbise, M.Div. has served as a pastor and spiritual director for 35 years. Currently, she serves as an intentional interim minister, and as a member of the pastoral team at the Living Stream Church of the Brethren, online. She is also trained as an end-of-life doula providing support and accompaniment to those who are dying and offering death education including courses at Western Michigan University.

She has a grown daughter and lives with her husband in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Schedule

Location – Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road W., Richmond, IN 47374

Tuesday, Jan. 16 - 1:30-4pm Wednesday, Jan. 17, 9am-noon, 1:30-4pm Thursday, Jan. 18, 9am-noon, 1:30-4pm Friday, Jan. 19, 9am-noon + 2-hour class meeting by way of Zoom late January / early February

Enriching Lives

*

Deepening Faith

Required Texts Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership **Required Reading** 615 National Road W Richmond, IN 47374 Doehring, Carrie. The Practice of Pastoral Care, Revised and Expanded Version: A 800-287-8822 x1824 Postmodern Approach. Westminster John Knox Press, 2015. 765-983-1824 (ISBN #: 0664238408). (232pp) academy@ bethanyseminary.edu Lawson, Paul David. Old Wine in New Skins: Centering Prayer and Systems Theory. Copyright 2023 Lantern Books, NY, 2001 (ISBN #: 1-930051-29-8). (120pp) Brethren Academy All Rights Reserved Peterson, Eugene H. The Contemplative Pastor. Eerdmans, 1993. (ISBN #: 0802801145). (180pp) Course Withdrawal Refund Suggested Reading Policy 100% of course fee prior to Justes, Emma. Hearing Beyond the Words: How to Become a Listening Pastor. Abingdon registration Press, 2006 (ISBN# 0687494990). (115pp) 50% from the registration deadline to the first day Patton, John. Pastoral Care, The Essential Guide. Abingdon Press, 2005. (ISBN# - 0687053226) (128 pp) No refunds will be given once the class has begun Pre-course assignments will be available on the syllabus. Exceptions require the approval of the Director of the Brethren Academy **Participants** To earn CEU credit Class size is limited to 20 students. Participant will As an attendee of this event, you may be included in still photos, videotaped - Meet the attendance footage, news articles, informational brochures or other media used to interpret requirement the mission and purpose of Bethany Theological Seminary, the Church of the Brethren, and the Brethren Academy. -Complete the assigned reading **Travel and Lodging** -Engage in the course through participation Transportation, lodging and meals are the participant's responsibility. The -Complete reduced Brethren Academy office will be glad to provide contact information for area assignments as outlined in the syllabus lodging. Introduction to Pastoral Care – January 16-19, 2024 <u>Register online</u> or fill out following information and return, along with payment to: Brethren Academy * 615 National Road West *Richmond, IN * 47374 Name: Address: Best contact phone: _ E-mail: I will be taking this course for: ____TRIM credit ____EFSM credit ____CEUs (2) ____Personal Enrichment Course Fee: \$300 payable to Brethren Academy Registration Deadline: December 5, 2023

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Equipping Ministers



Charter Busses to Annual Conference

Each year during Annual Conference, we contract with a local school bus company to rent busses to provide transportation for age group activities and other outings. We are finding it difficult to find a bus company to work within Grand Rapids this summer. Last year the Atlantic Northeast district chartered a bus to Annual Conference in Cincinnati. We were able to use their bus and driver during the week at a lower cost than renting school busses locally. In exchange, we gave them a donation of \$1,000 to help offset the costs of the bus (and make the trip more viable) and provided the recommended tip to the driver for our excursions. If any of you are planning to sponsor a bus trip to Annual Conference during the week, that would be beneficial to both of us. If any SOPA District churches can assist, please contact:

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Director of Annual Conference, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120,

Phone (874) 429-4364.

Church Happenings around Our District

The West Shore Church hosted the afternoon Thanksgiving Service for the Upper West Shore area churches and community on Thanksgiving Sunday 11/19/23. Pastors and others from 6 area churches/denominations participated in leading the worship, which included a family-led call to worship and popcorn prayer of things for which we're thankful to God. The sermon, *"Levels of Thanksgiving"* was brought by WSCOB co-pastor Keith Nonemaker. The ecumenical Ministerium's Christmas Service Award went to Sue Fornicola, a dedicated volunteer, and active vice-president of New Hope Ministries, a local food pantry. Non-perishables were collected for the local pantry, which serves increasing numbers of area families.

The Mechanicsburg Church is currently going through their library and they have quite a few books that are available to other church communities. For a complete list or, if you are interested in any of these books, several date back to the 1800's, please contact the Mechanicsburg Church office at (717) 776-8880 or mcob-secretary@verizon.net.

The Newville Church, instead of doing their shoeboxes for *Operation Christmas Child* this year, are going to put together "Health Kits" for the local Newville Area Food Bank. The kits will be handed out as part of their Christmas distribution Monday, December 18th. Kits will be made up with such items as band aids, bars of soap, combs or brushes, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, washcloths, etc. THE DEADLINE FOR DONATIONS OR FINISHED KITS IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH.

West York COB Bible Study meets Mondays a 7 PM. They are currently studying *"Transformed Women in the Bible,"* led by Judith Wallace (Understood this is a great study.).

The Southern PA District is pleased to welcome Mark Beliles and his wife, Reba, to Southern PA District's Chambersburg COB. Chambersburg COB called Mark to serve as their Sr. Pastor, effective the beginning of March, 2024.

Church News



Attention Vacation Bible School Leaders - *The Great Jungle Journey: an epic cruise from Genesis to Revelation*, is the title of the 2024 curriculum. The book and other items are available online at AnswersVBS.com or call (800) 778-3390 for assistance.

The **Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board** has taken action to close the **Brethren Service Center** in New Windsor. The process is anticipated to take up to 30 months. Please note that this decision does NOT impact the Brethren Disaster Ministries, Children's Disaster Service, or the SERRV warehousing. These will continue to operate out of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor.

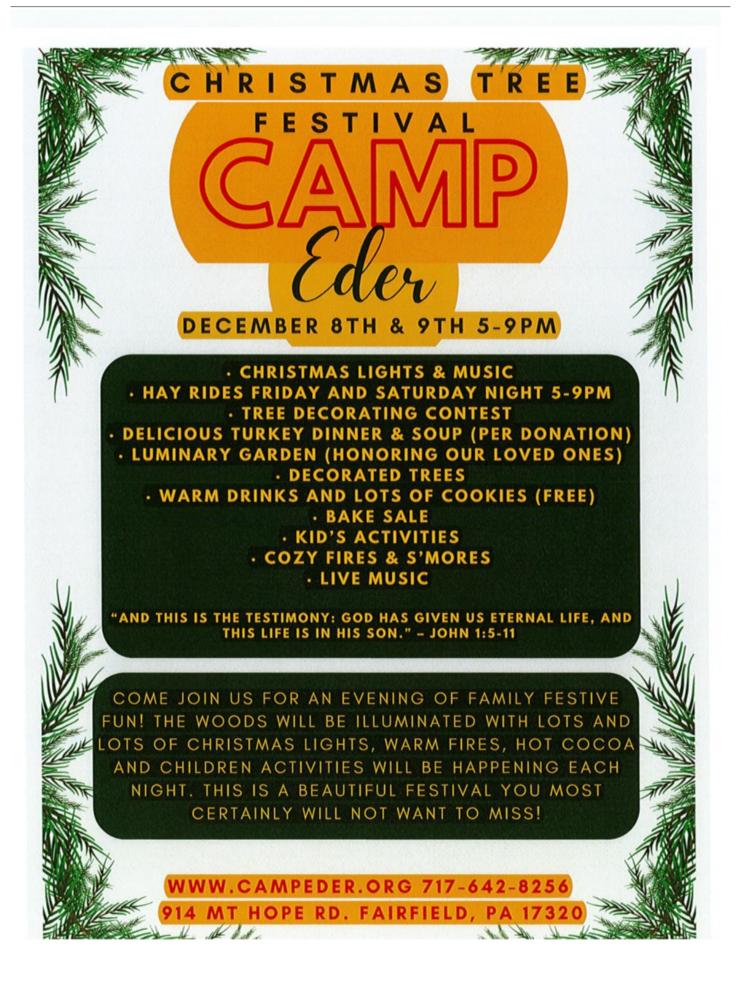
Cross Keys Village



Senior Living with a Purpose



Cross Keys Village – The Brethren Home Community will host a Lifespring Groundbreaking Ceremony (Order of program with approximate times) December 13, 2023 - 12:00 PM All are Welcome



13th Annual Camp Eder Christmas Tree Festival A Celebration of the Birth of Jesus

Friday, Saturday December 8th and 9th Daily 5pm—9pm

Sponsorship Form

Gold Sponsor: \$200.00

Provides funds to purchase items that highlight the birth of Christ and the journey to Bethlehem.

Frankincense Sponsor: \$100.00

Goes towards the cost of purchasing food and food supplies. Many food items will be available, including: cookies, hot soup, cocoa, sandwiches, turkey dinners, and more—all will be available to guests for a donation.

_ Myrrh Sponsor: \$ 50.00

Will provide 2 trees to be used for our decorating contest. Churches, organizations, and Camp Eder supporters, are given the opportunity to decorate a tree with their choice of theme. Trees are on display for the duration of the Festival and are entered into our lighthearted contest. After the Festival, the trees are made available to local families in need. You do not have to decorate a tree, however you are welcome to do so by checking the "Tree Sponsor" section below.

Luminary Sponsor: \$5.00 per luminary

Friend of Camp Eder \$____

_____ Tree Sponsor: No donation is necessary to take on the exciting task of decorating a tree for your organization or family. A 5-6 foot live-cut tree will be provided for you to decorate

(Name)	(Phone Number)	
(Address)		
(Email)		
Note:		

Thank you for your tax deductible donation!

717-642-8256, or campeder@campeder.org

914 Mt. Hope Rd., Fairfield, PA 17320



