



*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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# **SPECIAL EDITION FOR DISTRICT CONFERENCE**



**NOVEMBER 6 - 8, 2009**

**NAPERVILLE,  
ILLINOIS**



**ILLINOIS - WISCONSIN  
DISTRICT**

**CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

# WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT

By Gil Crosby, Moderator – Illinois-Wisconsin District



*"Help each other be right, not wrong.  
Look for ways to make new ideas work,  
not for reasons they won't. Do everything  
with enthusiasm, it's contagious."*

(Ian Percy)



This will be my last newsletter as the Moderator of the Illinois-Wisconsin District. It was an honor I almost turned down because of all the other things I thought I had to do. We all work in our local churches, have family commitments, make travel plans, work outside the church, volunteer for various service entities and sometimes just feel overwhelmed. But after talking with previous Moderators they encouraged me to take the step in faith even though I felt totally inadequate for the task ahead.

I still feel inadequate but do you know what I discovered? People working on behalf of the District of Illinois-Wisconsin are a hard working, nurturing group who go out of their way to support each other all the time striving to make our District a dynamic statement for our Lord Jesus. As an ex-officio member of all other teams I have come to sit in awe of the dedication given by these people to our District.

People work every day to support the Brotherhood, District and the individual churches of the Illinois-Wisconsin District. Our District Executive, Kevin Kessler works tirelessly in the District while pastoring his own church in Canton. We get full time service for half time pay. Seven elected people make up the Leadership Team (plus 8 ex-officio) who meet every six weeks at churches throughout the District. In between meetings they contact churches in their area, act as liaisons between the team and all the other ministry groups, conduct the business of the district, and administer programs like "Mission and Mortar"..

Six members of the Gifts Discernment & Call Committee have the thankless task of trying to convince the Brethren to serve on District positions. There are seven people who serve regularly on the Disaster Response Team. Did you know the Disaster Response Team has outfitted a trailer filled with hand and power tools and is ready at a moments notice to head out to the next place of need? Six District Deacons representing all geographical areas of the District contact Pastors, plan programs and events and support local congregations. Five members of the Ministerial Leadership Development Team are charged with ordination and licensing of Pastors, providing training, and supervising Pastoral enrichment. An Ethics Team of five members overseas the training and monitoring of behavioral policies in the District. One man, Willard Dulabaum, has been directing the TRIM (Training in Ministry) program for the past several. Many of our current Pastors (and myself) are graduates of this program designed to create a path through the Brethren Academy to service in the Church. Other Teams serving the district include five people on the Peace Team, seven members of the Youth Cabinet and our Standing Committee Delegate.

The New Church Development Team consisting of six members and the Apostle have been tirelessly working to establish new churches in the District. Two Pastors are working in Illinois and another looking to begin in Wisconsin. This group in a short time has done some amazing planting work against some significant challenges.

And Last we should not forget the Team that organizes and implements District Conference, the Program and Arrangements Committee. Three elected members and four ex-officio members are charged with planning, site selection, participation and execution of every District Conference.

I would like to also thank two people who have helped me this year and been in service to the District for more years than I can remember, Wilbur and Evelyn Bowman finish their terms on the Leadership Team this year, Wilbur as chairman and Evelyn as Recording Secretary. God speed to you as I know you will continue to serve the District and your Church..

So, If someone from Gifts & Discernment asks you to serve on a Ministry Team or other capacity, think of these people who have taken the challenge even though their schedules too are full. We all are called to serve in the mission of the Church. Volunteer your gifts into His Service..

## NINE MONTH REPORT

District Churches include the Illinois-Wisconsin District in their annual budgets.

The chart below shows the budgets and year to date commitments made by the District churches. Thanks for putting us ahead of budget at the three quarter-year point. Your contributions help fund District projects like Disaster Relief, Mission & Mortar, TRIM, District Executive, Pastor Training, Standing committee delegate, etc...

<b>Illinois/Wisconsin District Church of the Brethren</b> <b>2009 Pledged to Actual Comparison (unaudited)</b> <b>As of September 30, 2009</b>					
<b>Congregations</b>	<b>Year End 2008 Contributions</b>	<b>Annual Pledge</b>	<b>YTD Actual</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Paid %</b>
Allison Prairie	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Batavia Faith	\$1,658.45	\$0.00	\$614.62	\$614.62	-
Canton	\$1,400.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Cerro Gordo	\$750.00	\$1,000.00	\$750.00	-\$250.00	75.0%
Champaign	\$1,120.00	\$1,200.00	\$900.00	-\$300.00	75.0%
Cherry Grove	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	-\$500.00	0.0%
Chicago First	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Decatur	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$1,700.00	\$1,100.00	283.3%
Dixon	\$600.00	\$250.00	\$125.00	-\$125.00	50.0%
Douglas Park	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Franklin Grove	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	--
Freeport	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Girard	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$300.00	\$50.00	120.0%
Highland Avenue	\$11,025.00	\$15,141.00	\$11,355.75	-\$3,785.25	75.0%
Hurricane Creek	\$150.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	100.0%
La Place	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Lanark	\$2,245.76	\$2,450.00	\$1,633.28	-\$816.72	66.7%
Martin Creek	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Milledgeville	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Mt. Morris	\$8,724.00	\$5,760.00	\$3,190.00	-\$2,570.00	55.4%
Naperville	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Neighborhood	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Oak Grove	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Oakley Brick	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Panther Creek	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Peoria	\$5,850.00	\$5,850.00	\$4,387.50	-\$1,462.50	75.0%
Polo	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Rock Community	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Rockford	\$1,137.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Romine	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Springfield	\$3,500.00	\$3,100.00	\$3,100.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Stanley	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	--
Viriden	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$375.00	-\$125.00	75.0%
Walnut Grove	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$224.01	\$224.01	--
West Branch	\$740.25	\$740.25	\$765.25	\$25.00	103.4%
Woodland	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Yellow Creek	\$400.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	-\$200.00	0.0%
York Center	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00	\$6,375.00	-\$2,125.00	75.0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$61,100.46</b>	<b>\$57,441.25</b>	<b>\$47,745.41</b>	<b>-\$9,695.84</b>	<b>83.1%</b>

**THANK YOU ILLINOIS-WISCONSIN CHURCHES**



## **CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS**

**Barnraising** work is progressing on the new CPT building. We have a new roof, new windows, sub-flooring on the first floor to list a few. It is good to see work progressing but we are also very aware of our December move in date. There is much work to do. Is there a group from your church who will donate time? Do you know a retired carpenter who would be interested in helping? Or a handi-woman/man? Or do you have one day, several days, longer that you could come to work on the house. We need folks with carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills as well as those who can work with direction. As these folks work, we also need people who can clean up and do basic work. If you are coming from out of town, we can provide housing.

Work will continue after December 1 so if now does not work--schedule a time after January 1. Please keep me informed as to when you or a group will help or anticipate helping. Peace work happens in many ways--help create a space where peace will vibrate through the walls into the larger world.

I look forward to working with you to plan your time to help.

In God's grace and peace, Joyce

Joyce M. Cassel  
CPT House Volunteer Coordinator  
636 N. Harvey  
Oak Park, IL 60632

708.445.1998 home  
630.606.5670 cell

Seek justice, love mercy, walk humbly

## **2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REQUEST**

The Program and Arrangements Committee for the Annual Conference to be held in Pittsburgh next July 3 - 7 is collecting challenging and inspiring stories of persons, congregations or groups who have taken Jesus seriously. These could include a lifetime's commitment to the cause of the Gospel, a moment of selfless action, or any stories that span the diversity of our denomination, theologically, geographically, generationally and more. The Committee wants to include those stories of faith and testimony throughout our time together in Pittsburgh celebrating God's good work among us.

These stories should be sent as soon as possible, by mid-November to [cdouglas@brethren.org](mailto:cdouglas@brethren.org) or send them to The Annual Conference Office, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

Please plan to be a part of the 224th recorded Annual Conference where we meet as the body of Christ and the community of Faith. Your Prayers will strengthen those who gather as "One in the Spirit" to discern God's work for us to do.

## **4-H'er ASKS FOR PROJECT HELP**

Bethany Fike is a member of the 4-H clubs of America and has chosen an admirable project for Service Learning. Bethany is collecting Children's Books printed in Spanish for a new school in Honduras. The school just opened and the teachers desperately need books to help their students learn how to read.. Her goal is to collect 100 books by January so workers from the Northern Illinois Churches can take them to the students and teachers.

You can buy Spanish language Children's books or if so moved donate funds for Bethany to buy the books.

The books or funds can be sent to: Bethany Fike, 344 S. Main St., Pearl City, IL. 61602 Your name will be placed in the books you donate so the Honduran children will be reminded of your generous gift. Amazon and Scholastic books carry Spanish titles. Books should reach Bethany by December 31st.

## **Leadership Team meets at Chicago First Church**



The District of Illinois-Wisconsin Leadership Team met at the historic Chicago First Church of the Brethren. The First Church is located near the site of the original Bethany Seminary and Bethany Hospital in the inner city of Chicago.

Six voting members, Wilber Bowman, Chairman; Bill Pockington; Bob Champlin; Fletcher Farrar; Anna Lee Hisey-Pierson; and Vernon Dean plus five Ex-officio members Kevin Kessler, Dist. Exec.; Gil Crosby, Moderator; Orlando Redekopp, Mod. Elect; Lynda

DeVore, Apostle NCDT, and Evelyn Bowman, Recording Secretary attended the meeting.

Orlando Redekopp serves as the Pastor of Chicago First and lead the group in devotions from Hebrews on "Maturing as Christians". Pastor Redekopp gave an overview of the work being done at Chicago First which includes three worship services, a Community Garden, "Cease Fire" meetings, Work Camps, Bible Study, Brethren Men's Workshop, Tutoring, Faith Issues meeting just to name those he mentioned. The ladies of the church prepared a wonderful luncheon and continental breakfast for those attending. A big thank you to our hosts and hostesses.

Chairman Wilber Bowman called the meeting to order and the team proceeded to work on the business of the Illinois-Wisconsin District.

- A New "Heritage Team" was approved to work on discovering and preserving the history and heritage of the District. The members of the team consist of Martin and Patty Stauffer and Willard Dulabaum. Jim Lehman will be the LT's liaison with this group.
- The Peace Team will be given the option of closing. The team has no projects at this time and the Brotherhood Team serves many of the same functions.
- The new Administrative Assistant for the District is Beth Carpentier.
- Money donated by the Morris Firebaugh estate will be used for the "Missions & Mortar" ministry. The District makes grants and loans from this fund to individual churches in the district.
- The Treasurers report noted that our expenses exceed our income this month. A positive note came from the investment fund which has risen since the fall of the stock market last year. Church contributions fell behind at the 2/3 point of the year with only 56% meeting their pledges.
- Lynda DeVore, Apostle of the New Church Development Team reported the progress of church plantings in the District. She also thanked the Leadership Team for working with the New Church Development Team and the spirit of cooperation shown by both teams.
- Reports from the Liaison members, Ministry teams, DE and Moderator were presented.

The meeting closed with prayer by Gil Crosby, Moderator. The next meeting will be held October 31<sup>st</sup> at the Stanley Wisconsin Church of the Brethren.



This mural is on the building next to the Chicago 1<sup>st</sup> Church of the Brethren.

## DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETS AT STANLEY, WISCONSIN.



The Leadership Team of Illinois-Wisconsin District meet at the Stanley, WI. Church of the Brethren October 30<sup>th</sup>. The Stanley Church is one of the most picturesque churches in our District. We were welcomed by Pastor Ervin Witmer and members of the congregation with a tasty breakfast and wonderful lunch. Pastor Witmer led in devotions reading from Isaiah 41. He also gave us some background on the Church which was established in 1886 by the Wesley Beery family.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wilbur Bowman. This is Wilbur's last meeting because his term expires at District

Conference. Our Recording Secretary Evelyn Bowman also will be leaving as will Fletcher Farrar.

After the minutes from the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved, reports from The treasurer, financial secretary and the Ministry Teams were received, discussed and approved. A letter was sent to District members by the chairman asking for help meeting our budget. Some funds have already been received in response to the letter. A letter was sent to District Churches recommending they revise their deeds to protect themselves in event of closing or dissolution. This will be on the District Conference agenda.

The district received notice that they will be receiving a portion of the Frances Sanger Trust. We will be notified by the trusts attorney.

The Team voted to buy a paper folder to help Beth with the hundreds of mailings she makes on behalf of the district. She has been using a machine at her home church to do the work. We also voted to increase her wages beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. The TRIM Coordinator requested reimbursement for travel expenses and was approved. All of the above expenses are within the District budget.

Several appointments have been made to District Deacons with others to be made for District Conference. Our thanks go to the Stanley Congregation and Pastor Witmer for a "snowy" welcome to Stanley and for the use of their facilities.

Those attending the meeting were Wilbur Bowman, Chm., Kevin Kessler, DE., Gil Crosby, Moderator, Vernon Dean, Bill Pocklington, Jim Lehman, Fletcher Farrar, Ed Garrison, Lynda Lubbs-DeVore, NCDT, and Evelyn Bowman, Secretary.



## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE BALLOT NOMINATIONS**

"In just over two months the Nominating Committee of Standing Committee will be gathering Elgin, Ill., to prepare the ballot for the 2010 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pa. This daunting yet important task is made easier when brothers and sisters from across the denomination assist us in calling out the gifts of persons to serve the wider denomination.

"You can help by nominating persons online by going to [www.cobannualconference.org](http://www.cobannualconference.org). Click on "Election Forms" then "2010 Nomination Form." Complete the form and click "Submit Nomination." When you do this the Annual Conference office is notified of the nomination and the nominee is emailed a link to the "2010 Nominee Information" form to complete online. We encourage you to contact persons that you are nominating beforehand to get their permission. Also, please make sure that you have a correct e-mail address for the nominee.

"Please don't hesitate to contact the Annual Conference office if you have any questions about this process and how you can be part of it. Your participation in this process is extremely important. The deadline for nominations is December 1, 2009.

"Thank you in advance for helping us to find the most gifted servants in the church to serve in coming years."

Thank you!

Blessings,  
Jon Kobel, Conference Assistant  
Annual Conference Office  
1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120  
800-323-8039, x229  
[jkobel@brethren.org](mailto:jkobel@brethren.org)

## **DISTRICT CALENDAR**

### **2009**

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





## GREAT HARVEST CHURCH PLANTING

### Look For Our Planters at District Conference

Be sure to stop by the Great Harvest Church Planting table and talk with our planters while you are at district conference. They are prepared to answer your questions about their work in the district. Pastor's, you will want to be sure to come by the booth to pick up your free copy of "Ripple Church" by Phil Stevenson.

### THANK YOU!

New Church Development would like to offer our thanks to the Virden Church of the Brethren for hosting the Southern Illinois Planter Dinner. We offer a special thanks to the Virden youth for providing wonderful entertainment for the event. Thanks to all of you who attended the dinner in support of our planters.



### Prayers for Peace in Rockford

A recent tragic incident in Rockford has created an opportunity for the Brethren peace witness to impact that community. Pastor Samuel Sarpiya along with other local area pastors has been working with city leaders to bring peace and reconciliation to the situation created in the community over a recent shooting by police which has lead to a deepening of racial tensions. Please keep Rockford in your prayers along with Pastor Samuel and the other leads as they meet with On Earth Peace advisors for a Peace Seminar on November 11 and 12. Please pray that their work will have a powerful impact on this city and will pave the way for further ministry.

### A Note from Pastor Benjamin Amankwaa



Please accept greetings from Ghana in the blessed name of the Lord Jesus, our risen Savior. We are grateful to the Lord that He has afforded us the opportunity to join hands with the Great Harvest Church Planting to form a dynamic team united in common for the purpose of planting a Brethren Church in Wisconsin.

Dawn told me she shared a few things with you concerning the ministry and our plans and I would like to highlight a few of them in this email.

The decision for Dawn to complete her nursing degree is to make sure we are positioned well financially. We've had financial challenges for the past 22 months and have not yet sprung back to shape. We think that it's better to have a regular source of funds than to rely entirely on donors. She will complete in May 2011. I have a Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Science in Ministry, and now have completed my Master's of Ministry with a Major in Christian Education. I have non-ministry diplomas – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and Associate Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Administration. We were thinking that I find a job to take care of the family until Dawn completes her degree, then we can make the big move to Wisconsin. This way, we will have built donors and sponsors links in addition to our personal resources to be able to make the big move to Wisconsin.

It is our dream to create a church that targets the young professionals and college students. We aim at planting and developing a church that builds its ministry from the "outside in". We hope to use every creative means possible to communicate the love of Christ. We want to become a multi-sensory church, connecting Christ's thoughts in various ways. We want to be involved in community-based programs.

As far as prayer request goes, we ask that you pray for me to be reunited with my family end of November. Also, we are asking that you pray for Dawn to be successful and prosper as she completes her course work to be an RN. Sean is reported to be doing very well at school and Caleb is doing very well and growing and prospering as well. We ask that you continue to pray for them to continue to enjoy good health. Finally, we want to ask for prayer for Thomas and Linda Stanton for their support for Dawn, Sean, and Caleb. We ask that you pray for the Lord to multiply every seed they have sown into the lives of Dawn, Sean, and Caleb.

May the Lord's unfailing grace and steadfast faithfulness continue to flow to you. May He accomplish the vision for which he brought us in each other's path and establish this union.

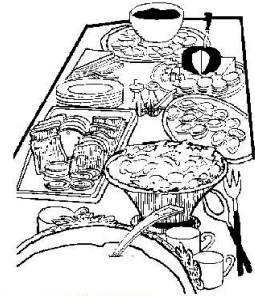


# DISTRICT POTLUCK



MAY 1, 2010  
at

**Peoria Church of the Brethren**



**WORSHIP   WORKSHOPS   FELLOWSHIP   FOOD**

**LEADERSHIP WILL INCLUDE JONATHAN SHIVELY, KEVIN KESSLER, ANNA LEE HISEY PIERSON, DANA MCNEIL, AND OTHERS.**

Registration from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Registration Fee --- \$5.00

More registration information will follow later.

The day's schedule will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.

Plan now to attend this exciting event. Bring your favorite potluck dish to enjoy with others from across the district. Drinks and table service will be provided. Share this information with others in your church. There will be something for everyone including pastors, music leaders, deacons, computer people, and those who simply want to learn, worship, and enjoy wonderful fellowship. So, bring a car load. More details about workshops coming later.

This one-day event is being planned by your **District Deacons** on behalf of the Leadership Team of the District.





**Thanks to the Naperville  
Church of the Brethren  
for hosting the 2009  
Illinois-Wisconsin District  
Conference..**