



Reflecting news and views

The Reflector

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District Executive: Kevin Kessler

Moderator Notes

Hi, my name is Paul Kohler (Rev. Paul S. Kohler MS BSed, Retired Math Teacher (Ret), Owner of Kohler Computer Service Systems, Pastor of the Champaign Church of The Brethren, Champaign, Illinois). I am the new Moderator of the Illinois and Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren. I'm seventy-six years old and in reasonable health for my age. I am currently studying Syriac Eastern Archaic (Jesus' native language), Syriac Western Archaic (The native language of Jerusalem), and of course the literature and religious writings of the earliest Christians (Mashiachim).

The purposes of these Notes are for your encouragement, information, education, entertainment, and amusement. In short, the things that are on my mind and which I think might be interesting to you. First, mark your calendar for: November 2 and 3, 2018, at Cerro Gordo, Illinois, for the annual District Conference. November 2nd will include worship and the 3rd will have some educational material and the business of the District (including eggs which could be sold at very high prices and some very good handicrafts). I attended the first planning meeting this past Saturday. It started at 10 a.m. and ended by noon. The Program and Arrangements committee and Cerro Gordo Church of the Brethren are intent upon giving their best for District Conference and are creating a memorable time.

While studying for the sermon to be delivered on the 14th (the second Sunday after the epiphany). The word "epiphany" originates from Greek: "epi" means beneath or below, as in epidural, beneath the skin. "Phany" means "spirit" or "soul", from which we get phantom. This can be translated as UNDER or reinforcing the SPIRIT. Now I have some questions: Why did the originators of the lectionary

put passages on sexual immorality and the calling of apostles during the second week of Epiphany? With that in mind, whose epiphany does this refer to? I'll give you a clue. Don't engage in immorality because it is a waste of your time (really, read it in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20) and follow Jesus (John 1:43-51) because it will be entertaining. And nothing about Jesus' book of the Law, for Jesus that would be the Mishna. All in all, very interesting!

District Conference 2018

It's not too early to begin making plans to attend District Conference this fall!

The Conference will be held at the Cerro Gordo Church of the Brethren, Cerro Gordo, IL, Nov. 2-3.

Moderator Paul Kohler is leading the conference with the theme, Preach the Word, based on John 1:1,14.

Auctions are planned again this year! Stayed tuned for additional information as the Program and Arrangements Committee makes known its plans for conference, which will be published in future issues of the district newsletter. Watch for information as it is published on the district website (www.iwdcob.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/iwdcob). Information will also be sent to church offices within the next few months. If you do not see information in any of these places, please contact the district office and we'll be glad to share conference material with you. Conference is a great time to catch up with friends from across the district, to worship together, and to learn about the good ministry in which we are involved!

DE Ponderings

Last week I caught up on a few chores at home that I've been neglecting, one of which was cleaning on old stereo system. The components of the system were all separate, so I carefully removed each one from the stereo cabinet. When cleaning the 5-disc CD player, I tilted it in such a manner that 2 CDs slid out the front. I finished cleaning, replaced the components in the cabinet, turned on the CD player, opened the drawer, and found 3 more CDs. After removing them I pushed the button to close the drawer. All was not well. The drawer did not close completely; it remained about a third of the way open. I could not get the drawer to close no matter what I tried.

Tammy was nearby and suggested that maybe more CDs were still inside the player. I argued that it was a 5-disc player and 5 CDs had been removed. Part of my argument hinged on the premise that I did not want to take all the components out of the cabinet again. But, I caved and removed the components, after which I tilted the CD player only to have 2 more CDs slip out of it. Why 7 CDs were in a 5-disc player I will never know. Needless to say, overloading a stereo component has undesirable consequences and can render it unusable.

How like an overloaded stereo component we can be at times. You move through life caring for various essential responsibilities. All is well. You are on time to meetings and events. You respond in a timely manner to various kinds of communication. You meet a variety of obligations. You pay your bills on time. You are handling a maximum capacity of responsibilities superbly.

Then you are invited to engage in a new opportunity. You may not want to accept the invitation but what will happen if you don't? The organization or group may not function well. You know of no one else who could handle the task as well as you could. You can do this and accept the invitation. This opportunity opens the door to yet another, and another, and another. And you respond with a "yes" to each invitation. Before long the calendar has few if any open slots. You begin scrambling to make appointments on time, occasionally forgetting one now and again. You intended to respond to an important email but a text message changed your course and you never made it back to the email. You

notice an extra charge on your credit card statement, a late fee assessed for missing the due date with your last payment.

When is it right to accept or decline an invitation to add a new responsibility? The answer is different for each of us. It is important to occasionally take stock to determine how well we are meeting the obligations for which we are responsible. If some things are left undone or neglected, maybe it's time to be "tilted" and allow the "extras" to slip away so that we are able to function well at our created capacity.

I have much to learn from this brief missive. I can easily go beyond capacity. So in this new year, I hope that I will be more responsible with my obligations and learn to function more capably at my created capacity. It means I may need to be "tilted" once in a while for some "extras" to slide out. Chances are I won't like being tilted, but if it allows me to function more fully and serve others more responsibly, then it will be worth it.

How about you? Any "tilting" need to happen in your life?

Mission And Mortar Grants

The Mission and Mortar Grant program has been in existence for nearly a decade. Congregations needing to do repairs or make upgrades to property or engaging in a mission project, and in need of additional financial capacity, may apply for a grant of up to \$2,500.00, and an additional \$5,000.00 in a no-interest loan. Applications may be requested from the district office. The District Leadership Team reviews all applications to determine if the grant/loan will be awarded. This program has assisted congregations in starting a buddy bag program, purchasing a cooler for a food pantry operation, installing a lift, repairing a roof, upgrading the furnace and air conditioner in the parsonage, replacing an outdated electrical system, updating sound systems, and more. If your congregation needs additional financial capacity to fund a much-needed project, please, by all means, contact the district office for an application.

Denominational/District Reporting Forms

Each year the denominational offices send report forms to congregations for completion. The completed forms provide the opportunity for the denominational offices and district offices to maintain accurate records of information about congregations. Following is the list of forms received by congregations to complete, the information requested by the form, and when it is due. The forms may be completed online. It is important to follow the online instructions to ensure that the district office receives the information submitted. If forms are submitted by paper, the Yearbook Office will provide a copy to the district unless the form provides instructions to send a copy to the district office. Your assistance in completing and returning these forms is greatly appreciated.

Form A – Directory Information Due: May 15

- provides name and contact information of the pastor and moderator as well as indicating accommodations for people with disabilities

Form B – Mailing Address Information Due: December 31

- provides name and contact information of congregational leadership

Statistical Information Due: March 15

- provides statistical information about the congregation (attendance, membership, pastoral status, financial information)

Congregational Giving Report Due: December 5

- provides information about congregational budgeted giving to various denominational, district, agency, and local ministries.

Church Name	Form A	Form B	Statistical Report	Congregational Outreach
Date Due:	5/15/18	12/31/17	3/15/18	12/5/17
Allison Prairie				
Canton				X
Cerro Gordo				X
Champaign				X
Cherry Grove				X
Chicago First				X
Decatur				X
Dixon				
Franklin Grove				
Freeport				
Girard				
Highland Avenue				
Hurricane Creek				
Lanark				X
La Place				
Martin Creek				
Milledgeville				X
Mt. Morris				
Naperville				X
Neighborhood				
Oak Grove				
Oakley Brick				
Panther Creek				
Peoria				
Polo				X
Rock Community Church				
Rockford				
Romine				
Springfield				
Stanley				
Virden				
Walnut Grove				
West Branch				X
Woodland				
Yellow Creek				
York Center				X

Thoughts from the Theopoetics Retreat (Spring 2017)

by Terry Link

The 2017 gathering for fellowship and CEU credit for credentialed ministers in our IL/WI District was held at Bishop Lane Conference Center on the Rock River, just south of Rockford. Approximately seventeen attended. Scott Holland, of Bethany Seminary, was our facilitator on the subject of TheoPoetics. One might say TheoPoetics is receiving and expressing Holy inspiration via a diversity of genres.

On Monday and Tuesday my phone received an early morning text that a resident of Pleasant Hill Village had passed. Tears began to fall during those days, as the angst of that old helpless feeling arose. Some containment was felt as the following was written before a walk to breakfast.

CAN U FEEL IT?

all my friends are dying - each of us in time
the world that closes in- opens up in thine

sunlight through a broken blind
claims a spot of ground
another cycle in the wheel
going round and round and round

happy 4 each day - and the moments that are given
the beetle on my knee - sorrows company
clings tightly to my pants - in a day long belly laugh

CAN U FEEL IT?

(During class, a brown lady-bug looking beetle had appeared on the knee of my blue jeans and we kept company, until break when I stepped outside!)

That afternoon, we went out into the grounds for poetic inspiration to arise. Some walked, others sat, and contemplation abounded. I wandered and found myself upon a wooden bridge over a clear, gently, running stream.

ON BISHOP KAGAN BRIDGE

going upstream is the call
sometimes in spring - sometimes in fall
we wonder where it's going - knows only where it's
been
toss a stick into the waters
hear them gently flow

the little boy tinkles - into the endless stream
as Elders dream those endless dreams.....

Terry Link, is an ordained Brethren minister, serving in his seventh year, as Chaplain for the Brethren Home of Girard (Pleasant Hill Village) and is a member of First Church of the Brethren, Springfield IL.

Ventures in Christian Discipleship 2018 Course Schedule

Empowering Small Congregations

Jan. 20, 2018, 9am-Noon CST

Presenter: Jim Tomlinson, Retired Church of the Brethren Pastor, District Executive, Teacher

Subject: Congregation in Mission

Congregational life provides settings for persons in community to flourish in their faith. What are the dynamics to allow this to happen? What are the impediments that get in the way of this flourishing? Where can congregations go to find resources for mission? What are the “Brethren” ideas of congregational life that draw persons? What may keep them away? What are the Biblical images that help us focus on mission? How do they encourage mission? These questions can be a spring board for drawing us into a lively discussion. We will work on the concepts of “settler” verses “frontier” churches and explore how these concepts impact congregational life and mission.

Feb. 10, 2018, 9am-Noon CST

Presenter: Carol Scheppard, 2017 Moderator of Church of the Brethren and Professor at Bridgewater College

Subject: How the Bible Came to be the Bible

The Christian Bible is a living document with a rich and spirited history. Our course will trace the Bible’s development from its early beginnings as a loose collection of shared texts and resources to its formal adoption as canon at the ecumenical councils of the late 4th century AD. We will observe the way the Christian scriptures merged with the developing Hebrew canon and will follow its on-going transformation through the Latin Vulgate to the Luther Bible and beyond.

Mar. 17, 2018, 9am-Noon CST

Presenter: Bobbi Dykema, Pastor and Professor serving in the Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Subject: Revitalizing Worship through the Arts

Imagine a worship service where any or all of the pieces—from the call to worship to the benediction—contained new surprises: words, images, sounds, and experiences that would engage the scripture and the congregation, all ages, in new ways. Now imagine these exciting new ways of being church happening in your congregation!

Creativity is a God-given birthright to all of God’s children, and scripture calls us to bring our best before the Lord. The challenge of crafting innovative worship doesn’t have to take a lot of time or money, just joyful open hearts. Join us to learn how!

Apr. 14, 2018, 9am-Noon CST

Presenter: Joe Detrick, Retired District Executive Minister in the Church of the Brethren

Subject: Congregations Nurturing a Culture of Call: Why It Matters

This interactive course will focus on the distinctive role congregation’s play in the calling and nurturing of ministerial leadership. We will hear testimonies of those who have answered the call – from biblical times to the present, and examples of congregations who have excelled in creating a climate for calling. We will examine the new Ministerial Leadership (2014) paper, highlighting various components of “discerning the call” toward credentialed ministry. We will identify 10 practical ways congregations and districts can partner in the calling, training, and sustaining qualified ministerial leaders for the local, district, and national ministry needs.

All courses available online and available for .3 CEUs. Preregister at www.McPherson.edu/Ventures. These courses are open to everyone and at no cost. However, if you desire CEUs, a \$10 donation is suggested.

Newsline

-- **The Church of the Brethren seeks to fill a full-time salaried position of Donor Relations specialist.** This position is part of the Donor Relations team and reports to the director of Donor Relations. The major responsibility is to strengthen and nurture the individual and congregational stewardship, direct gift, planned giving, and enlistment programs of the Church of the Brethren through face-to-face visits with individuals and congregations. Primary focus will be on positively impacting individual giving in support of denominational ministries. Required skills and knowledge include grounding in Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision of the Church of the Brethren; at least three years of experience in planned/deferred giving and/or five years in development-related activities in the not-for-profit sector, or other comparable experience; ability to relate with individuals and groups; basic computer skills working with Microsoft Word, Excel, e-mail, Internet access; a bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience. Location is flexible; the candidate must be willing to travel to the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., for individual and department meetings as needed. Applications are received beginning immediately and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org or to the Human Resources Manager, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367.

-- **Bethany Theological Seminary is seeking a full-time executive director of finance and administration** who is entrepreneurial, is able to multitask, seeks collaborative solutions, and provides a positive and productive impact with both strategic and tactical initiatives. A successful candidate will be invited to join the seminary's leadership team starting no later than March 2018. The position reports to the president. Bethany Theological Seminary is located in Richmond, Ind. The executive director will oversee short- and long-term financial planning, accounting, payroll, facilities management, and human resources and will supervise the Business Services Office staff. This person will advise the president and Leadership Team on financial planning, budgeting, cash flow, investment priorities, and policy matters. In all matters, this person will employ clear and continuous lines of communication, keeping the president informed of all critical issues. Salary is

commensurate with qualifications. A master's degree in business administration and/or qualification as a certified public accountant is preferred; a bachelor's degree in business or accounting with finance experience is acceptable. This person must have a proven track record of excellent judgment; skills in administration, leadership, and interpersonal communication; and demonstrate a commitment to personal and professional growth. Affinity with the values and mission of the seminary is required. For a complete job description, visit www.bethanyseminary.edu/about/employment. Application review will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. To apply, send a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three references to president@bethanyseminary.edu or Attn: President Jeff Carter, Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374. Bethany Theological Seminary's policy prohibits discrimination in employment opportunities or practices with regard to race, gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or religion.

-- **The Workcamp Ministry invites young adults** in the Church of the Brethren to apply for the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) position of assistant coordinator. Assistant coordinators of the Workcamp Ministry serve at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., from the end of August 2018 to May 2019, preparing for summer workcamps. They travel throughout the summer of 2019, coordinating the workcamps. The workcamps are week-long service projects both in and outside of the United States. The position description and online application are available at www.brethren.org/workcamps. Direct questions to Emily Tyler, coordinator of Workcamps and BVS Recruitment, at etyler@brethren.org or 847-429-4396.

-- **The Church of the Brethren workcamp office** is offering sample 2018 registrations for Junior High, Senior High, Young Adult, Adult, Advisor, and We Are Able participants. The office hopes that these sample forms will give registrants the ability to familiarize themselves with the information need in the form, as well as contact the workcamp office with any questions they may have before registration opens on Jan. 11, 2018, at 7 p.m. (central time). The sample registrations can be found at www.brethren.org/workcamps. Any questions or comments concerning the 2018 workcamps schedule and registration can be sent to cobworkcamp@brethren.org.

-- **“Join us for this informational and instructive seminar!”** invites the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. The next Clergy Tax Seminar is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a break for lunch. Deb Oskin returns as the leader for this event. Students, pastors, and other church leaders are invited to attend either in person at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., or online. Participants will learn how to file clergy taxes correctly and legally, and how to comply with regulations while maximizing tax deductions. Participants may earn .3 continuing education credit. This seminar is highly recommended for all pastors and all other church leaders who wish to understand clergy taxes including treasurers, steward commission chairs, and church board chairs. Sponsors include the Brethren Academy, the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry, and Bethany Theological Seminary. Registration costs \$30 per person. Current Bethany, TRIM/EFSM/SeBAH, and Earlham School of Religion students may attend at no cost, although registration is still required. Registrations are not complete until payment is received. The registration deadline is Jan. 19, 2018. Register at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/clergy-tax-seminar> .

-- **Kevin Kessler, district executive minister for Illinois and Wisconsin District**, has been announced as the preacher for the opening of the 2018 Illinois Conference of Churches Annual Assembly. The theme for the event to be held in Champaign, Ill., next Sept. 28 will be “Christian Healing in a Fractured World: An Ecumenical Perspective on Polarization in the USA 2018.”

-- **Beth Sollenberger has been called to serve as quarter-time interim district executive for Michigan District**, beginning Jan. 1, 2018. She has been district executive minister of South Central Indiana District since 2011, and will continue in that role. In previous positions in the denomination, she has served pastorates in Florida, Ohio, Maryland, and Indiana; served the former Church of the Brethren General Board as director of Stewardship Education (1995-97) and as coordinator of Congregational Life Team, Area 2 (1997-2004). Once the Michigan District Leadership Team fills an administrative assistant position, the Michigan District office will be moved to a location accessible to Sollenberger and the administrative assistant.

-- **The Church of the Brethren seeks to fill a full-time salaried position of director of Information Technology**, based at the denomination’s General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The major responsibility is to give oversight to information technology needs and to manage information technology activities including application design, development, maintenance, equipment purchase, and network applications. Skills and knowledge required include understanding of Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision of the Church of the Brethren; knowledge and experience to plan and implement a vision for on-going technical growth that will coordinate efforts at many levels of the denomination; strong technical skills in database management and systems analysis; excellent verbal and written communication skills; progressive administrative and management skills; positive customer service attitude; knowledge and expertise in budget development and management; knowledge of Raiser’s Edge system and VOIP phone systems. A minimum of a bachelor’s degree in information technology or a related field is required. Applications will be received beginning immediately, and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org or contact Human Resources Manager, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367.

-- **The Church of the Brethren seeks to fill a full-time hourly position of program assistant for the Office of Ministry**, based at the denomination’s General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The major responsibilities of this position are to enhance and support the functions of the Office of Ministry through administration of a variety of tasks. Skills and knowledge required include excellent administrative and organizational skills; ability to handle sensitive information and maintain confidentiality; strong oral and written communication skills; personable qualities and capability to develop excellent working relationships with staff colleagues, districts, and pastoral personnel; skill in computer applications with capacity and willingness to learn new software applications; ability to work with minimum supervision, be a self-starter, readily adaptable to change, and work well under pressure; maturity in judgment and character; appreciation for the role of ministerial leadership in the life of the church. A

bachelor's degree or commensurate education, life, and work experience is preferred. Applications will be received beginning immediately, and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org or contact the Office of Human Resources, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367.

-- Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) seeks a three-quarter-time psychosocial care coordinator to resource the well-being of its service workers. The position entails ensuring independent spiritual and psychosocial support for CPT members whose work involves physical rigor, communication in crisis situations, and exposure to violence and trauma. Responsibilities include: 1) providing psychosocial support to individual CPT Corps members and teams; 2) coordinating CPT's Circle of Care (a network of volunteer counselors, healers, and care providers); 3) enhancing organizational structures that foster a culture of self-care and sustainability in peace work; 4) working with CPT staff to coordinate holistic responses to teams in emergencies. The position involves some international travel to project sites and organizational meetings. Candidates should demonstrate passion for the spiritual and psychological health of others, commitment to grow in the journey of undoing oppressions, and ability to work independently and collaboratively as part of a dispersed team across continents. Experience in the field of psychology or social work and a trauma-informed approach is preferred. This is a 30 hours per week, three-year appointment. Compensation is \$18,000 per year. Benefits include 100 percent employer-paid health, dental, and vision coverage; three weeks of annual vacation. Location: no preference. Start date is negotiable; the position is available as of Feb. 1, 2018. To apply submit electronically, in English, the following to hiring@cpt.org : cover letter stating motivation/reasons for interest in this position; résumé/CV; a list of three references with e-mail and daytime telephone numbers. Application review begins Jan. 5, 2018. For more about Christian Peacemaker Teams go to www.cpt.org .

-- Annual Conference moderator Samuel Sarpiya is sharing Christmas greetings with the denomination. Find his Christmas video posted online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR83CO67V54&feature=youtu.be .

-- Bethany Theological Seminary seeks a full-time financial aid and enrollment assistant with an immediate starting date. This is an opportunity for a person with strengths in caring for details and supporting colleagues in the mission of the Admissions and Student Services Department on the seminary campus in Richmond, Ind. Responsibilities include overseeing student accounts, financial aid, and the Federal Work-Study program. This person also will be a vital part of the admissions team and will provide needed support to student development and alumni /ae relations. Eligible applicants will hold the minimum of an associate's degree. Affinity with the values and mission of the seminary is required. Experience in student billing and the handling of confidential materials is preferred. Qualified applicants will be personable and able to be self-directed, manage a complex workload with attention to details, offer office support to colleagues, and quickly respond to phone and e-mail requests from prospective and current students. Experience with Salesforce, Excel, iContact, Cougar Mountain, or other accounting software, and creating web forms would be helpful. A complete job description is available. Application review will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. Send a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three references to recruitment@bethanyseminary.edu or to Bethany Theological Seminary, Attention: Lori Current, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374. Bethany Theological Seminary's policy prohibits discrimination in employment opportunities or practices with regard to race, gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or religion.

-- Jan. 25 is the date of the next online Town Hall with Samuel Sarpiya, moderator of the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren. The conversation takes place at 7 p.m. (central time). These events are being held each month, as live online conversations using Zoom technology and sponsored by the Annual Conference office. For more information, go to www.brethren.org/ac/2018/theme.html .