

Reflecting news and views

# The Reflector

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

June 2012 / Volume 09 / Issue 5

District Executive: Kevin Kessler

## Church of the Brethren Annual Conference

### Conference Witness to the Host City

Delegates to the 2008 Annual Conference in Richmond, VA processed an item of business entitled *Query: Conference Witness to the Host City*. The query acknowledges that because Annual Conference is held in various cities, it would be good to give witness to our shared faith in Jesus in these places. Delegates in Richmond adopted the concern of the query and referred the concern to the Program and Arrangements Committee for consultation and implementation.

**The Annual Conference witness to the city of St. Louis involves the collection of school supplies for the St. Louis Public School system.** During the 2012-13 school year, the St. Louis Public Schools will serve approximately 28,000 students in 72 different schools.

The list of school supplies was provided by the St. Louis Public Schools, and includes the following: **2 pocket letter size portfolios, Glue sticks, Ball point pens – medium tip, Highlighters, Washable markers – 10 pack, Rulers – 12" plastic, Colored pencils, colored, 12 pack, Protractors – 6" plastic, Pencils, #2, Crayons – 16 pack, Paper filler – 3 hole, college rule, Erasers, Primary writing paper, Backpack (black only)**

Moderator Tim Harvey recently went to a local retailer and purchased the entire list of supplies—not including the backpack—for under \$18. The color of the backpacks was requested by the St. Louis school staff, and may be difficult to find at this time of year.

Conference attendees who participate in this outreach are invited to bring their supplies to the Sunday morning worship service at Annual Conference, where they will be received during the offering. Representatives from the St. Louis Public Schools will receive the supplies during the afternoon business session on Tuesday, July 10.

### Work Day at Batavia, New Beginnings Church Building



The District Leadership Team in preparation for selling the New Beginnings Church building in Batavia is planning a workday on-site, 611 N. Van Buren St., for the purpose of disposing of items in the building as well as sprucing up the property. Work will begin at 9:00am and continue until noon or such time as the work is completed. No special skills are required, just a willingness to pitch in and share in a district work day.

**Work Day - When:** Saturday, June 30, 2012

**Where:** New Beginnings Church, 611 N. Van Buren St, Batavia, **Your assistance is appreciated!**



### The Next Newsletter will be August

With Annual Conference the first weeks in July, the District Newsletter will not be published in July. Please have your articles ready for the first week in August...

# DE PONDERINGS by Kevin Kessler



In a book I recently read, *Sacrilege* by Hugh Halter, I learned that churches in America spend about 85 percent of their income on themselves leaving, of course, 15 percent for outreach or support to judiciary/denominational efforts. The author provided additional information to making his point a bit more vivid. He estimated conservatively that we have about 400,000 churches in America with an average of 70 people and a median income of about \$100,000. Doing the math indicates these churches contribute approximately \$6,000,000,000 toward the desperate needs of people.

## York Center welcomes New Congregation



The York Center Church of the Brethren is excited to welcome **God's Congregation Worship Center** to their church building. This new congregation will begin worshipping at York Center on Sunday, July 1. They have been meeting in a community building for the past few months. York Center brothers and sisters are preparing office space for their Pastor Carl Mabins. He began his ministry by reaching out to young folks in the community. The two congregations look forward to sharing fellowship, meals, and periodic worship services.

York Center will hold a **Pet Blessing** service on the church lawn on **Saturday, August 11 at 10 a.m.** This service offers the opportunity for us to give thanks to God for the animals that bless our lives. For the past four years, this has been a joy-filled service with very well-behaved cats and dogs, and people.

I thought it would be interesting to know what percentage of the U.S. Federal Budget is used for welfare. As complicated as the federal budget is I wondered how difficult it would be to nail this down. I found on The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities website that 13 percent of the federal budget is used for Safety Net Programs. The church has a 2 percent edge on the federal government. Really nothing to brag about.

Okay, the point is not to put a guilt trip on the church. Guilt is never a good motivator. But maybe it's helpful to consider what the results might be if the percentages were different. How much more good would be done in the world if less were kept in the church and more given to those in need?

Talking about percentages may not even be the right conversation to be engaging in. What if we changed the focus from dollars and percentages to what we are called to do with the resources we have? Our mission according to scripture is to help the widow, the poor, the sick, and the impoverished to the point that needs disappear. Acts 4:34-35 provides the basis for this understanding: "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."

Author Hugh Halter suggests that it would indeed be amazing the increased amount of good deeds the church could do if it kept only 50 percent for itself. Indeed! Practical? Probably not. But it never hurts to strive for a more equitable balance, especially understanding that our call is to eliminate needs. With this understanding of call foremost on our hearts and in our minds, I'm confident we'll be motivated to narrow the gap between what we keep and what we give to those in need. What do you think?

Come, and be a part of unlocking the  
Secrets of God's Kingdom, at Camp Emmaus.

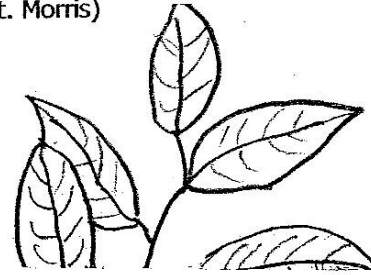
(Near Route 64, between Oregon and Mt. Morris)



97 acres of rolling wooded countryside,  
with creeks and a 1 acre lake.



Newly renovated outdoor  
swimming pool.



9 log cabins, for boys and girls,  
nestled in the trees.

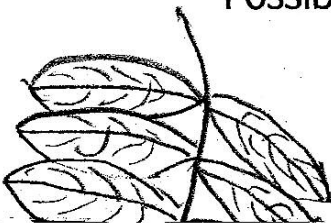


Retreat lodge (sleeps 24, with kitchen, etc),  
and log cabin (sleeps 14) available  
year round.

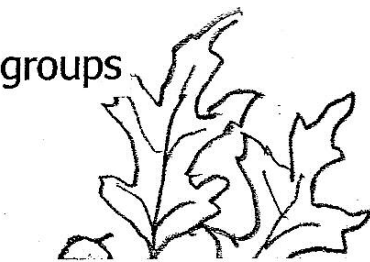
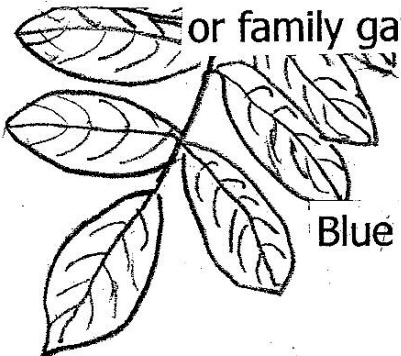
Five Brethren camps for those 1<sup>st</sup> grade through  
high school, in July and August.

Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend family camping.

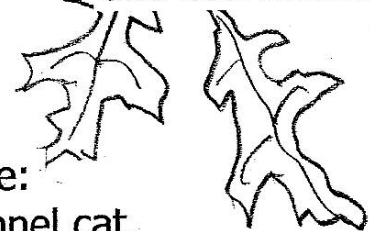
Possible availability for outside groups  
upon request.



Outdoor shelter available for church  
or family gatherings.



Dedicated staff, directors,  
and counselors.



Great fishing at the lake:  
Blue gill, bass, crappies, channel cat.

For more information, visit [www.campemmaus.org](http://www.campemmaus.org)

Or

Contact Bill and Betty Hare, Camp Managers, at  
815-734-4027





# Illinois Central Song & Story Fest: All Aboard!

July 1-7, 2012 • Camp Emmanuel - Astoria, Illinois

**A Family Camp** featuring Brethren musicians and storytellers in the woods and river valleys of central Illinois! We're going to celebrate railroads and trains this year at the Fest and take some of our themes and titles from songs and stories about trains. We'll explore the impact of our increasingly virtual (not to be confused with virtuous) world on our relationships and on the role of the church in keeping face-to-face communities alive. **So join us in Riding the Rails in Comfort. Climb aboard our train Bound for Glory! These people will help make the trip enjoyable:**

## Storytellers & Workshop Leaders

Deanna Brown, Bob Gross, Kathy Guisewite, Reba Herder, Jonathan Hunter, Jim Lehman, Sue Overman, *Campfire, Workshop, and Concert Musicians*, Rhonda & Greg Baker, Patti Ecker & Louise Brodie, Peg Lehman, LuAnne Harley & Brian Kruschwitz, Jenny Stover-Brown & Jeffrey Faus, Chris Good & Drue Gray of Mutual Kumquat, Mike Stern

## Jump the train to the lake at Camp Emmanuel!

**Lodging** - Rustic cabins or dorms furnished with bunk beds, or in your own tent or RV. Please bring your own bedding and towels as the Camp doesn't provide these. There are a number of hookups for RVs. Hot showers are provided in common bath-houses.

**Food** - Arlene Kindy and her crew will cook for us again this year. Please bring a new table grace to add to our repertoire.

**Craft Project** - Contact Ken if you have a good craft project to share and lead.

**Camp Emmanuel** is located three miles south of Astoria, Ill., (on US Rt. 24) some 17 miles west of Havana (55 miles west of I-55 on US 136) and the Illinois River. Check it all out on the Camp website at [www.cob-net.org/camp/emmanuel/index.htm](http://www.cob-net.org/camp/emmanuel/index.htm)

## Registration and Fees:

Registration includes all meals, on-site facilities, and leadership; and is based upon age. Children 3 and under are welcome, no charge.

**Adults \$ 260.00**

**Teens 13 - 19 \$ 200.00**

**Children 4 - 12 \$ 130.00**

**Maximum Fee per Family \$ 780.00**

Please register now and remit the entire fee by June 1. Registrations post-marked after June 1 should add 10% as a late fee. No discount for off-site, tent or RV housing.

**Daily Fee** - \$45/adult, \$35/teen, \$25/child, \$140/family; includes all meals.

Contact Bob Gross, On Earth Peace director, at 260-982-7751 or [bgross@onearthpeace.org](mailto:bgross@onearthpeace.org) if you need financial help.

## Registration information at:

[www.onearthpeace.org/faith-legacy/song-story-fest/registration](http://www.onearthpeace.org/faith-legacy/song-story-fest/registration)

Call Darlene Johnson at the 410-635-8704 to pay by credit card or ask registration questions; you may also mail registrations or checks to: On Earth Peace, PO Box 188, New Windsor MD 21776  
Phone: 410-635-8704; Fax: 410-635-8707;  
[oep@onearthpeace.org](mailto:oep@onearthpeace.org)

For additional information or with program questions contact: Ken Kline Smeltzer, Director, 1452 Willowbrook Drive, Boalsburg PA 16827-1668  
814-571-0495 (mobile); 814-466-6491 (home);  
or [bksmeltz@comcast.net](mailto:bksmeltz@comcast.net)

# Pinecrest Manor Achieves Coveted Five-Star Status



(May 31, 2012) Mt. Morris, IL– Pinecrest Community is proud to announce the achievement of a “Five-Star” ranking by its nursing home, Pinecrest Manor, in ratings released in May by Medicare.

The achievement is a tribute to its dedicated nursing staff, and its diligence on health inspections and quality measures, said CEO Ferol Labash. “Quality begins with our leadership,” Labash said. “Jolene LeClere, administrator of health services, and our team of administrative staff, lead the way in providing quality, compassionate care.”

Director of Nursing Meg Unger agreed: It’s the staff. “Quality staffing, in all departments, is the backbone of Pinecrest Community,” Unger, a 25-year employee, said.

According to Medicare, when looking at the five-star ratings, more stars are better. Five stars are the most a nursing home can get. One star is the fewest. **Only 10 percent of nursing homes in America can attain the five-star rating at any one point in time.**

This star rating is for overall staffing hours, which includes registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, licensed vocational nurses, and certified nursing assistants. Other types of nursing home staff such as clerical, administrative, or house-keeping are not included in these staffing calculations.

Pinecrest Community, operated since 1893 by the **Church of the Brethren**, which still oversees its operations today, recommends those considering nursing homes for their loved ones consult the information made available at the Medicare.gov Web site. The Brethren’s 22 retirement communities and nursing homes across the nation have a legacy of excellence, having been ranked by Consumer Reports magazine as third in the nation in quality.

To view ratings of all nursing homes, go to <http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare> and select “compare nursing homes.”

Comforters for District Conference

## You Still Have Time!!!

### We Encourage Your Participation



**Please Let The Appropriate Persons In Your Congregation Know About This.**

Last year at District Conference at Lake Williamson we were able to participate in a variety of events including love feast, worship, business, fellowship, and an **auction of some wonderful comforters**. The comforters showcased the creative talents from many of our churches and the auction led by Brother Rick Koch from Milledgeville was a lot of fun as well!

We would like to continue the project for another year and invite each congregation to make a contribution. **There are no rules** - be colorful, be creative, have fun. Proceeds will go to support our District work.

Please spread the word about this project. Let me know by September 15 if you are going to participate and then bring your comforter to District Conference (Nov. 2-5, 2012) and enjoy the friendly camaraderie as we bid for these wonderful pieces of Brethren art.

*In Christ’s Service, Ed Garrison,*  
*egarrison207@comcast.net (815) 734-4565*

***Come Join Us!***

# **2012 ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER 2-4, 2012**

**LAKE WILLIAMSON CHRISTIAN CENTER**

**CARLINVILLE, IL**

**HOSTED BY VIRDEN CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

**Friday Evening:**

**Worship: Dan Ulrich**

**Professor of New Testament Studies at Bethany  
Theological Seminary**

**Saturday Evening:**

**Mutual Kumquat Concert**

**Sunday:**

**Insight Sessions**

**Worship: Benjamin Reynolds, Interim Pastor  
at First Chicago CoB**

**Lake Williamson Christian Center  
17280 Lakeside Dr.  
Carlinville, IL 62626  
[lakewilliamson.org](http://lakewilliamson.org)**



# Coordinator of Outreach Programs Named at Bethany Seminary



Richmond, Indiana—Rebekah Houff has been named to the position of coordinator of outreach programs for

Bethany Theological Seminary, to begin June 1, 2012. Houff is a 2012 graduate of Bethany, having earned a master of divinity degree with an emphasis in youth and young adult ministry.

In this one-year position, Houff will work with Russell Haitch, assistant professor of Christian education and director of the Institute for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults. A key responsibility will be to plan and facilitate the 2013 Exploring Your Call, a ten-day seminar for high school students finishing their sophomore, junior, or senior year. Exploring Your Call will be held this year from June 15-25 at Bethany in Richmond, Indiana.

Houff has previously served the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministries Office in coordinating national conferences and workcamps.

## *Biblical, Spiritual, and Practical Resources*

workshops for 2012-2013 presented by  
Ruthann Knechel Johansen



Ruthann Knechel Johansen, president of Bethany Theological Seminary, is pleased to offer the following workshops to districts, congregations and other interested groups or gatherings. They are suitable for pre-district conference events, insight sessions, weekend congregational presentations, or other settings that fit the cadences of life and learning in your part of the church. We trust that these workshops will be wonderful opportunities for education and thoughtful discussion about significant questions in our lives today and to strengthen or develop the relationship between Bethany and the individuals, congregations, and districts of the Church of the Brethren.

The preferred format is an interactive group discussion; however, the feasibility of this format will be determined in part by the size of your group. We will work with you to meet the needs of your group as best we can. Most of the topics can also be adjusted to fit the timeframe your group has available. If you have interest in scheduling a workshop with President Johansen, please contact Shaye Isaacs, executive assistant to the president, at [isaacsh@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:isaacsh@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1803. You may also contact President Johansen directly at [johanru@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:johanru@bethanyseminary.edu).

Available workshops are: Beatitudes Spirituality; Job's Lament, Job's Friends, and Us: Reimagining the Kingdom of God; Engaging the Great Poems of the Bible and I and Thou: The Art, Practice, and Spiritual Discipline of Listening.

# Call for a Season of Civility in Wisconsin

## From our State's Religious Leaders

We, the undersigned leaders in Wisconsin's faith communities, know that democracy thrives on open and vigorous debate about public policies. However, as Wisconsin struggles through another year of divisive campaigning and elections, we are concerned that hostile political rhetoric is overstepping the bounds of civility and even decency in our congregations and society at large. By nature, religious congregations include people from all walks of life who hold differing views on political and social issues. The teachings of our religious traditions compel us to be concerned about the common good and the well-being of our neighbors. But we do not all agree on the means to achieve these ends.

Virtually every religious tradition includes some version of "the Golden Rule" – to treat others as we would like to be treated. Likewise, the idea of democracy is based on regard for the value of each and every individual.

Yet, as a result of the extreme political polarization in Wisconsin, many in our congregations and communities feel marginalized or demonized by their neighbors on account of their economic status, occupation or political beliefs. Politics in a democracy is not a zero-sum game or a winner-take-all contest. Rather, it is a joint effort to reach a workable consensus on how to advance the common good. But our ability to cooperate to solve common problems and achieve shared goals is now undermined by rampant disrespect, disinformation, distrust, and disregard for the interests and ideas of others. Because we believe that this situation is unacceptable in our public life, we commit ourselves to a Season of Civility:

- We will seek to model and support respectful and honest conversations on public issues within our congregations, assemblies, and other forums.
- We will make a genuine effort to understand the reasons for the views of those with whom we disagree and try to explain the grounds for our own positions clearly and without arrogance. Our goal will be to identify shared values and concerns, rather than to "win" arguments.
- We will be mindful of our own fallibility and keep our views open to correction and reconsideration without betraying our deepest convictions. We encourage all of our fellow citizens, to likewise commit themselves to a Season of Civility:
- Our congregations should be places where civility is taught and practiced as together we seek to learn what our faith calls us to do and be in the world.
- Candidates should strive to adhere to high standards of civility, integrity and truthfulness and insist that the advertisements produced by their own campaigns, and those of third parties, do the same.
- In their campaign reporting and commentary, media should subject all claims and counterclaims to rigorous but fair scrutiny, checking facts, critiquing logic, evaluating sources, and providing context.
- As citizens we should all be critical consumers of media and advertising, questioning claims and resisting attempts to manipulate our emotions.

We offer this statement in the confidence that, if we embrace our faith traditions' highest values of compassion and mutual respect, we will find ways to work with our differences and cooperate to fashion a healthier, livelier and more enduring democracy.

*The above document was signed by our District Executive, **Kevin Kessler** and 34 members of the religious communities of Wisconsin including representatives from Wisconsin Protestant Churches, The Hindu Temple, The Sikh Religious Society, the Baha'is, The Islamic Society, Muslim Women's Coalition, the Jewish Community Relations Council, The Unitarians and the Wisconsin Council of Churches.*



# 2012 Annual Conference Business

## Unfinished Business

- Query: Guidelines for Implementation of the Congregational Ethics Paper
- Query: Guidance for Responding to the Changing of Earth's Climate

## New Business

- Query: Annual Conference Elections
- Query: More Equitable Representation on the Mission and Ministry Board
- Church of the Brethren Vision Statement 2012-2020
- Revitalization of Annual Conference
- Revision to Ministerial Leadership Polity
- Revisions to Polity on Districts
- Updating Structure for Program and Arrangements Committee
- Church of the Brethren Ecumenical Witness

# 2012 Annual Conference Ballot

The ballot has been announced for the 2012 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, to take place in St. Louis, Mo., on July 7-11. The Nominating Committee of the Standing Committee of district delegates developed a slate of candidates, and the Standing Committee then voted to create the ballot that will be presented to the delegate body in July.

*Nominees are listed by position:*

## Annual Conference Moderator-Elect:

- Dava Hensley of Roanoke, VA
- Nancy Sollenberger Heishman of Tipp City, OH

## Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee:

- Wendy Noffsinger Erbaugh of Clayton, OH
- Rebekah Houff of Richmond, IN

## Mission and Ministry Board:

### *Area 1*

- Connie Burk Davis of Westminster, MD
- Rhonda Ritenour of York, PA

### *Area 2*

- J. Trent Smith of New Lebanon, OH
- Sherry Reese Vaught of Mansfield, OH

## Brethren Benefit Trust Board:

- Eric Kabler of Johnstown, PA
- Karen Pacheco of North Miami Beach, FL

## Annual Conference Secretary:

- James Beckwith of Lebanon, PA
- Bonnie Martin of Annville, PA

## Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee

- Bernie Fuska of Timberville, VA
- Carol L. Yeazell of Arden, NC

## Bethany Theological Seminary Trustee:

### *Representing the clergy*

- James Benedict of New Windsor, MD
- Paul Brubaker of Ephrata, PA

### *Representing the colleges*

- Celia Cook-Huffman of Huntingdon, PA
- W. Steve Watson of Harrisonburg, VA

## On Earth Peace Board:

- Barbara Wise Lewczak of Minburn, IA
- Cindy Weber-Han of West Chicago, IL

# 2012 Calendar

## JUNE

- 1-3 .....Women's Retreat, Camp Emmanuel
- 3-9 .....Youth Camp, Camp Emmanuel
- 10-16 ..Jr. Hi Camp, Camp Emmanuel
- 10-29 ..BVS Summer Orientation
- 16-22 ..National Young Adult Conf., Knoxville, TN
- 17 .....Father's Day
- 17-23 Junior Camp, Camp Emmanuel

## JULY

- 1-7 .....Song & Story Fest, Camp Emmanuel
- 6-7 .....Ministers Assoc. Pre-Conf., St. Louis, MO
- 7-11 ....ANNUAL CONFERENCE, St. Louis, MO
- 7 .....Mission & Ministry Board, St. Louis, MO
- 13-15 ..Pre-Junior Camp, Camp Emmanuel
- 13-15 ..Counselor in Training – Camp Emmaus
- 14-15 ..Elementary I – Camp Emmaus
- 17-20 ..Elementary II – Camp Emmaus
- 22-28 ..Senior High – Camp Emmaus
- 29-1 ....Junior High – Camp Emmaus

## AUGUST

- 3-5 .....Young Adult Camp – Camp Emmanuel
- 5-10 ....Elementary III – Camp Emmaus
- 10-12 ..Men's Camp – Camp Emmanuel
- 10-12 ..Women's Camp – Camp Emmaus
- 20-30 ..BVS/BRF Orientation, New Windsor
- 31 .....Family Camp – Camp Emmanuel (thru Sept. 3)
- 31 .....Family Camp – Camp Emmaus (thru Sept. 3)

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 .....Camp Appreciation Dinner – Camp Emmaus
- 3 .....Labor Day
- 3 .....Family Camp – Camp Emmanuel
- 3 .....Family Camp – Camp Emmaus
- 16 .....BVS Fall Orientation (thru Oct 5)
- 17 .....Rosh Hashanah
- 21 .....International Day of Peace
- 26 .....Yom Kippur
- 29 .....Fish Fry (11AM – 2PM) Camp Emmanuel

## OCTOBER

- 7 .....World Communion Sunday
- 20 .....Work Day Camp Emmanuel
- 20-23 ..Mission & Ministry Board, Elgin, IL
- 28 .....Reformation Sunday

## NOVEMBER

- 4 .....National Jr. High Sunday  
Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 10 .....Leaf Raking – Camp Emmaus
- 10-11 ..Powerhouse Youth Conference, Manchester
- 16-18 ..Mission Alive, Lititz, PA
- 22 .....Thanksgiving Day
- 25 .....First Sunday of Advent

## DECEMBER

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

## Powerhouse: Save The Date!



**What:** Powerhouse regional youth conference, a weekend of worship, workshops, music, food, and fun!

**When:** Nov. 10-11, 2012

**Where:** Manchester University (note our new name effective July 1!), North Manchester, Ind.

**Who:** Youth in grades 9-12 in 2012-2013 and advisors

**Website:** [www.manchester.edu/powerhouse](http://www.manchester.edu/powerhouse)

**Other details:** Coming soon!

Manchester College, Campus Ministry/Religious Life, 260-982-5243

## For Delegates at Annual Conference



A reminder to congregations from the Conference Office: If the delegate you have registered for Annual Conference is unable to attend and you need to change to an alternate delegate, you must either, **(1)** email the Conference Office ([annualconference@brethren.org](mailto:annualconference@brethren.org)), or **(2)** have the alternate bring a letter to Conference indicating the change. For questions or more information call 847-429-4365.

**Jon Kobel, Conference Assistant**, Conference Office,  
1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120, 847-429-4365  
Direct, 800-323-8039, x365, [jkobel@brethren.org](mailto:jkobel@brethren.org)