

THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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May 2026

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – PASTOR IKE GRAHAM

What Makes Jesus Sick?

Revelation 3:14-22

In His words to the church of Laodicea, Jesus warns us about the danger of self-sufficiency. Laodicea was a wealthy banking center and proud of her rich resources. In AD 60, the city was destroyed by an earthquake. Rather than accepting aid from the Roman Empire, the people of Laodicea refused any help and rebuilt the city themselves with their own resources. They did not need anyone's charity.

Yet, while Laodicea appeared to have everything, it actually lacked the most basic of resources — water. Unlike the mountain towns that had cold water streams or nearby Hierapolis that had access to hot springs, Laodicea had no water supply of its own. Water had to be piped in through aqueducts. By the time it arrived, the water was lukewarm and full of sediment. Cold water is good for drinking, hot springs were reputed to have healing qualities, but lukewarm, sediment-filled water neither refreshes nor heals. It is disgusting.

Jesus tells the Laodicean church that they are just like their water. "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15–16).

Jesus is not saying that He wishes they were either spiritually hot or spiritually cold rather than being spiritually lukewarm. Nowhere does God desire for His people to have cold hearts. Rather, Jesus explains what He means by being lukewarm in the next verse. "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked" (v. 17). The lukewarm person is not one who is mildly passionate about God. Rather, the lukewarm person is one who has lost his dependence on God. In his arrogance, he believes he has no need of Christ's righteousness because he has enough of his own.

Whenever we take pride in our own moral goodness, we have fallen into the perilous sin of the Laodiceans. We are like lukewarm water. We are forgetting that all of our righteous deeds are nothing more than filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Jesus finds this sort of spiritual pride so offensive that it makes Him sick. He will spit out of His mouth all those who think that they are rich in their own righteous works.

Unless we see that we are poor and needy, Jesus will have no part of us. We do not begin the Christian life poor and then grow into the riches of our own righteousness. Rather, we begin the Christian life spiritually bankrupt. As we grow, we come to understand even more the depth of our sin and our great need for a savior. It is only when we see our poverty and neediness that we can truly become rich. That is why Jesus says, "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see" (Rev. 3:18). Christ is not calling us to wallow in our spiritual poverty but to delight in the riches of His grace.

Be ruthless in rooting out spiritual pride. Remember that Jesus is nauseated by self-righteousness. Whenever you are feeling self-sufficient, ask God to open your eyes to your own nakedness. When you see your own bankruptcy, cry out to Jesus so that you may delight in the riches of His grace.

*****CONFERENCE DETAILS*****

- Pastors, please, please, please send in your church dues as soon as possible. Multiply \$25 times the number of church members and send the total to Grace Brethren Church – 2200 Paradise Rd., Orrville, Ohio 44667. The deadline is June 1st.
- There will be 2 golf carts to transport people from place-to-place at Laurelville. Call Nathan (330-234-0943), or Nancy (330-201-3649) to get a ride. You can drive your car, or ride in the golf cart.
- Weather permitting (aka, Lord willing), we will begin Conference with a picnic on Thursday, July 2nd. Sign up for supper that night online if you want to have your picnic meal provided. Or, order it by telling Pastor Ike at ikeg327@gmail.com Picnic tables are limited, so bring chairs for the picnic. We will go through the cafeteria line to get our food, and then take it out to Gazebo Hill. The pool pavilion picnic tables may also be used.
- There will be a concert on Friday night, July 3rd. The Merrill Evangelistic team will be providing the concert in "The Gathering Place."
- On Saturday, July 4th, after supper, we will take wagons up to the top of the hill to watch fireworks, have a bon fire, and a singspiration. Those fireworks will be at a distance. Mt. Pleasant is also having a "Patriotic Party" with fireworks at 10pm.
- Dr. Kevn Zuber of the Master's Seminary will be our keynote speaker.

A Conference schedule is available online at www.cgbc.org When you register and make your reservation, complete each page. Be sure to answer every line; that is, be sure the page is completely filled out even if it is a "no" answer. A complete registration, or lodging choice, or meals choices will not register properly without the page being completely filled out. You also have the option of calling or texting 330-749-0545 to register, or make your room reservation and meal choices. You can also e-mail ikeg327@gmail.com The cut off for reservations is June 15th. Then, send a check to:

Grace Brethren Church 2200 Paradise Rd. Orrville, Ohio 44667

For the ladies' luncheon on Friday, July 3rd, Stephanie Knight is now handling those registrations. Please contact her at ibelieve_01@yahoo.com or 814-444-6709. You purchase your meal the same way that you purchase a lunch.

Remember, Pastor Terry Reese (814-254-6734) needs help with the Kids' Conference and Pastor Chris Knight (814-483-9384) is looking for special music and instrumentalists to assist our song times together.

We pay a fee to allow you the convenience of purchasing rooms and meals online. If you prefer, you can simply call 330-749-0545 to make your reservation and meal choices and send a check to the address above. This will reduce our costs. Also, please do not dispute charges with Stripe. Call Pastor Ike Graham at 330-749-0545 to resolve any charge issues.

CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE – PASTOR TERRY REESE

Hello, Brethren! We are indeed looking forward to our great annual coming together as a community of like-faith, and to working with our fellowship's next generation of leaders (i.e., our children)! We would also *greatly* welcome much-needed additional workers to our staff (who will be compensated for their labors). I am also looking forward to once again visiting *Living Treasures*—which is a sheer delight for anyone of all ages who delights in the incredible variety of creatures that emerged from God's good Hand in the Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation. The park features some 300 animals across 70 species from around the world (exotic, woodland, aquatic, and domestic). The staff at *Living Treasures* has informed me that special feeding packs are available for our young people to safely feed the animals (\$4.50 for a single pack, or 2 for \$8.00). My son-in-law, who recently visited the park with our granddaughter (age 2 ½), told me that he felt that a single pack can comfortably be shared by three young children.

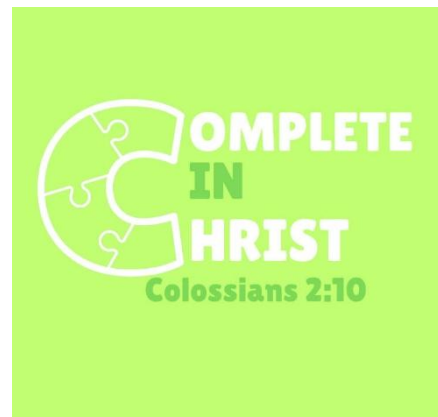
YOUTH CONFERENCE – PASTOR CHRIS KNIGHT & BROTHER REUBEN AUTEN

Have you registered for YCON yet? Check out the online registration on the CGBCI website! Our theme will be "Complete in Christ" taken from Colossians 2:10. We will focus on the sufficiency of Christ and how that affects our daily walk.

There are three options to choose from:

1. Full YCON – \$275 Includes: lodging (Cottages), all meals, activities, t-shirt, & booklet
2. Day YCON - \$175 Includes: all meals, activities, t-shirt, & booklet
3. Limited YCON – \$50 Includes: activities, t-shirt, & booklet

We have planned a Guided hike on the McCune Trail in the beautiful Laurel Highlands. This trail is a 3.7-mile trail in the Ohiopyle State Park. The guide, Brother Todd Stockslager, attends Listie GBC. We will then have a picnic supper and devotions along the rapids of the Youghiogheny River! You can register on the CGBCI website.



Additional Laurel Highlands Attractions near Laurelville - Pastor Terry Reese

The Laurel Highlands are all about recreation—and Laurelville is close to two of my favorite attractions! For those of you who may have some free-time at Conference and are interested in fine art and history, Laurelville is only 31 miles from Fort Necessity, where the young George Washington found himself at the center of an international crisis that sparked the French and Indian War (Braddock's Grave and the restored period inn, the Mount Washington Tavern, are nearby). And Laurelville is only 28 miles from Fallingwater (Frank Lloyd Wright's monumental experiment in integrating architecture with the forces of nature). I love both attractions—and would add that even our kids, who were quite young, were delighted by Fallingwater (my daughter was initially quite skeptical about touring some "dumb old house")! Fallingwater is also only 6 miles from the impressive running waters of the Yock at Ohiopyle.

BEREAN FAITH FELLOWSHIP

Berean Faith Fellowship in Mt. Vernon, OH is praying for a God called man to step into the role of pastor. Due to health issues Pastor Jeff Eno is only able to provide some of the needs of an interim pastor. Are you praying with us that God will lay it on someone's heart to fulfill this need?

MIDWEST FELLOWSHIP – PASTOR RED WILLIAMS

"Who Am I?" was the defining theme for the annual conference of the Midwest Fellowship of the CGBCI. The conference was held at Lakeland Conservative Grace Brethren Church. Pastor Bob Kulp was the moderator and chose this as his theme. Pastor Kulp spoke on the Christian's role as an ambassador for Messiah Jesus, drawing on 2 Corinthians 5:9-21. He pointed out that all believers in Jesus have been "commissioned" to be an ambassador in spreading the good news of Christ.

Delegates from the following churches were in attendance: Elkhart, Mishawaka, New Troy, Lakeland (Warsaw), The Refuge (South Whitley) and Alto. Eight pastoral delegates and 11 lay delegates were seated. Elected as moderator for 2026-27 was Pastor Tim Cover. Others were Pastor Rob Cover as vice-moderator, Ladeen Zielasko as secretary, Michelle Cover as treasurer, Pastor Dr. Russ Simpson as statistician, and board members Doug Zielasko and Philip Miller.

The 2027 Conference will be held at the Mishawaka church. Delegates and guests were treated to a taco bar for lunch.

NATIONAL EVANGELISM TEAM (NET '26) – PASTOR DEL MILLER

NET 26 Ministry Dates:

May 31, 2026 **10:45 AM**-Vandalia GBC, 810 Larry Ave. Vandalia, OH

June 3, 2026-**5:30 PM** (Outreach meal), **6:30 PM** Outdoor program at GBC of Somerset,
1605 Maplehurst Dr. Somerset, PA

June 7, 2026-**9:45 AM** North Buffalo GBC, 135 Glade Run Road Kittanning, PA

June 7, 2026-**6:00 PM** North Buffalo GBC (see address above)

June 9, 2026-**7:00 PM** Valley GBC, 11815 Rt. 56 E Armagh, PA

June 10, 2026-**7:00 PM** North Buffalo GBC (see address above)

July 5, 2026-**9:30 AM** CGBCI Conference at Laurelville Retreat Center near Mt. Pleasant, PA

Here are some important details for those in Western PA: The program on June 3rd at Somerset will begin close to 6:30 PM Lord willing. It was printed in another publication as a half hour later than that. The plan is to have an outdoor event so your prayers for helpful weather are appreciated. The team plans to have a full presentation (approx. 50 minutes) on Sunday morning June 7 at 9:45 AM. They will also share some music in the 10:45 AM worship service. The 6:00 PM service will be another opportunity for them to do a full presentation. For those close to the Kittanning area, there will be some day-time presentations in that area June 8-10. Contact Matt Foreman for details at 724-763-7871

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Thank you to all who have been supporting this ministry. If you haven't checked out Grace for Living online, you can view it at <https://www.cgbci.org/grace-for-living>.