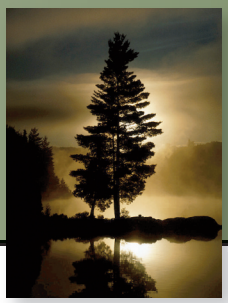

Reflecting news and views

The Reflector

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

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District Executive: Kevin Kessler

A Message from the Moderator, Dana McNeil

Come Holy Spirit, Come

In the fall and winter I find I really like cookies and other sweets. And I vow every year to stay out of the Halloween candy and the Girl Scout cookies. The funny thing is that I can be very successful in giving those things up for lent when I have made a promise to God to avoid them in an attempt to grow closer to Him, but the rest of the time it seems really hard.

Recently in our message series on John we started to learn about Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit and why He was going to send it. Jesus tells the disciples that He is sending the Holy Spirit to help them stay connected to Him. He is sending the Spirit to remind them of the things that He is telling them.

Oh No! That means that every time I am reaching for that candy or cookie and I hear in my heart "You think it will make you happy but it's only going to make you sick" I am hearing the Holy Spirit try to remind me. And every time I deny what it is saying and grab the cookie, saying "but it's so good, and I don't care what it costs me, even though I know I will later", I am denying the very purpose of the Holy Spirit, to remind me that I asked Jesus to help me with this.

I think we often think of the work of the Holy Spirit only being that work that we call miracles where the healing happens in a flash, the power to overcome sin comes in a flash. But often it is the "still small voice" that reminds us of our relationship with Jesus, that reminds us who we are in Him, that reminds us of our commitment to Him, that reminds us of His commitment to us, and we are called to participate in the process by listening, by responding, by participating in the work that is being done in our life.

In His book "Forgotten God", Francis Chan uses this analogy:

"Imagine I buy a treadmill to lose some weight. Three months later I take it back to the store and complain to the clerk that it didn't work—I didn't lose a pound. He asks me, "What was the problem? Did it not work properly?" I respond, "I don't know if it works. I never ran on it. I just know I didn't lose any weight, so I am done with it!" This may seem like a silly example, but change the details and suddenly it sounds pretty familiar: "I have prayed for the Holy Spirit to free me from my lust, and I am still addicted to pornography." Or, "I have prayed for years to be able to forgive my dad, but I am still racked with anger and bitterness thirty years down the road." "I have prayed for years to be free of my gluttony, but despite prayer, spiritually based support groups, and dieting, I am still a compulsive, unhealthy eater." Fill in whatever sin plagues you and suddenly the treadmill illustration doesn't seem so silly. In fact, it seems like those prayers for freedom from that ongoing sin didn't really "work" in much the same way the treadmill didn't help me lose any weight."

It is the still small voice that tells us to close our lips as we are about to say something that we shouldn't say. It is the still small voice that tells me "don't pick up the cookie". It is the still small voice that reminds us when we haven't been spending any time with Jesus. It is the still small voice that reminds us that we can trust Jesus when everything feels like it is falling apart around us. It is the still small voice that reminds us that it's all about Jesus when we get thinking that it's all about us. It's the still small voice that convicts us of our sin and reminds us we have a Savior who gave everything to forgive us and show us how much we mean to Him.

Jesus said, "He who hears these words and puts them into practice…." (*Mt. 7:24*)

Will we listen? Will we put them into practice? Maybe I should grab a cookie and think about it? Then again…

BVS Connections Dinner

Hello, Illinois/Wisconsin District! My name is Ben Bear and I'm a volunteer with Brethren Volunteer Service working with public relations and recruitment. We're hosting a dinner at **York Center Church of the Brethren on Friday, May 15, at 6:30pm.** Here's the announcement:

BVS Connections Dinner: Whether you're a long-time supporter or interested in learning more about Brethren Volunteer Service, come join us at York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill., at 6:30pm on Friday, May 15, for an evening of food, fellowship, and stories! BVS will be providing a (free!) simple meal of pasta and salad while we gather to share stories from any current or alumni volunteers present. One of the BVS staff will be present to talk about BVS, its work in our world, and how you can become involved. RSVP to Ben Bear by email (bbear@brethren.org), call/text (703.835.3612), or by attending the event on the BVS Facebook page. See you there.

If there's a way or place to share this information with other congregations in the district, that would be great! If not, maybe it could be added to the district calendar on your webpage. If nothing else, at least y'all know now! Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks for your work!

Ben Bear, Brethren Volunteer Service, Unit #277, Volunteer Assistant for Recruitment

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL. 60120, 847.429.4397

www.brethrenvolunteerservice.org

Advocating justice. Working for peace. Serving human need. Caring for creation

District Conference Illinois-Wisconsin District

November 6 - 7 • Friday and Saturday at the Peoria Church of the Brethren

Don't Forget the Habitat Mission, the Silent Auction and renewing old friendships. It's not too early to be thinking about it.

Song and Story Fest 2015

Mountain Meadows Song and Story Fest:
In Time With...
July 26 - August 1, 2015
at Camp Wilbur Stover, New Meadows, Idaho

Join On Earth Peace the last week of July for this inter-generational family camp rich with storytelling and music!

At the Fest, through music, stories, and community, we open ourselves to the holy, so that our life, work, and struggles move more in time with the energizing Spirit of Life. Join us as we invite the Lord of the Dance to lead us all, wherever we may be...

For more information and Online Registration go to Onearthpeace.org

Reprinted from *PEACEBUILDER.*

Kate Loomis-Adams performs at the 2014 Song and Story Fest at Camp Inspiration Hills in Burbank, OH.

Photo Credit: Jim Lehman

District Conference Mission Project

Save the Date
Friday, November 6th, 2015

Habitat for Humanity®

This year District Conference is providing the opportunity to serve at a mission project with **Habitat for Humanity** on Friday morning and afternoon. Please pass the word among your congregations so we can work together sharing the love of Christ with some families in Peoria as we gather for District Conference.

Abide in my Love... and Bear Fruit
— John 15:9-17

Annual Conference - Tampa Florida
July 11-15, 2015

Are you a Doctor, Nurse Practioner, RN, LPN, or EMT?

The First Aid Office at Annual Conference in Tampa is looking for DRs, RNs, LPNs and EMTs who would be willing to volunteer a few hours during Annual Conference this summer. Kathi Horrell is coordinating the First Aid Office this summer in Tampa and would be glad to hear from willing volunteers! Please contact her at: neonpalmtree@gmail.com

Chris Douglas, Director of Conference Office, Church of the Brethren, Elgin, IL 60120, 847-429-4364 (direct), 800-323-8039 ext. 364

Explore Your Call at Bethany

Bethany will once again be holding "Explore Your Call", a program for high school students July 24-August 3 on the Richmond campus. Students have the opportunity to study theology in the classroom, then head out into the world to shadow pastors and do real-life ministry. Faith and vocation will be explored through a combination of classes taught by Bethany professors, congregational visits, service projects, personal and spiritual enrichment, and recreation.

All qualified applicants will receive a full scholarship to "Explore Your Call". The only cost to participants is their transportation to and from Richmond, Indiana. More information and an online application for "Explore Your Call" can be found at www.bethanyseminary.edu/eyc

Work Day - 8:00am Saturday, May 16th

The Brethren Home of Girard
Pleasant Hill Village
Come and help beautify the grounds.

"The Home" has set their Annual Work Day for Saturday May 16th starting at 8:00 am.

We plan to paint some fencing, sealcoat the gazeebo and plant lots of flowers around the grounds. Please bring your gloves. A light lunch will be provided along with refreshments and fellowship throughout.

Please call and let us know how many may be coming and confirm the week prior in case rain is predicted– by calling 217-627-2181 ask for Kyle Hood, Maintenance or email us at pleasanthillvillage@royell.org

To all who have assisted in the past, a hearty Thank-You for your dedication to serve.
Pleasant Hill Village is a good opportunity to be involved in serving some of the least among us.
www.pleasanthillvillage.org
1010 W. North Street Girard, Il 62640

Don't be confused by the "National 50+ Adult Conference" description.

We just want everyone to know that if you are 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, or even older, you are invited to join us at beautiful Lake Junaluska (NC) September 7-11, 2015 for a time of inspiration, fun, and fellowship.

An exciting line-up is planned for NOAC 2015!
Visit www.brethren.org/NOAC for information about conference speakers, preachers, entertainers, Bible studies, and other program highlights.
Registration brochures will be arriving in your mailbox soon. If you do not receive yours, e-mail NOAC2015@brethren.org or call (800) 323-8039 ext 305 to have one sent to you. They are also available to download on the NOAC website.

Register
Online: Opens Monday, March 2 at 9:00 a.m. CST
Mail: Any time!

Keep watching your in-box for more news about NOAC 2015!

You can also like us on Facebook Church of the Brethren NOAC

Kim Ebersole
Director of NOAC
(800) 323-8039 ext 305

Debbie Eisenbise
Director of Intergenerational Ministries
(800) 323-8039 ext 306

NOAC attendees are invited to take a bus to National Older Adult Conference

By Laura Whitman

National Older Adult Conference is only a few months away! If you don't have a way to get there, why not take a bus? Four buses from around the country will be heading to Lake Junaluska, N.C., for NOAC in September. Following are the places and districts from which buses will leave for NOAC, and contact information for each bus:

Read the full story at www.brethren.org/news/2015/noac-attendees-invited-to-take-bus.html
Reprinted from the Brethren Newsline.

2015 Calendar

May

Older Adult Month

2 .....Ministerial Leadership Dev. Team
3 .....National Youth Sunday
7 .....National Day of Prayer
9 .....Bethany Commencement
10 .....Mother's Day
14 .....Ascension Day
14-1 ....Church Leadership Conf., Frederick, MD
24 .....Pentecost
25 .....Memorial Day
31 .....Trinity Sunday

June

Torture Awareness Month

4 - 7 ....Women's Camp - Camp Emmanuel
5 .....World Environment Day
6 .....District LT Meeting - LaPlace
7-13 ....High School Camp, Camp Emmanuel
14-20 ..Middle School Camp, Camp Emmanuel
19-21 ..Nat'l. Jr. High Conf, Elizabethtown College
21 .....Father's Day
21-27 ..Junior Camp, Camp Emmanuel
25-27 ..Pre-Junior Camp, Camp Emmanuel
27 .....Ministerial Leadership Dev. Team, Peru, IL

July

4 .....Independence Day
9 .....CODE Meeting, Tampa, Fl.
10-11 ..Minister Assoc. Cont. Edu. Event, Tampa
10 .....Mission & Ministry Bd. Meeting, Tampa
11-15 ..ANNUAL CONFERENCE, TAMPA, FL.
31-2 ....Men's Camp, Camp Emmanuel

August

1 .....District LT Meeting - Polo

September

4-7 .....Family Camp, Camp Emmanuel
7-11 ....Nat'l Older Adult Conf., L. Junaluska, NC
13 .....National Grandparents Day
19 .....Fish Fry, Camp Emmanuel
20 .....Bethany Sunday, Mission Offering
21 .....International Day of Peace
23 .....First Day of Autumn

October

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Pastor Appreciation Month

3 .....District LT Meeting - Oak Grove
4 .....World Communion Sunday
16 .....World Food Day, Peace with Justice Week
17-19 ..Mission & Ministry Bd. Meeting, Elgin, IL
18 .....Laity Sunday
25 .....Reformation Sunday
29-31 ..Bethany Theo. Sem. Presidential Forum

November

1 .....All Saints Day, Nat'l. Jr. High Sunday
(Daylight Savings Time)
3 .....Election Day
7-8 .....DISTRICT CONFERENCE
8 .....Stewardship Sunday
11.....Veteran's Day
21 .....District LT Meeting - Pleasant Hill
22 .....Christ the King Sunday
26 .....Thanksgiving
29 .....First Sunday of Advent

December

6 .....Second Sunday of Advent
10 .....Human Right's Day
13 .....Third Sunday of Advent
20 .....Fourth Sunday of Advent
22 .....First day of Winter
24 .....Christmas Eve
25 .....Christmas Day
31 .....New Year's Eve