

Reflecting news and views

# The Reflector

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

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*District Executive: Kevin Kessler*

Wishing all a

**Merry Christmas**

and a

**Blessed New Year**



## The Illinois/Wisconsin District Office

**Kevin Kessler**  
District Executive

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Administrative Assistant

*Beth Carpentier*

*Kevin Kessler*

# Thoughts from the DE - Kevin Kessler



Each year I like to go back through the list of books I've read and choose 5 that I liked the best, then write a brief review of each to share with others. So, here are my picks for 2011. I

will also list honorable mentions that could easily have made this list as well.

**1. The Harry Potter Series** by J. K. Rowling (Scholastic) – Many who are reading this review have likely read these books (7 in the series), but if you haven't, I would recommend a jaunt through them. The classic good versus evil concept is clearly evident throughout the series. Rowling also delves into the dynamics of relationships, conflict, and cause and effect. Although I doubt Rowling was writing with Christianity in mind, the story includes subtle frameworks of Christian understanding. A lot of pages, but an easy read.

**2. Take This Bread** by Sara Miles (Ballantine, 2007) – Miles opens up to share the journey of her life—from her days of being a traveling journalist, to working in restaurants, to finding faith, to quickly making faith an active verb. Although her approach to faith sometimes seems irreverent, she leaves no question that it is real to her. Readers of this book will be intrigued how Miles juxtaposes the Eucharist with just generally eating together. She makes connections that cause both to be viewed in deeper, more reverent ways. A refreshing, stirring read.

**3. Leaving Church: A Memoir** by Barbara Brown Taylor ((Harper, 2007) – This is the first of Taylor's books I've read and was immediately drawn in by her folksy, down-to-earth style of writing. Leaving Church is Taylor's personal journey of falling in love with a little country church, being called to serve as the pastor, relating stories about the joys and difficulties of ministry there, and her subsequent call to leave the church for a teaching position. The little country church held a warm and dear spot in her heart even after leaving. A touching read.

**4. Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us** by Daniel H. Pink (Riverhead, 2009) – I was fascinated by this book. Rewards and punishment are not the greatest factors for motivation. Intrinsic desire and passion are greater

motivators. Pink explores ways to focus on intrinsic motivators as the means to help people reach their potential. He includes stories from fascinating read.

**5. Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived** by Rob Bell (Harper, 2011) – Bell explores the possibilities of every person's fate under the microscope of God's grace and redeeming love. While Bell may challenge orthodox views, his provocative thoughts point in the direction of a loving God, whose love is greater than any of our understandings of salvation. A provocative read.

Following are the honorable mentions:

**a. Becoming an Anti-racist Church: Journeying Toward Wholeness** by Joseph Barndt (Fortress, 2011)

**b. The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith** by Stuart Murray (Herald Press, 2010)

**c. Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History** by Erik Larson (Vintage, 2000)

**d. Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption** by Laura Hillenbrand (Random House, 2010)

**e. Fly in the Ointment: Why Denominations Aren't Helping Their Congregations and How They Can** by J. Russell Crabtree (Church Publishing, 2008)

## Oak Grove Church adds Fellowship Hall



The Oak Grove Church of the Brethren located in rural Low Point, Illinois has realized a dream after several years of planning and prayer. This fall they added a fellowship hall to replace the meeting room and kitchen in their small basement. The men and women of the church are now engaged in finishing the interior of the building. There will be a formal dedication sometime in early spring. Congratulations to Pastor Buegel and the congregation for taking this step in faith to serve His kingdom.

# World Interfaith Harmony Week February 1-7, 2012

On October 20, 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution designating the first week in February to be an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. The U.N. General Assembly called for dialogue among the different religions internationally, nationally, and locally to enhance interfaith harmony and cooperation.

In this historic action the U.N. General Assembly recognized the possibility and necessity for the believers in the major world religions to facilitate peace building and to engage in the global moral issues of poverty, hunger, health care, environmental destruction, and other world challenges. Clergy and congregations are asked to focus during this week on (1) learning about the faith and beliefs of followers of other religious traditions, (2) remembering in prayers and messages about interfaith cooperation, and (3) sharing together in cooperative compassionate care for persons suffering and marginalized in our local communities.

Brethren representative on the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches, Larry Ulrich commented, "Increasingly American diversity has persons of other faith traditions living with us as neighbors. In the cacophony of misunderstanding and mistrust, harmony is a recognition of the moral impact of learning about each other's faith, religious beliefs and practices, and the increased

possibilities of helping local people in need through cooperative service. The World Interfaith Harmony Week is an opportunity to expand compassion locally by reducing our fears and prejudices."

For further information and resources:  
[www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com](http://www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com)

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## Memorial Gifts build new Building



Memorial gifts from the estates of Dorothy Harshbarger and Cora Snoko provided the funds for the Peoria Church of the Brethren

to construct a maintenance garage, storage for Mt. Mission and a picnic pavilion. Both of these ladies were charter members of the Peoria Church.

The men of the Church are finishing the inside of the building which should be completed early next year. A dedication will be held at the Church next spring.

## Words from 2011 Moderator, Pastor Lisa Fike



A few weeks ago we concluded our 2011 Illinois and Wisconsin District Conference.

As I look back over the weekend I am reminded of a group of Christian people who enjoy gathering and sharing as brothers and sisters.

For me, gathering for Love feast was an awesome experience. From my vantage point I was able to look out over the room and witness persons humbling themselves to participate in feet (or hand) washing, and then to share in a simple meal and in the bread and cup, this touched my heart. To participate in the experience, for me, was the reason for us to gather at Lake Williamson for our 2011 District Conference.

It has been a joy to serve the district as your moderator for 2011. Now I can return to giving the Freeport Congregation most of my attention. I

would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your warm wishes and invitations to serve in a variety of ways over the last year. As moderator I have had the opportunity to visit several churches and bring the message. I was invited to participate in the Rockford First Church gifting service, pool dedication at Camp Emmaus, and pastoral installation at Cherry Grove Church of the Brethren. I also want to thank the members of Freeport Church of the Brethren who have so willingly shared me with the district. Lastly; I want to thank my daughters, Carol and Bethany, for their support, especially Bethany who has had to put up with an extra busy schedule, messy house and fast food meals.

Blessings to new Moderator Fletcher Farrar and Moderator-Elect Mark Flory Steury as you serve our district. I am looking forward to the next time we meet to share in fellowship with my sisters and brothers around the district.

# Peoria Church and Mt. Mission



The Peoria Church of the Brethren embarked on their annual trip to Eastern Kentucky with trucks and trailers loaded with clothing, household items, furniture, tools and other necessities useful to the residents of the area. The Peoria Church has partnered with the Mt. Zion Methodist Church since the 1980's in this Mission. This year the Peoria Church assumed the responsibility of organizing the event. Trucks caravan over a four day period delivering the goods to Henderson Settlement, Red Bird Mission and Mt. Mission in the Appalachian area of Eastern Kentucky. We would like to extend an invitation to other Brethren Churches to join the Peoria Church for next year's Mt. Mission project in November 2012, usually after District Conference. If you are interested phone 309-683-3980 or email [mail@peoriabrethren.org](mailto:mail@peoriabrethren.org) .

# 2012 National Young Adult Conference



Are you between the ages of 18 and 35? If so, then you are invited to the NYAC in Knoxville, TN. This event will be a chance for young adults to gather and create a loving community, have engaging conversations about our role in the denomination and also enjoy various speakers.

NYAC takes place on **June 18 – 22, 2012** at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Our theme is **"Humble, yet Bold: Being the Church,"** based on Matt. 5: 13 – 18, "Being Salt for the Earth" and "A light for the world."

Online registration begins Jan. 6 at 8 PM at [www.brethren.org/yac](http://www.brethren.org/yac) . The cost for the event will be \$375 and includes housing, programming and meals. The Young Adult Steering Committee encourages congregations to offer NYA C scholarships in their 2012 budgets. NYAC gift certificates may be purchased by friends and families.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY to be part of the community that will be created during these five days in Knoxville. Join us on Facebook on "Young Adults of the Church of the Brethren."

For more information call 800-323-8039 ext. 281 or E-mail [NYAC2012@brethren.org](mailto:NYAC2012@brethren.org) .



## DISTRICT POTLUCK

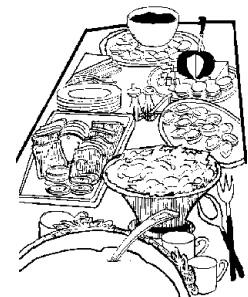
What's the Date?

# APRIL 28, 2012

at

**Peoria Church of the Brethren**

4714 N. Sheridan Rd.  
Peoria, IL 61614



# 2011-2012 Calendar

## DECEMBER

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

## FEBRUARY

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- 1 .....New Year's Day
- 14 .....Leadership Team Meeting - Neighborhood
- 16 .....Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 25 .....Peoria Area Pastor's Meeting
- 29-Feb 17.....BVS Winter Orientation

## FEBRUARY

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- 20 .....President's Day

## MARCH

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- 10-12 ..Mission & Ministry Board, New Windsor

## APRIL

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- 6 .....Good Friday
- 7 .....First Day of Passover
- 8 .....Easter
- 23-May 4.....BVS Older Adult Orientation
- 28 .....DISTRICT POT LUCK at Peoria CoB

## MAY

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- 1 .....Labor Day
- 6 .....National Youth Sunday
- 13 .....Mother's Day
- 17-19....New Church Dev. Conf. , Richmond, IN
- 28 .....Memorial Day

## JUNE

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- 10-29 ..BVS Summer Orientation
- 16-22 ..National Young Adult Conf., Knoxville
- 17 .....Father's Day

## JULY

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- 6-7 .....Ministers Assoc. Pre-Conf., St. Louis, MO
- 6-11 ....ANNUAL CONFERENCE, St. Louis, MO
- 7 .....Mission & Ministry Board, St. Louis, MO

## AUGUST

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- 20-30 ..BVS/BRF Orientation, New Windsor

## SEPTEMBER

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- 3 .....Labor Day
- 16-Oct 5.....BVS Fall Orientation
- 17 .....Rosh Hashanah
- 26 .....Yom Kippur

## OCTOBER

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- 20-23 ..Mission & Ministry Board, Elgin, IL

## NOVEMBER

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- 4 .....National Jr. High Sunday
- 16-18 ..Mission Alive, Lititz, PA
- 22 .....Thanksgiving Day
- 25 .....First Sunday of Advent

## DECEMBER

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- 9 .....First Day of Chanukah/Hanukkah
- 25 .....Christmas Day
- 31 .....New Year's Eve

## Bethany Seminary invites youth to explore their call



High school youth are invited to attend Exploring Your Call (EYC) at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., this summer, June 15-25, 2012. This event provides the opportunity for young people entering their junior or senior year of high school in fall 2012 to explore faith and vocation through classes, congregational involvement, service projects, personal and spiritual enrichment, and recreation.

Russell Haitch, associate professor of Christian education and director of the Institute for Youth and Young Adults at Bethany, oversees EYC. "It's an intense but beautiful program. Last year, youth studied theology in the classroom, then shadowed pastors and did real-life ministry, then took a trip to Chicago to live in an intentional community and learn about all sorts of non-pastoral vocations. The level of conversation and quality of friendship that developed was really splendid, and I'm excited that equally good things will happen this year."