

Reflecting news and views

# The Reflector

a publication of the Illinois/Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren

February 2011 / Volume 08 / Issue 2

*District Executive: Kevin Kessler*

## From the Moderator, Lisa Fike, Freeport Church of the Brethren



In February we are surrounded by reminders of love. With Valentines' Day coming we are asked to remember the people we love.

So to begin with I am reminded by the people I love:

First of all I think of two very special young women, my daughters Carol and Bethany. Carol, you may know, is a BVSer working at the COB General Offices as assistant work camp coordinator. Bethany is a junior at Pearl City High School and involved in band, choir, speech team, drama, and National Honor Society.

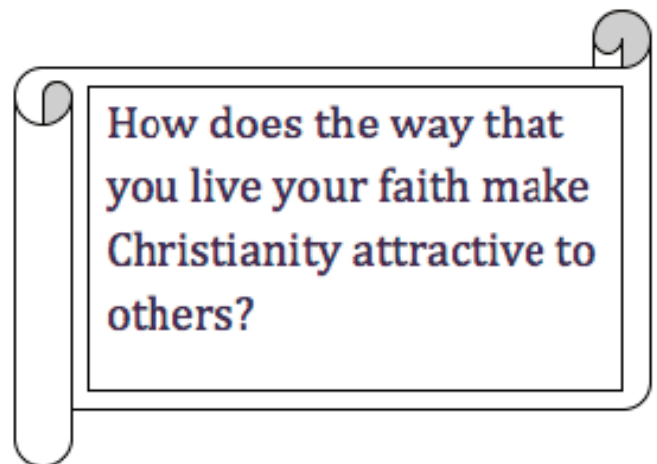
Next I think of, my parents who are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this month. Our family; which now includes their four children, one son-in-law, eight grandchildren, two grandsons by marriage, three great grandsons and as of three days ago a great granddaughter, will gather in celebration of those 60 years of married love. On the Fike side of the family I have a wonderful mother-in-law (She really is wonderful) and 2 brothers and sisters in law, a niece and three nephews. These 29 people mean the world to me.

As I think about love and our Biblical command to love everyone I must admit it doesn't come as easily as loving those that are close to me. Still we are reminded to love one another as Jesus loves us (John 15:12). Like every other family our family has disagreements, times we don't like each other very much. My mother-in-law told me once a long time ago, "If you love someone you don't argue with them." What she was really saying is when we love someone we have to be willing to listen to their point of view without objection or interruption. Loving one another isn't being in agreement on every issue. Loving one another is sharing a willingness to see differences and allowing each to have the opportunity to share their point of view.

Brothers and sisters we are called to love one another. May we strive to love as Our Lord loved us.

As a side note: **I welcome opportunities to visit with your congregation.** The Freeport congregation has provided a few Sundays for me to make visits. If a time other than Sunday works for you I would be open to that as well. Feel free to call or email me.

In Christ's love, Lisa Fike



# DE Thoughts by Kevin Kessler, District Executive



In keeping with the commitment I made in last month's article, I will share some thoughts related to responses that were given to the questions distributed at District Conference this past fall. Question #1 and the responses:

## What do you hope to see happen in the IL/WI District in the next 3-5 years?

(1) Growth of current churches and new churches in all areas; (2) Strengthen new churches that are coming into being; (3) Work with existing churches to grow spiritually and in numbers; (4) To complete the process of establishing goals and strategies to accomplish our vision; (5) To move forward making great progress in the 5 key result areas we have; (6) Renewed emphasis on support of a variety of church planting and church health processes.

I and other leaders in the district hear in these responses a call for revitalization. As a result, I am making an effort to learn more about this subject and have purchased several books which I have dived into to hopefully gain an understanding of ways in which I may be helpful. Author J. Russell Crabtree in his book *Fly in the Ointment* provides some very helpful information. He iterates and reiterates that the most helpful thing a regional association (in our context, district) can do is to assist congregations with gaining the know-how to grow into vital, healthy churches. I was delighted to read this especially in light of the new mission statement that has been developed for our district which reads "Empowering healthy, reproductive ministries... rooted in Christ... active in mission... connected to the Church of the Brethren movement." Our mission statement reflects Crabtree's emphasis.

So, what are the "know-how" concepts or principles that congregations need? As I read and reflect on this subject of congregational health and vitality, it is becoming ever more clear that a plethora of "ways" exist for being renewed and revitalized. What I find more appealing than ways are concepts. For instance in *Fly in the Ointment*, Crabtree makes a distinction between being *transactional* or *transformational*. Being transactional is concerned with returns on investment. The concern here is thinking in terms of how many people are in the pews as a result of the effort we give to evangelism.

Being transformational is concerned with focusing on needs and helping to make a positive impact on those needs. For instance, instead of seeing someone as a pew-filler, we see the need in their life and act upon it in ways that will bring about a positive change for them. The end result *may be* that they will eventually fill a pew, but that isn't the main focus; it is an added benefit.

In two other resources, *The Tangible Kingdom* and *The Tangible Kingdom Primer* by Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, the authors focus on the concept of creating incarnational community. Simply stated, living out incarnational community is developing a "posture (the way a person or community expresses itself to others, especially in nonverbal ways)" to carry out the "Gospel (the good news of Jesus, capable of transforming everything about a person, their community, and their world)." Incarnational congregations do not remain safe in the confines of comfortable study and worship but rather embrace the risk to engage their contextual communities to understand needs and bring about positive transformation.

Beginning to think in terms of being transformational and incarnational challenges us to be more outward focused. It tends to take our minds off of being concerned about declining membership and aging demographics (inward focus) and widening our gaze to the needs of the community around us and how we might influence positive transformation (outward focus). Vitality and health follow, organically, as people who are on the periphery of faith find, through our efforts, a way for meaning and purpose in their lives, and then they come along with us on a journey of faith and faithful living.

Please note that reintroducing health and vitality into systems that are weary and anxious takes time and effort. There is no quick fix. However, the positive changes that emerge—transformed lives and communities—are well worth the effort.

Recognizing that a change is needed is also worth noting. Unease about the state of things is not a problem. More importantly, it points to what Crabtree refers to as "higher-level issues". The recognition of problems helps us to think beyond the present situation to begin asking more meaningful questions. Inquiry into deeper levels of understanding could bring ease to the uneasiness.

*continued on last page*

# Annual Conference Quilts

January 29, 2011

Greetings to you as we begin this New Year!



Many congregations have folks who continue the art of quilting. We have an opportunity to fulfill a request from our Annual Conference moderator as well as provide a contribution to our district. Moderator Robert Alley recently wrote each district requesting "a comforter... **This should be a pieced and knotted comforter (not a stitched quilt). Please make it colorful.**" It will be brought forth during one of the worship services at Annual Conference this year in Grand Rapids and be displayed as part of our worship/business space. We hope to have many congregations create comforters. **One will be sent to Annual Conference;** the others will be displayed and auctioned off at District Conference this November to benefit the District. Each comforter should fit a double or queen-sized bed and the dimensions should be 86 by 88 inches or 96 by 100 inches. Projects should be completed by June 15.

I hope you will discuss this with other creative people in your church and accept the invitation to participate. Please notify me of your intention to participate by **March 15**, and I will gladly make arrangements to get your gift to the appropriate location. Thank you for your consideration in the creative project.

Ed Garrison, Standing Committee Representative,  
Illinois/Wisconsin District

egarrison207@comcast.net (815) 734-4565

# 2011 Spring District Youth Global Justice Retreat

**March 18th – March 20th, 2011**  
**Camp Emmaus, Mt. Morris, Illinois 61054**

**When:** Registration will begin at 7 pm on Friday Night at Camp Emmaus. Retreat participants will be dismissed from Camp Sunday at 11:30 AM.

**Who:** Everyone currently in 9th through 12th grades during the 2010-2011 school year. Friends and advisors are welcome.

**Where:** Camp Emmaus 1-815-734-4268

**Speakers:** **Rick Polhamus** is a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and has worked in the Middle East over the past 10 years. He has training and experience in violence reduction, conflict resolution and transformation, negotiation, and mediation.

Polhamus has lived and worked in many places with CPT including extended stays in South Dakota, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Palestine/Israel, and Iraq. He has served on CPT's steering committee and has been the CPT Representative to the World Council of Churches. He coordinated CPT-Iraq's "Adopt-A-Detainee" campaign dealing with abuses of Iraqi detainees. He has also worked with CPT's "Violence Is Not Child's Play" campaign and participated in many other CPT activities. In addition to being part of CPT in Palestine/Israel, he has led many international delegations that were exploring the issues of the conflict there.

**Seth Hendricks** of Mutual Kumquat fame is a songwriter, guitarist and has a Master's of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary. In 2006, Seth composed the theme song for National Youth Conference and has provided leadership for numerous regional and district events throughout the Church of the Brethren. Currently he is the director of youth and music at Happy Corner Church of the Brethren in Clayton, Ohio.

**Cost:** \$30 for youth – no charge for advisors. Make checks payable to "Illinois/Wisconsin District Youth"

**Registration Deadline: March 11th, 2010**

Registration forms can be downloaded from <http://www.cobyouth.org/> Or contact Ralph Miner at [rminer151@earthlink.net](mailto:rminer151@earthlink.net) with questions.

**Illinois/Wisconsin District Church of the Brethren  
2010 Pledged to Actual Comparison (unaudited)  
As of December 31, 2010 (YEAR END)**

Congregation	2009 Actual Contribution	2010 Annual Pledge	2010 YTD Actual	Difference	Paid %
Allison Prairie	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Batavia Faith	\$614.62	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	--
Canton	\$1,500.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,800.00	\$500.00	138.5%
Cerro Gordo	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Champaign	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Cherry Grove	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	--
Chicago First	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Decatur	\$1,700.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	--
Dixon	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Douglas Park	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Franklin Grove	\$600.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Freeport	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Girard	\$300.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Highland Avenue	\$15,141.00	\$15,141.00	\$15,141.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Hurricane Creek	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	100.0%
La Place	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Lanark	\$2,449.92	\$0.00	\$2,654.08	\$2,654.08	--
Martin Creek	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Milledgeville	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	--
Mt. Morris	\$3,190.00	\$1,776.00	\$1,876.00	\$100.00	105.6%
Naperville	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Neighborhood	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Oak Grove	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	--
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	\$5,850.00	\$0.00	100.0%
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	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Romine	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
Springfield	\$3,100.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Stanley	\$150.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Virden	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Walnut Grove	\$224.01	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	--
West Branch	\$965.25	\$740.25	\$994.25	\$254.00	134.3%
Woodland	\$1,000.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$0.00	100.0%
Yellow Creek	\$400.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	100.0%
York Center	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00	\$0.00	100.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$59,684.80</b>	<b>\$49,907.25</b>	<b>\$56,165.33</b>	<b>\$6,258.08</b>	<b>112.5%</b>

THANK YOU to all the District Churches who committed pledges to meet a budget  
and to those who sent contributions even though you had not pledged.  
Our District is vital because of Congregational support, Thank You again..

# Freeport Church of the Brethren Deacon Training



**Saturday, March 19, 2011**

**9:00AM – 3:00PM**

(Registration begins at 8:30)

Freeport Church of the Brethren  
777 West Pleasant Street  
(Pleasant Street & West Avenue)  
Freeport, Illinois 61032

Leadership: Donna Kline, Director of Denominational Deacon Ministries

Registration: Please submit the form below, along with payment. Cost is \$15 per person.

Deadline: Monday, March 14, 2011

## Freeport Church of the Brethren Deacon Training Saturday, March 19, 2011

Person(s) registering: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshops:

- The Art of Listening
- Support in Times of Grief and Loss
- Deacons and Pastors: The Pastoral Care Team

Mail this form and your registration fee (\$15 per person, which includes lunch) to:

**Freeport Church of the Brethren**  
**Attention: Wendy Boettner**  
**777 West Pleasant Street**  
**Freeport, Illinois 61032**

Make checks payable to "Freeport Church of the Brethren"

Ministers desiring .5 CEU credits should also include a separate check in the amount of \$10, payable to "Brethren Academy".

Registration deadline: Monday, March 14, 2011

# 2010-2011 Calendar

## FEBRUARY

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- 14 ..St. Valentine's Day
- 21 ..President's Day
- 26 ..Leadership Team

## MARCH

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- 6 ....One Great Hour of Sharing
- 9 ....Ash Wednesday
- 12 ..Camp Emmanuel Board Meeting
- 13 ..Daylight Savings Time Begins

## APRIL

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- 9 ....Leadership Team
- 16 ..Program & Arrangements
- 16 ..Camp Emmanuel Work Day
- 16-22....Camp Emmanuel Work Week
- 17 ..Palm Sunday
- 19 ..Passover
- 22 ..Good Friday
- 24 ..Easter

## MAY

- 1 ....National Youth Sunday
- 5 ....National Day of Prayer
- 7 ....Camp Emmanuel Counselors in Training
- 8 ....Mother's Day
- 13-15....Camp Emmanuel Young Adult Camp
- 14 ..Leadership Team
- 27-30...Emmaus Family Camp
- 30 ..Memorial Day

## JUNE

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- 3-5....Camp Emmanuel Women's Camp
- 5-11....Camp Emmanuel Youth Camp
- 12-18....Camp Emmanuel Jr. High Camp
- 17 ..Nat'l. Jr. High Conf, Elizabethtown College
- 19 ..Father's Day
- 21 ..First Day of Summer
- 25-26...Elementary Camp I - Emmaus

## JULY

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- 1-6 ....Annual Conference, Grand Rapids, MI
- 8-9....Camp Emmanuel Pre-Jr. Camp
- 10- 16...Sr. High Camp - Emmaus
- 10- 16...Camp Emmanuel Jr. Camp
- 17-23...Jr. High Camp - Emmaus
- 23 ..Leadership Team
- 24-29...Elementary III Camp - Emmaus

## AUGUST

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- 2-5...Elementary II Camp - Emmaus
- 5-7...Women's Camp - Emmaus
- 12-14....Camp Emmanuel Men's Camp
- 14 ..Camp Emmanuel Board Meeting
- 20 ..Program and Arrangements

## SEPTEMBER

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- 5 ....Labor Day
- 5 ....NOAC, Lake Junaluska
- 2-5 ....Family Camp Emmanuel
- 2-5 ....Family Camp Emmaus
- 11 ..Grandparent's Day
- 17 ..Leadership Team
- 21 ..International Day of Peace
- 29 ..Rosh Hashanah

## OCTOBER

- 2 ....World Communion Sunday
- 8 ....Yom Kippur
- 8 ....Program & Arrangements
- 10 ..Columbus Day
- 15 ..Leadership Team
- 22 ..Camp Emmanuel Fall Work Day

## NOVEMBER

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- 4-6 ....District Conference, Lake Williamson
- 6 ....Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 12 ..Camp Emmanuel Board Meeting
- 18-19...Leadership Team Retreat
- 24 ..Thanksgiving
- 27 ..First Sunday of Advent

## DECEMBER

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- 21 ..Hanukkah
- 25 ..Christmas
- 26 ..Kwanzaa

## DE Thoughts

*continued from page 2*

Crabtree contends, "Paradoxically, what we avoid only makes life harder." Jumping into the issues helps us to make corrections.

Among the congregations in our district, one, Mt. Morris, is recognizing the need to move into higher-level issues. This congregation is in the midst of an intentional process of discernment and action toward a renewed reality. I'm excited about the possibilities in front of them and the emerging story they will have to share with us.

What the future may hold is unknown, but asking the higher-level questions has the potential to increase the production of fruit for the kingdom of God—in Mt. Morris and in all of our communities.

*Every day that we resist necessary change closes a door of opportunity somewhere in the future.*

—J. Russell Crabtree