



Reflecting news and views

The Reflector

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

November 2016 / Volume 13 / Issue 8

District Executive: Kevin Kessler

From the Moderator

I am Allegra Hess, a member of the York Center congregation, and the newly installed moderator of the IL/WI district. "Don't Be Afraid- I Bring Good News" is our theme for the '17 District Conference. How often we are reminded in scripture that we are to trust in God and not be afraid- Isa 12:2. "Perfect love dispels fear", "Fear not, I am with you always". Currently, it seems like fear often dictates our decisions and determines our actions. In sharp contrast to that, we need to find ways to rely on our loving, merciful, and always present God, trusting that we will find comfort in the presence of God's spirit in our lives. We may need a reminder that Jesus' message was all about trust in God, and, accepting God's grace and protection, and then offering that love and grace to all whom we meet.

We are challenged to admit our fears and commit them to God's love and enduring care. Then we can live a life of expectant hope and joy.

I plan to contact congregations in the new year, detailing my interest and availability to visit your church and learn of your fears and struggles, to hear of your hopes, dreams and the ways you are living out your faith in your particular setting.

I leave you with words from the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation":

Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed

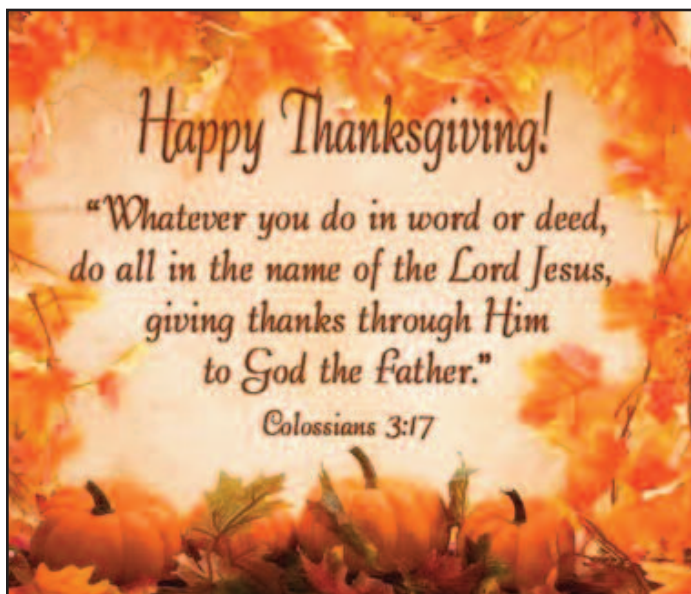
For I am your God and will still give you aid.

I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,

Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.



On Dec. 1, 2016, Andrea Garnett will begin serving as the Administrative Assistant in the office of the IL/WI District of the Church of the Brethren. She previously served as the office manager for First Presbyterian Church of Monticello, IL. She is proficient with Microsoft Office and social media applications, and is well acquainted with congregational systems and denominational structures. Andrea resides in Canton, IL with her husband, Pastor Micah Garnett, who serves God with Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Canton, of which Andrea is also a member. A graduate of Wartburg College in Waverly, IA (B.A. in Religion) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg in Gettysburg, PA (M.A. in Religion), she also has experience in chaplaincy. Andrea's office schedule will be announced at a later date, and she looks forward to working with the people and congregations in our District.



From the IL/WI District Office

Kevin Kessler
District Executive

Beth Kelly
Administrative Assistant

DE Ponderings

Where do we begin?

A TED talk I recently watched states that we often begin divergent dialogue with each other at the wrong place. We frequently begin with political correctness. Political correctness requires us to be careful what we say, to be forthright but smoothing off the edges of sharpness. If we speak in politically correct ways, then we cause less harm to the other whose views are distinctly different. However, being politically correct may leave room for misinterpretation. Those in dialogue then begin to speak past one another, unsure of what the other has said. What is intended as unharmful can be misinterpreted as disrespect.

To start with political correctness focuses on issues, subjects, matters of fact. What this beginning place misses, or bypasses, is the value of the other and their emotional state. So, according to the TED talk, the better place to start is with emotional correctness. At this level of dialogue, the emphasis is placed on trying to understand from what emotional place the other is coming. So instead of trying to understand the meaning of the position taken, there is more effort given to understand what causes the other to reach such a conclusion. For example, maybe an experience in life is affecting their reasoning. Rather than having the other articulate a particular belief system, effort is better given to listening and asking questions to learn about the other's emotional state. In so doing, a connection is made at a much deeper relational level. We see the other as a human being, valued not for their position but for their personhood.

Granted, this approach does not change the mind of the other. Granted, this approach will not bring you immediately, or ever, into agreement. But it does bring you in touch with the humanity of the other. And in this sharing of humanity, there is opportunity to exist together not on the grounds of belief, but on the basis of our humanness.

I found this TED talk helpful. I find emotional correctness a concept more in line with the values of Jesus. Jesus was, in my view, always more concerned about the emotional welfare of a person than the correctness of their ways and views. For example, in the culture of Jesus' time, a politically correct lifestyle was to not engage in an adulteress affair. When a woman caught in adultery was brought before Jesus and condemned for her actions, Jesus peered into the woman's emotions. He saw in her a human of value

and greater potential. He met her on the level of her emotional plane and extended grace, opening the door to know her for more than her identity as an adulteress. Jesus saw her humanity and offered to be in relationship with the whole of her personhood. She was spared harm. She was given life. She could live with peace, peace that passes all understanding.

Oh that we would enter into the emotional being of each other, to understand, to find our common humanity, to extend grace, and to live at and in peace with all. This seems like a good place to begin...and end.

Pray...Support... Give

Frequently throughout the business session of District Conference, the message was shared to pray, to support, to give in response to a variety of ministries in which we are involved. The emerging ministries covet your prayers, appreciate your support, and offered a persuasive need for funding. The Leadership Team realized the importance of prayer, needs the support of congregations and individuals, and is better able to serve and do ministry with financial gifts. Denominational ministries are sustained through prayer, support from human resources, and monetary gifts. Praying, supporting, and giving are less about need and more about opportunity. To pray, to support, and to give are opportunities to share in the grace, mercy, love, and justice of God. These ways are opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus, and power of the Holy Spirit's peace, in a world and at a time that will be blessed profoundly with well supported and resourced ministries. So, please consider how you can contribute to strengthen the ministry and work we do together. Your contributions of prayer, support, and money help to ensure disaster response efforts, sustain emerging ministries, enable mission and mortar grants, encourage congregational vitality, open doors for Brethren influence worldwide, support staff whose work gives direction to teams and congregations, and so much more. Consider your ability to participate in these exciting possibilities.

IL/WI District Conference 2016

The IL / WI District Conference was held November 4 & 5, 2016, at the Rockford Community Church under the theme *Living Together in Unity* with Brother Ellis Boughton providing leadership as moderator.

The conference began Friday evening with spirit-filled worship including lively music led by the Rockford Community Church (RCC) praise team. The RCC youth performed a provocative skit pointing toward the embracing love of Jesus. Ellis Boughton offered a thoughtful message inviting listeners to strive toward unity in Jesus Christ amid our differences. Offering received totaled \$899.25.

A photo album of conference can be found on the IL / WI District Facebook page. Follow this link: www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10155013791791874&set=a.10155013791711874.1073741836.513296873&type=3&theater

Highlights of business on Saturday encompassed:

- Hearing from two emerging ministries, Parables and The Gathering Chicago, led respectively by Jeanne Davies and LaDonna Nkosi. Parables provides a safe worship environment for persons and families with special needs. The Gathering Chicago is a movement for prayer and peace in the city of Chicago and globally. Both ministries are receiving financial support from the district and are seeking additional support from grants, fundraising, and district congregations and individuals. Prayer support is most vital.
- Hearing testimonies from three congregations—Rockford Community Church (implementation of mobile labs), First Church of the Brethren in Peoria (serving the community), and Neighborhood Church of the Brethren (finding ways to share their faith with all the groups and people who use space in their building).
- Calling people to serve on various teams and in a variety of leadership positions. Paul Kohler (Champaign COB) is called as moderator-elect.
- Receiving reports from Pinecrest Community, Pleasant Hill Village, Camp Emmanuel, and Camp Emmaus. Pinecrest and PHV continue to face challenges because of shortfalls in state Medicaid payments. Yet, they continue to faithfully and joyfully serve their residents and constituency. The two camps continue as place and space where young people find solace and faith. The camps, while providing separate programming, support their counterpart with prayer and encouragement, while good-heartedly adding a little jovial rivalry.
- Viewing a video of the work of Bethany Theological Seminary, On Earth Peace, Brethren Benefit Trust, and the Church of the Brethren, Inc. Jay Wittmeyer shared a report for the Church of the Brethren, Inc. speaking specifically about Church of the Brethren influence around the world. Cindy Weber offered greetings from On Earth Peace and spoke about the challenges the agency is experiencing in its relationship with the Church of the Brethren, noting that OEP desires to be a presence of peace among us.
- Vicki Matheny, Leadership Team Chair, reviewing the work of the Leadership Team in 2016. Two key emphases given attention were emerging ministries and endowing district reserves.
- District Executive, Kevin Kessler, offering thoughts about his work in the district. Of continued importance is the building and maintaining of relationships. He noted that he will have, at the end of 2016, served as DE for 10 years. He offered gratitude to Beth Kelly, Administrative Assistant, for her years of service since she is moving on to a full-time office manager position at the church she attends. Andrea Garnett will be assuming the Administrative Assistant duties in earnest Jan. 3, 2017. He shared about the re-building project at Oakley Brick and the opportunity to contribute to a fundraising event the congregation is promoting.
- Loren Habegger, Disaster Response Coordinator making it clear (in a light-hearted way) that he does not coordinate disasters but *response* to disasters. He noted that our district is scheduled to provide teams of responders a couple weeks in 2017. Watch for announcements about these opportunities.
- Holding Silent and Live auctions. The total amount raised was \$2,406.00.
- Consecrating Allegra Hess (York Center) to serve as moderator through district conference in 2017. York Center Church of the Brethren (Lombard, IL) is the site of the 2017 conference.
- Offering a heart-felt thank you to the Rockford Community Church for their wonderful hospitality as host of this year's conference. Job well done, sisters and brothers!

Thanksgiving greetings,



This is the time of year when the word “thanks” or “thank you” are often spoken. Now it is my turn and great pleasure to offer a thank you to all of those warriors of the Lord who helped

make our District Conference such a success. My term as Moderator has been completed and certainly not by my efforts alone has it been a great success. The Rockford congregation really stepped up to the task of host. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Those who provided leadership in music and skit provision really excelled! The total worship spoke to the theme of “unity” that I was hoping for.

I know the District is in good hands as Allegra steps in to fill the Moderator position. I suggest that we all lift her up in prayer as her year in leadership begins. She and I have had conversations and will keep in contact as the year moves forward. God does not call the equipped; he equips the called. God bless Allegra.

My year as moderator was a huge learning experience. Conference, of course, is the final event for the Moderator but the year is one of learning and making new friends. The committees that work within the District complete many task in the background that many do not see. It is interesting to attend and find the work that is accomplished. The year begins with replacement individuals learning the position of their committee and the tasks for the year. New officers are chosen and the work begins. With the advancement of electronic meetings, the travel needed has become less. Somehow each committee concludes their work with items to be presented at District Conference. This is not to say that some items are ongoing as study and discernment is taking place.

A special thank you must be given to Kevin Kessler and Dana McNeil as they were always my go to people when the going got tough. I could never have been successful without the excellent help of Beth Kelly. I don't know if she realizes just how much she is appreciated. Thank you Beth. God Bless you in your future endeavors.

Most of all I thank God for His leading in my life. I call on his name often during my service.

Peace to you all. Keep living in unity.
In Christ always,
Pastor Ellis

Greetings from IL/WI Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM):

A primary purpose is to invite additional persons from the District to join a team of 10-12 volunteers that will be assisting in a BDM home rebuild project the week of January 22-28, 2017. (Six persons have already committed to join the team.) The location is still being finalized, but will be probably be in West Virginia or South Carolina where recent flooding caused extensive damage.

There are no special skills required to join the volunteer team. If you know which end of the hammer to hold or know how to flip pancakes in the kitchen to feed the volunteers, and have a passion for helping those in need then you are qualified.

The week long volunteers will be housed in a local church or other facility. Very adequate meals are provided, so the only requirement is your time and cost of travel to and from the site, usually in a car pool. In return, volunteers can expect to receive a substantial reward from the satisfaction of serving as a Good Samaritan helping a family in need.

To join the January 22-28 volunteer team, or for more information, contact
Loren Habegger, IL/WI District Disaster Coordinator
ILWI.DDC.LH@gmail.com

Note that a second team will be assembled for a rebuild project the week of November 12-18, 2017.

Ordained Ministers Recognized at IL/WI District Conference

At district conference each year, ordained ministers are recognized for every 5-year increment of service. At this year's district conference, held November 4th & 5th, the following received certificates:

Tim Laird – 5 years – pastor at Cerro Gordo
Ginny Haney – 10 years – pastor at Mt. Morris
Shannon Hinkle – 10 years – pastor at Rock Comm.
Dennis Webb – 10 years – pastor at Naperville
Lynda Willmann – 10 years
Blaine Miner – 20 years
Dennis McClure – 25 years
Robert Smith – 25 years
Marty Creager – 30 years
Kathy Gingrich – 35 years
Richard Bright – 40 years – pastor at West Branch
Cynthia Weber-Hann – 40 years

We thank you for your years of dedicated service to the Church of the Brethren.

Crisis in Nigeria



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Join in support of our Nigerian Brethren on their Long Journey Home:

Nigeria Workcamps are being formed to help rebuild churches, repair church facilities, to worship and pray in fellowship with the Nigerian Brethren and to encourage people as they recover. Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) families and their neighbors have started the long journey of recovery and return of self sufficiency. Join in helping communities and churches rebuild in Nigeria.



NIGERIAN WORKCAMP

WORK, WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP



A Joint Church of the Brethren & EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) Project

Workcamp Dates:

- November 4th—21st, 2016
- January 11th –30th, 2017
- February 17th—March 6th, 2017
- Additional workcamps in 2017 are being planned

Workcamp Activities:

- Majority of work will focus on rebuilding churches
- May also assist with relief activities or distributions
- Worship and fellowship with Nigerian Brethren
- Life-changing cultural experience

Workcamp Registration: Registration forms and additional information can be found at:

- <http://www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisis/action.html>
- Call 847-429-4388 or email Kendra Harbeck at kharbeck@brethren.org
- Forms: Registration, Release/Covenant, Nigerian Visa Application, Questions and Answers

Important Dates:

- 90 days before workcamp: Registration, visa application and \$600 deposit due
- 60 days before workcamp: Balance of costs due (approx. \$2,000)—you will be notified of exact total.
- 90-60 days before travel meet with your doctor or a travel clinic about immunizations or medications

Workcamp Cost Estimate: \$2,600

- \$1,250 (approximate) - Air Transportation
- \$200 - Nigerian Visa
- \$650 - Housing, food and travel in Nigeria
- \$500 - Project materials for construction
- Expenses not included: vaccinations

Seek Support: Interested workcampers are encourage to seek support and prayers from their faith community for the workcamp

SUPPORT CHURCH REBUILDING GRANTS

The Nigeria Church Rebuilding fund needs your support to provide a \$5,000 grant for each Church EYN rebuilds. Send your Support: Church of the Brethren Nigeria Church Rebuilding, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin IL 60120



www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisis • kharbeck@brethren.org • 847-429-4388

Pinecrest Community Welcomes Jonathan Shively



Pinecrest Community's CEO, Ferol Labash, is pleased to announce that Jonathan Shively has been named the new director of advancement for Pinecrest. Jonathan began his work with Pinecrest on November 2.

Jonathan brings a wealth of experience to his new role. Jonathan served as the executive director of Congregational Life Ministries with the Church of the Brethren for eight years. Prior to that, he worked as the director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, as pastor for the Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren, and as adjunct faculty for Bethany Theological Seminary. Jonathan holds degrees from Elizabethtown College (B.A. in Music), Bethany Theological Seminary (Master of Divinity), Fuller Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry), a graduate certificate in nonprofit administration, and has completed coursework in fundraising and long-term care administration.

Jonathan is the founder and principal of ArtistryLeads, a consulting firm that offers leadership and board development, executive coaching, staff and volunteer training, and strategic planning and innovation for organizations. Jonathan will continue work with ArtistryLeads in addition to his work at Pinecrest as director of advancement. Jonathan's deep connections with the Church of the Brethren and the richness of his work experience will enhance his work as Pinecrest's director of advancement and will make him a valuable member of the Pinecrest administrative team.



The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee (PCBAC) is planning to offer an insight session at the 2017 Annual Conference. The content of this session would provide an opportunity for congregations and pastors to share ideas and activities that have been meaningful and supportive of the pastor's ministry. We are looking for written examples and stories, as well as individuals and pastors who could give a testimonial of their successful experiences at the insight session. If you would like to share your experience either in person or by written example, please notify us at nancy.lbowman@gmail.com by December 1, 2016. Thanks for your participation and being a part of this insight session.

Germany Tour 2017 with Mark Flory-Steury

Plan to travel to Germany next summer, July 9th – 20th, 2017 with Mark Flory Steury to celebrate and commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. October 31, 1517 is the date that Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the castle church door in Wittenberg. We will visit many sites related to the Reformation including Wittenberg, the Wartburg Castle and Luther's birthplace of Eisleben. We will also visit sites related to the Pietist movement (Halle) and the early Brethren (Schwarzenau). Included in the tour will be the cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Erfurt, Marburg and Berlin. We will also take a day trip to Strasbourg, France. And we will end our visit with a Rhine River cruise. Contact Mark Flory Steury at 630-701-5348 or florysteur@gmail.com. You may also visit the website www.cvent.com/d/mfqt9v to see a full itinerary and to register. Hope you can join us!"



The Church of the Brethren has hired James Miner as Yearbook specialist, working with Brethren Press at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. He brings more than 20 years of experience in the field of data processing, and previous experience working in the IT department at the General Offices. From October 1981 through May 1992 he was a computer programmer and systems analyst for the former General Board. He most recently has been a software engineer for Kronos in Schaumburg, Ill. He also is serving as web administrator for Camp Emmaus and for Illinois and Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren, and from 2001 to 2010 he was district youth advisor. He holds degrees from Elgin Community College and from Manchester College (now Manchester University) where he earned a degree in math and computer science. He is a life-long member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin.

Church of the Brethren Newsline, November 5, 2016

Service Opportunity to Honduras

You are invited to travel to Honduras with Bill Hare, Polo, IL. Congregation, January 6- January 16, 2017. You will be working with the local people in LaPalma to build 6 concrete block homes for 6 impoverished families in the far southern part of the country.

Please call Bill Hare at 815-734-4268 for information if you are interested. Thank you.



The Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren

On, December 23,
2015, The Oakley
Brick Church of the

Brethren was destroyed by straight-line winds that caused extensive damage. After many months, it was determined that the church could not be repaired in a safe manner. Only recently was the structure taken down as brick and debris had continued to fall. There is nothing left but the ground that it was built on in 1867 and many memories.

For some in the congregation, their forefathers established, pastored and even built the church. Many changes have come about since the church was built brick by brick. One thing that the Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren never lost was commitment.

The Church body has made a commitment to rebuild the church on the original site. Keeping with our spiritual and traditional goals, God has led us to a project that has opened doors for a very exciting upcoming event. We "believe" this event will bring people together.



"A Night to Believe" Christmas Benefit Concert

Featuring
THE HENNINGSENS

For: **The Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren**

PASTOR DAVE ROE

P.O. BOX 184, CERRO, IL 61818

HOSTED BY: **Heartland Community Church**

PASTOR JOE BOWMAN

3253 NORTH BRUSH COLLEGE ROAD, DECATUR, IL 62521 GORDO

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

DOORS OPEN 5:30PM-DONATIONS-\$30 PER PERSON-CONCERT AT 7PM

If you wish to make a cash donation or becoming a sponsor of this event

Please contact The Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren Annex at:

214 South Monroe, Cerro Gordo, IL 61818

Phone: 217-763-6500

Mail to: Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren at P.O. Box 184, Cerro Gordo, IL 61818

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SPONSORSHIP

Bronze - \$100-\$400

Silver - \$500 - \$900

Gold - \$1,000 and up

All Sponsorships will be recognized at the concert

Name_____

Recognized at Concert -- No_____ Yes_____

Amount_____

Name_____

Attach logo or Name of Business if recognized

Business_____

Amount of check_____ Check #_____

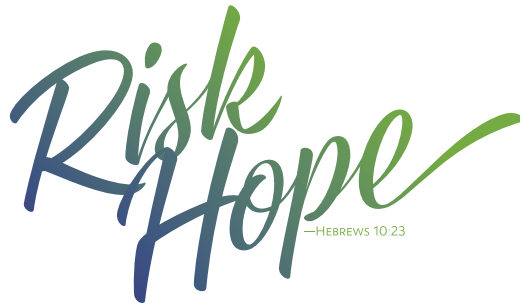
Cash Amount_____

Bronze - \$100 - \$400

Silver - \$500 - \$900

Gold - \$1,000 and up

Signature_____



Sending Your Congregation's Delegate to Annual Conference

In 2017, the 231st recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And once again congregations will be encouraged to send a delegate to come together for fellowship and to discern the business of the denomination. For those who may be unaware, here is some information on sending a delegate from your congregation.

Why is it important for my congregation to send a delegate to Annual Conference?

Sending a delegate to Annual Conference is the only way to ensure your congregation has a say in decisions that affect the whole church. The Annual Conference delegate body is one of the most important—if not the highest—level of decision making in the Church of the Brethren. Each congregation may play a vital part in Annual Conference by sending a delegate or delegates. The number of delegates a congregation may send is relative to the number of members in the congregation.

Who can be a delegate and how many delegates does our congregation get?

Each congregation may choose who their delegate(s) may be, and all delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The pastor of a congregation is not automatically a delegate.

The number of delegates allowed per congregation is based on its membership statistics as reported in the Church of the Brethren Yearbook for the previous year. The number allowed is as follows:

1 – 200 members	1 delegate
201 – 400 members	2 delegates
401 – 600 members	3 delegates
601 – 800 members	4 delegates
801+ members	5 delegates

What do delegates and their congregations get from Annual Conference?

Delegates benefit personally from the opportunities for spiritual renewal, continuing education, and faith formation. Their congregations benefit from the spiritual growth that their church leadership may bring back and share with the church. In addition to business sessions, each Conference features daily worship services, Bible studies, insight sessions on a wide variety of topics, support groups, meal events, an exhibit hall with booths and many free resources, a Brethren Press bookstore, and much more. All of these are open to every Conference attendee. Every congregation that sends a delegate will also receive a copy of that year's Annual Conference minutes.

To take full advantage of sending a delegate, a congregation should make time for that person to report back following the Conference, so that they can share the experience with the whole congregation.

Delegate registration for Grand Rapids will open online on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. The registration fee for each delegate is \$285. For more information about how to send a delegate to Annual Conference, contact the Conference Office by email at annualconference@brethren.org, or call 800-323-8039 ext. 365.

Celebrate 2017

Annual Conference Quilting Bee

*Your finished 8 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch block must begin at the bottom of this sheet,
meeting this line and matching the width of this paper.*



**Your congregation is invited to
create a block
for the 2017 Conference quilts.**

Please follow instructions on the next page.

**ALL Quilt Blocks should be postmarked
by May 15, 2017**



**Mail your quilt blocks and a dollar (or more) donation
(checks payable to AACB)
to offset the cost of quilting materials to:**

**Margaret Weybright
17132 US 6
Syracuse, IN 46567**

Phone - 574-831-2488



Quilt tops are assembled before conference.

No blocks can be accepted at conference for this year's quilts.

All blocks delivered at conference will be considered
for next year's quilts and wall hangings.

**AUCTION PROCEEDS OF CONFERENCE QUILTS BENEFIT
PROJECTS TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER.**