



Reflecting news and views

# The Reflector

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District Executive: Kevin Kessler

## From the Moderator



Faith; what is it and how do we obtain and use it? Webster's New World Dictionary gives a clear-cut and simple definition: "unquestioning belief." Tyndale Bible Dictionary states that "FAITH is belief in that which has no tangible proof; trust in God. Simple. How then do we tie faith to unity? If, as a church, we

profess to believe in God our Creator then we have that one thing in common. Therefore, we have the beginnings of unity. How do we grow our unity through that oneness of faith? "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." James 2: 17. We must be Christ to others through our faith.

One thing that many do not realize is that by sharing our faith we will grow in our faith. Remember that first time you told someone your story of coming to Christ? Not easy or comfortable to say the least. It comes easier after that and in turn, we become stronger in our faith. Go and tell are words to live by. Share whose we are with anyone who will listen. When discussion leads to division, return to the reason you believe in God and how that belief led to your faith. That is where the cornerstone of unity lies.

The Church of the Brethren began through division but has always held to the core of faith in its ideals and teaching. From the Anabaptist beginnings with its core values of Scripture and believers' baptism over the state church and forced participation we have always met discussion and change head on. The word discernment could be placed side by side with the image of one pausing to allow the Holy Spirit work. In that pause, one's faith can emerge. Faith and trust in a power greater than ours to give instruction, correction, and guidance in the way we should go.

I must insert a cautionary however here. However, we humans have the power of choice given by God. We often choose our own desires over those indicated by God. Where, then, is our faith? We often demand our own way even when divisiveness is the end result. Unity falls to the wayside. God made us

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## Mission and Ministry Board names new general secretary for the Church of the Brethren David A. Steele

David A. Steele has been named general secretary-elect of the Church of the Brethren by the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board. His appointment was announced yesterday, May 23, at a specially called meeting at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.



"I am humbled to be called," Steele said. "It is a privilege to serve." He added, "obviously it is a daunting call in some respects, given the currents in the life of the church, but it's an exciting call. I look forward to the opportunity of serving in this capacity."

Steele currently is district executive minister of the Church of the Brethren's Middle Pennsylvania District, a position he has held since 2005. His start date as general secretary will be Sept. 1.

# Hope Imagination and Mission Church Planting Conference in Brief

The Illinois/Wisconsin District was well represented at this year's Church of the Brethren Church Planting Conference held this past May at Bethany Theological Seminary. The theme this year was Hope Imagination and Mission and featured a variety of speakers, presentations and inspirational prayer, art works and worship time together. Ninety-two participants from 17 districts gathered together to hear church planter stories and wisdom from established and church planting congregations. It was a great time of relationship-building, worship, inspiration and resource sharing together with focus on partnering together for church re-vitalization and

church planting which go hand in hand. Here are a few pictures from the experience. Stay tuned for reflections and inspirations from the conference in the July newsletter. New church and ministry plants, including IL/WI District's the Parables Community with planter Jeanne Davis and The Gathering Chicago with planter LaDonna Nkosi will be featured in the July / August issue of The Messenger.

## DE Ponderings

Upon reflection, I don't recall a time in my life when I've experienced as much loss, transition, and uncertainty, all in a matter of a few months, than in the first several months of this year. I'm still trying to understand what it all may mean, and, likely, will only derive partial meaning, never fully comprehending the experiences.

In 2 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul is stating the difficulty involved in sharing the good news, the "treasure in clay jars." He speaks about being perplexed, afflicted, driven to despair, persecuted, and struck down. But through all of this Paul states that he and his ministry companions "do not lose heart." The effort may be overwhelming but it does not overcome them. The extraordinary power of the good news, the "treasure," is greater than all the difficulties they endure. Thus, they do not lose heart and are able to continue the work and ministry to which they were called.

How easy it can be to lose heart in the face of loss, transition, and uncertainty. So, like Paul, I find that which can help me retain stamina to continue work and ministry. Undoubtedly, the gospel, good news, provides a necessary boost, and then within the gospel framework a combination of items are helpful. One such item is a hymn that is particularly meaningful to me. "Great is Thy Faithfulness" speaks of God's constant love, mercy, and grace that that never fail, never change, and are never lost, even in times of distress and perplexity. Regardless of experiences in life, I am assured that "morning by morning new mercies I see." These new mercies are blessings of abundance yet "with ten thousand beside." God is faithful no matter what. When all else seems to crumble or fall apart, God's faithfulness will not.

Upon this foundation I place my trust and know that I will be sustained regardless of loss, transition, and uncertainty.



*Pictured here are Samuel Sarpiya, planting pastor of Rockford Community Church, Leslie Lake, pastor of Polo Church of the Brethren*



*and member of the District Church Revitalization and Development Team, Jeanne Davies, planter of Parables Community and LaDonna Nkosi planter of The Gathering Chicago and Sydwell Nkosi. (Photos courtesy of Church of the Brethren/Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford).*





# Class of 2016 Graduates



**Back Row:**  
Beth Wethington,  
Ela Robertson,  
Chris Stover-Brown,  
Don Fecher,  
Harvey Leddy

**Front Row:**  
Kristy Shellenberger,  
Annie West-Johnson,  
Karen Duhai,  
Jana Carter,  
Angela Finet,  
Angela Adams

**In Absentia:**  
Tom Appel,  
Brody Rike

On Saturday, May 7, Bethany Theological Seminary recognized its thirteen newest graduates, the class of 2016. Surrounded by faculty, staff, family, and friends, the following students received graduate degrees and certificates:

## Master of Divinity

Thomas N. Appel, Aurora, Colorado  
Karen M. Duhai, Richmond, Indiana – Emphasis in peace studies  
Donald E. Fecher, Milford, Indiana  
Angela S. Finet, Nokesville, Virginia  
Harvey S. Leddy, Eden, North Carolina  
Ela J. Robertson, Barnesville, Ohio  
Christopher E. Stover-Brown, Wichita, Kansas – Emphasis in peace studies

## Master of Arts

Jana Carter, Los Angeles, California – Concentration in theological studies  
Kristin Shellenberger, Goshen, Indiana – Concentration in biblical studies  
Beth B. Wethington, Henrico, North Carolina – Concentration in peace studies

## Certificate of Achievement in Theological Studies

Angela L. Adams, Tiskilwa, Illinois  
Brody S. Rike, West Alexandria, Ohio  
Roxanne M. West-Johnson, Council Bluffs, Iowa

## Summer/Fall 2016 Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership Courses

*“Walking to Peace” with Father John Dear*, Annual Conference DISU, Instructor: Debbie Roberts, June 28-29 (credits: MS, BTS) **Registration Deadline: May 28, 2016**

*Neighboring Faiths: A Christian-Muslim Encounter in the US*, SVMC weekend intensive at Mechanicsburg COB, Mechanicsburg PA, Instructor: George Pickens, August 11-13, 2016 (credits BT) **Registration Deadline: July 11, 2016 (Register through SVMC)**

*Church of the Brethren History*, online, Instructor: Denise Kettering-Lane, September 5-October 28, 2016 (credits: BT, BTS, FCR) **Registration Deadline: August 5, 2016**

*Introduction to Theology*, online, Instructor: Nate Inglis, October 10-December 2, 2016 (credits: BT, BTS) **Registration Deadline: September 10, 2016**

*Introduction to Old Testament*, online, Instructor: Matt Boersma, October 16-December 10, 2016 (credits: BT) **Registration Deadline: September 16, 2016**

*Faith and Finances*, weekend intensive, Instructor: Beryl Jantzi, November 2016, final date TBD, (credits: M/MS, BCE) **Registration Deadline: October final date TBD 2016**



– **Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS)** is looking for volunteers to begin their year of service in the summer orientation, July 17-Aug. 5. Call Jocelyn Snyder, BVS orientation coordinator, to express interest in beginning a year or two of service. She can be reached at 847-429-4384. For more information about BVS go to [www.brethren.org/bvs](http://www.brethren.org/bvs)

– **Brethren Press** seeks an individual to work within the customer service team. The ideal candidate will be a person of faith who enjoys helping congregations find the right resources, and is adept at maintaining detailed systems for inventory management. This person must be able to work in a religious setting and communicate knowledgeably with customers in congregations. The customer service representative works with purchasing and inventory, takes orders via the telephone and website, and maintains a thorough knowledge of products offered by Brethren Press. Applicants should be competent in Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, and be a quick learner of new systems. They should have training or experience in areas such as sales and customer service, inventory management, accounting, e-commerce, customer database systems. Candidates should be familiar with congregational life and resources such as Sunday school curriculum, books, hymnals, and bulletins. They should be comfortable handling multiple simultaneous projects, meeting deadlines, and working within a team. This position is full-time, though part-time work can be negotiated. The position is based at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Applications will be received beginning immediately and will be reviewed until the position is filled. Qualified candidates are invited to request the application form by contacting Office of Human Resources, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367; [humanresources@brethren.org](mailto:humanresources@brethren.org).

## 2016 Calendar

### June

- 18.....District Leadership Team meeting
- 19 .....Father's Day
- 27-29 .....Council of District Executives  
Summer Meeting
- 29-July 3..Annual Conference

– **Remembrance: Graydon "Grady" F. Snyder**, 85, died on May 26 at Timbercrest, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in North Manchester, Ind. He was a former dean and Weiland Professor of New Testament Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary, the Church of the Brethren graduate school of theology, where he taught from 1959-87. "We can be in remembrance and prayer for a fine life of theological scholarship that has impacted several generations of ministers and members of the Church of the Brethren," said a communication from the Bethany Pastoral Care Team. Snyder left Bethany to teach at Chicago Theological Seminary until his retirement. Over his career he wrote many books, commentaries, articles, and curriculum, including publications for Brethren Press and pieces for "Messenger" magazine. A native of Huntington, W.Va., he was a graduate of Manchester College (now Manchester University), held a bachelor of divinity degree from Bethany Seminary, obtained a doctor of theology from Princeton Theological Seminary, and did graduate work at several European universities. He was active in the Brethren Health and Welfare Association and was a member of the Governing Council of Bethany Hospital formerly located on the west side of Chicago. For many years, he and his wife Lois Horning Snyder were staunch members of Chicago First Church of the Brethren. The family is planning a burial to take place in the Chicago area, and a memorial service to be held at a future date.

## From the Moderator

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individuals and as such we each have our own characteristics. We do have one thing in common as Christians—our faith, the first brick in the cornerstone of our unity. Let us always use that faith for the common good of the Church and for the common good in our relationships with each other as individuals.

In closing I must say that the church has been moving forward in faith. New avenues of outreach have begun and new leadership can be found in several areas of the denomination. God is alive and well in the church! Let us keep our faith active and our unity will grow stronger. God is good all of the time and all of the time God is good.

In Christ always,  
Pastor Ellis