



Reflecting news and views

## The Reflector

a publication of the  
Illinois/Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren  
District Executive: Kevin Kessler



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### We are one in the Spirit

By Gil Crosby, Moderator –  
Illinois-Wisconsin District

*"..Peace will come if you empty your heart  
of resentment and bitterness." (Herbert  
Hoover)*



One of my favorite stories was written by  
J. E. Miller in 1942 in his book, "Stories

from Brethren Life". Miller lived in the Illinois-Wisconsin District in Milledgeville. The story tells of a farmer who purchased a piece of land next to a man who was constantly arguing over the fence line between the two properties. Neighbors warned the fellow not to buy the land because of potential trouble. The Farmer said, "Oh, don't worry, I'll kill him". Knowing the man was a Brethren the neighbors were taken aback when the farmer clarified his remark.. "I'll kill him with love." After several confrontations with the neighbor the farmer always graciously gave the neighbor more than he asked for. The neighbor finally said, "I've never before met a man like you. No one can quarrel with you."

Did you ever wonder why Roloids and Tums were some of the largest selling products in America? It could be because we get our stomachs in an uproar by being upset, in fact quarrelling with what others do, think or believe. We may not openly quarrel but we stew over it and get angry over the actions of others. And for what? All we get out of it is indigestion.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a booklet for Guideposts called "How to cope with ten of life's toughest problems". (copyright 1975) In the book he tells of a response by Abraham Lincoln when asked how he coped with all the bitter criticism poured out on him. Abe replied, "I do the very best I know how, the very best I can. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

Dr. Peale tells us the Bible, with its profound insight into human nature, says Pray for your enemies. He goes on to say its effective because the human mind can hold only one idea at a time. If you are praying for those who bug you, you cannot simultaneously brood over whatever perceived offence they may have cause you. Paraphrasing what Paul says in Romans 12, be nice to people you don't like, It will drive them crazy. Why are so many Christians always so angry? We probably are justified to be angry about foolish wars, starving children and people who don't think like us. WHAT! People who don't think like us? That's not right!.. but stop and think how much anger in our lives in fact is just that.. We are not tolerant of people who hold different views on life, the Bible, politics, etc.. Time to reach for the Roloids...

To quote from Dr. Peale's writing again, "When a person has this God given inner calm, they are not likely to be disturbed by man made storms."



## IT'S TIME TO BEGIN THINKING ABOUT DISTRICT CONFERENCE

District Conference will be held at: **Naperville Church of the Brethren**  
The dates for the conference are: **November 6 -9, 2009**  
The guest speaker for Sunday is: Chris Bowman, Past Annual Conf. Moderator  
Saturday Evening Entertainment is: Dennis Webb & Naperville Men's Glee Club  
Saturday Evening Meal will be: Provided by Naperville Church of the Brethren  
Friday Evening Worship Service: Moderator, Gil Crosby

A **Silent Auction**, Coordinated by Pastor Rich Koch, ends Saturday afternoon.

PLEASE: bring your donations to the auction Friday Evening if at all possible and let Pastor Koch know what you plan to bring. [ricbeckkoch@mchsi.com](mailto:ricbeckkoch@mchsi.com)

## ONLINE BANKING AND BILL PAY NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN CREDIT UNION

Check it out! Church of the Brethren Credit Union is excited to announce that you can now access your CoBCU accounts 24 hours a day from any Internet connection, with our new Online Banking and Bill Pay.

The new online services allow Credit Union members to monitor their account balances; transfer funds among savings, checking, and Club accounts; submit Credit Union loan payments; and set up payees to handle such things as your auto insurance, cable television, and utility bills. You can even send your monthly tithe with online Bill Pay. Online Banking is available to all members of CoBCU, whether you have a savings account or both savings and checking accounts. But to use Bill Pay, you must have a checking account.

If you are a Credit Union member but have not yet signed up for a checking account with debit card, all you need to do is deposit \$25 into the new account to open it. Once you have a checking account with CoBCU, you can easily sign up for online services and enroll in Bill Pay. And if you act now, you can receive a free box of checks with your new checking account. If you do not belong to the Credit Union, contact us about becoming a member. Credit Union membership is open to all members and employees of the Church of the Brethren and Church of the Brethren-affiliated institutions, agencies, and camps, as well as their immediate family members.

To learn more about all the benefits available, contact CoBCU at 888-832-1383 or visit [www.cobcu.org](http://www.cobcu.org).



## EASTER SUNDAY



As the sun rose on Easter, Sunday morning, 23 people gathered on the front porch at 833 Mulberry Grove Road to worship our risen Savior. Pastor Kirk Fifer did a presentation as a Roman soldier reflecting on what he had seen at the crucifixion of Christ and what had happened three days later. Following the worship service everyone gathered at the Hurricane Creek Church of the Brethren for a potluck breakfast. Sunday school and Children's Church began at approximately 9:00 a.m. with 27 in attendance. Children's Church featured reenacting finding the empty tomb on the first Easter morning. Laughter and squeals of delight could be heard as the children participated in the annual egg hunt. The children ranged in age from 3 ½ months to high school students that helped the younger hunters.

( District Churches make allocations in their annual budgets to support the Ministry of the District.

Some do not report a pledge but support the District. Churches that send their pledges to the

District Quarterly will not appear in this chart if they were received after March 31.)

### Illinois/Wisconsin District Church of the Brethren

### 2009 Pledged to Actual Comparison (unaudited)

As of March 31, 2009

Church	Pledged	Actual	Difference	Paid %
Allison Prairie	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Batavia Faith	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Canton	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Cerro Gordo	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	0.0%
Champaign	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00	0.0%
Cherry Grove	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Chicago First	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	0.0%
Decatur	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$600.00	0.0%
Dixon	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	0.0%
Douglas Park	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Franklin Grove	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Freeport	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	0.0%
Girard	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Highland Avenue	\$15,141.00	\$0.00	\$15,141.00	0.0%
Hurricane Creek	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	0.0%
La Place	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	0.0%
Lanark	\$2,450.00	\$408.32	\$2,041.68	16.7%
Martin Creek	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Milledgeville	\$1,200.00	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	16.7%
Mt. Morris	\$5,760.00	\$1,440.00	\$4,320.00	25.0%
Naperville	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Neighborhood	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Oak Grove	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Oakley Brick	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Panther Creek	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Peoria	\$5,850.00	\$0.00	\$5,850.00	0.0%
Polo	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Rock Community	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Rockford	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Romine	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Springfield	\$3,100.00	\$0.00	\$3,100.00	0.0%
Stanley	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Viriden	\$500.00	\$125.00	\$375.00	25.0%
Walnut Grove	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
West Branch	\$740.25	\$740.25	\$0.00	100.0%
Woodland	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	0.0%
Yellow Creek	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	0.0%
York Center	\$0.00	\$2,125.00	-\$2,124.99	--
Totals	\$48,191.25	\$12,538.57	\$35,652.69	26.0%

**(This letter has been sent to the Astoria Church and all Brethren churches in the Illinois-Wisconsin District.)**



Church of the Brethren

**IL/WI District Church of the Brethren**  
269 E. Chestnut Street Canton IL 61520  
Phone and fax: 309-649-6008

District Executive: Kevin Kessler, [kevink.iwdcob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kevink.iwdcob@sbcglobal.net)  
Administrative Assistant: Emily Cleer, [emilyc.iwdcob@att.net](mailto:emilyc.iwdcob@att.net)

April 18, 2009

Grace Bible Church of Astoria  
Pastor, Leadership Team and Members  
702 E. Broadway  
Astoria, Illinois, 61501

Dear Sisters and Brothers of Grace Bible Church,

Grace and peace to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

We write this open letter to you with the knowledge that you have left the denomination to start an independent church. While we are saddened by the process and the outcome we wish to remain brothers and sisters committed to Christ's message.

We were especially saddened that you did not come before District Conference as other churches have done and presented your case for resolution by the elected delegate body of the church. Had you approached us through the accepted methods outlined in the polity of the church, this disagreement would never have devolved into legal action. Your unilateral action of changing the deeds to the property violated Church of the Brethren polity which the congregation and pastors agree to follow when a pastor is ordained and installed in our Body of Christ. After you took the first legal action, changing the deeds, we were left with no other options than to go to court. We did so reluctantly, recalling that Paul had challenged the Corinthians to appoint judges which would require both sides to engage in brotherly discourse.

We recognize that the Grace Bible Church and the Illinois-Wisconsin District have wasted far too many of our resources on unproductive legal action. Seeking the mind of Christ we will not pursue any further legal action.

We continue to strongly believe, however, that a church established by Brethren, for Brethren and caring for God's property as Brethren makes the property belong to the wider body of the Church of the Brethren. This polity of the Church of the Brethren was put into place to protect the Church of the Brethren congregations from being seized under false pretenses by persons or groups influencing the congregation to move away from Church of the Brethren values and practice.

We recognize your legal maneuver of requesting massive historical data in an attempt to bury the plaintiff in paperwork rather than engage in sincere dialogue. We are reminded of Paul's letter to the Philippians (2:4) "Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others." We are "one in the Spirit" and firmly believe in Jesus' command to "Love our neighbors as ourselves." He did not put any qualifications on who to love.

Acting as good stewards of Church of the Brethren property we hereby give the Grace Bible Church of Astoria full use of our property as long as they continue to function as a Body of Christ for the betterment of the

Kingdom of God and their neighbor's good. For continued use of the property we would ask for an annual remittance of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) payable every Easter Sunday when we celebrate our risen Lord who sacrificed everything for us. If the Grace Bible Church of Astoria ceases to function as a church, decides to move or ceases Christian practice, the property will remain the responsibility of the Illinois-Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren.

Brothers and Sisters, we may continue to disagree on how to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and to love our neighbors but we should never doubt each other's commitment to His kingdom and the Good News of life everlasting. We now ask God's blessing on the Grace Bible Church of Astoria. We ask that the Grace of God be with you and that the Holy Spirit guide your service to his kingdom.

We are yours in Christ as you are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

(Signed by)

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Kevin Kessler, District Executive   Wilbur Bowman, Leadership Chairman   Gilbert Crosby, Moderator

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## **DISTRICT YOUTH RETREATS**

Due to an insufficient number of registrations, the spring district youth retreat that had been scheduled in April had to be cancelled. The next retreat will be held during district conference, Nov. 6-8 at Naperville Church of the Brethren in Naperville, Ill. David Radcliff of New Community Project will be the featured speaker. Watch [www.cobyouth.org](http://www.cobyouth.org) for details on this and other upcoming events. Don't forget to register for youth camps at Camp Emmaus and Camp Emmanuel this summer.

Also, if your congregation has suggestions of youth who will be in grades 9-12 next year for the district youth cabinet, please send those names to the district office or to Jim Miner at [jim\\_e\\_miner@yahoo.com](mailto:jim_e_miner@yahoo.com).

Cabinet announces theme for 2010 NYC

National Youth Conference (NYC) 2010 has a theme: "More Than Meets the Eye," drawn from 2 Cor. 4:6-10 and 16-18 (The Message).

The theme and some other aspects of the conference were decided as the National Youth Cabinet met earlier this year in Elgin, Ill. In a statement on the theme, NYC co-coordinators Audrey Hollenberg, Emily LaPrade, and Matt Witkovsky said the scripture passage "reminds us that God does great things through each person. . . . Even though we may seem like simple jars of clay, with God's light we are more than meets the eye."

The cabinet also discussed worship speakers and music leaders, which will be finalized in the coming months, along with broader goals, the schedule, and promotion ideas. Details will be posted as they become available at the new NYC website: [www.2010nyc.org](http://www.2010nyc.org). NYC 2010, for senior high youth and advisors, will take place July 17-22, 2010, at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.

Members of the cabinet, which will next meet in mid-August in Colorado, are Sam Cupp, Jamie Frye, Tyler Goss, Kay Guyer, Kelsey Murray, and Ryan Roebuck, along with adult advisors Christy Waltersdorff and Walt Wiltchek, Church of the Brethren Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas, and the NYC co-coordinators.



## District Leadership Team meets at Woodland Church:



The Leadership Team of the District has made a conscious effort to visit many Churches in the District to meet with Pastors and members. The Team has met in the following Churches since District Conference in 2007: Hurricane Creek, Milledgeville, Oak Grove, New Beginnings, West Branch, Springfield, Neighborhood, Yellow Creek, Champaign, York Center, Dixon, Woodland and are scheduled to meet in other churches throughout the year. The Leadership Team is committed to being a relevant part of the Congregational Life of the Illinois-Wisconsin District.

At the Woodland gathering the Leadership Team finished business after a wonderful lunch prepared by the Woodland Congregation and then proceeded to Camp Emmanuel for the annual work day. The District Camping Ministry is an extremely important part of the Church and especially for the young people in the District.

If you would like someone from the Leadership Team to talk to your congregation or even bring a Sunday Message please contact the District Office. The Moderator, District Executive or some members of the Team can make arrangements to work with you on a program..



The Leadership Team asks for your suggestions on programs or areas where we can work with you to enrich our District in our quest to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Many have taken advantage of the Mission and Mortar fund to help with local projects that require funds not readily available in a local congregation. Others have sent volunteers to work with the District Disaster Team using the tool trailer that has been assembled by the District. Some have taken advantage of the seminars, retreats, and continuing education classes that District Ministry Teams have organized. Still others have been supporting the Church plantings being guided by the New Church Development Team.

**Your District** is a vibrant, dynamic body among a scattered, diverse community of the Church of the Brethren. Help us to help you as servants of Christ. We must continue to remember that Jesus commanded us to Love and serve our neighbor. "We ARE one in the Spirit."



Church of the Brethren

## BUS TRANSPORTATION TO NATIONAL OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE-'09



Bus transportation from the IL/WI District is being provided to National Older Adult Conference at Lake Junaluska, NC September 7-11, 2009. The bus will depart from Mt. Morris Church of the Brethren at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 6. Additional stops to be announced. A deposit of \$125 is required by July 1 with a total cost of \$260 per person for double motel occupancy or \$340.00 per person for single motel occupancy. Balance is due Aug. 15. Please make reservations with Marvin Thill. Make checks payable to NOAC '09 Bus Trip.

Marvin Thill Bus.  
8040 US 20 E  
Stockton IL 61085  
Ph. 815-947-3197  
e-mail [bettyandmarvin@g.mail.com](mailto:bettyandmarvin@g.mail.com)

P.S. Persons in the southern part of the district may elect to ride on the Plains NOAC Bus. The price will be a bit less than the IL/WI bus and may be boarded in the St. Louis area. Call David Fruth. 620-245-0674

## "BECOME YOUR LEGACY"--MAY IS OLDER ADULT MONTH

*"I pray that the God of Glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation...so that with the eyes of your heart, you may know what is the hope to which you have been called and what are the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints..."*

Ephesians 1: 17-18 Oxford inclusive version



Each May, the Older Adult Ministry Cabinet of the Caring Ministries sponsors Older Adult Month. The theme for 2009 is "Become Your Legacy."

Rachael Freed, founder of Life Legacies, has described legacy as the "footprints we leave behind." A legacy is evidence that our lives have had meaning and that we have made a difference to the people our lives have touched. "Becoming your legacy" is a life-long process, one that we begin as children and continue throughout our lives as we lead the way by example, teaching and living life faithfully—striving toward the "hope to which we have been called." Our beliefs and values, our thoughts and actions, contribute to who we are as people of God and guide us toward the hope to which God has called us. Like the transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly, our lives are a process of becoming our legacy.

Wonderful resources have been created to help you and your congregation explore "the hope to which you have been called" and ways to live out and preserve our legacy. Worship resources, Sunday school and small group study sessions, intergenerational activities, and personal reflections are available at [www.brethren.org/oam](http://www.brethren.org/oam). Click on Older Adult Month to download and print these materials or contact Caring Ministries at (800) 323-8039 for paper versions of these resources.

Kim Ebersole  
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## DISTRICT CALENDAR



### 2009

May 3	District Deacons meeting, Peoria, 3:30pm
May 10	Mother's Day
May 21	Ascension Day
May 25	Memorial Day
May 30	Joint IL/WI District Leadership & New Church Development Team meeting, Naperville
May 31	Pentecost
Jun. 21	Father's Day
Jun. 24	Council of District Executives Summer meeting, San Diego, CA
Jun. 26-30	Annual Conference, San Diego, CA
Jul. 4	Independence Day
Jul. 11	IL/WI District Leadership Team meeting, Polo
Aug. 8	Program and Arrangements Committee meeting, Naperville, 10am
Aug. 8	Gifts Discernment and Call Committee meeting, Naperville, 1pm
Aug. 15	IL/WI District Leadership Team meeting, Cerro Gordo
Sep. 7	Labor Day
Sep. 26	IL/WI District Leadership Team meeting, Douglas Park
Oct. 3	District Deacons meeting, Peoria, 10am
Oct. 10	Program and Arrangements Committee meeting, Naperville, 10am
Oct. 10	Gifts Discernment and Call Committee meeting, Naperville, 1 pm
Oct. 12	Columbus Day
Oct. 25-27	Midwest DE's gathering, Camp Mack, Milford, IN
Oct. 31	IL/WI District Leadership Team meeting, Stanley
Nov. 1	Daylight Saving Time Ends
Nov. 6-9	District Conference, Naperville
Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Dec. 5	Joint IL/WI District Leadership & New Church Development Team meeting, Peoria
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve

