

The Reflector

An e-publication of the Illinois & Wisconsin District of
the Church of the Brethren



DE Ponderings

by Kevin Kessler

Colossians 3:1-17

Eugene H. Peterson in "As Kingfishers Catch Fire" has a warm place in his heart for Christian doctrine indicating that it has a spaciousness when accurately perceived. However, he contends that after becoming familiar with these understandings of Christian faith our imaginations wane and we fall under the less poetic world of conduct.

Michael Frost and Christiana Rice in their book "To Altar Your World" offer a similar focus using different language. Instead of using the language of conduct, these two authors talk about a Christian moralism which they assert gets us nowhere. The church, in their view, spends more energy working on a moral code that is difficult to prove than simply striving to love our neighbors as ourselves. A moral code is not the solution to move us closer to the perfect love to which God calls us.

In the letter to the Colossians, we find a comparable message. In chapter 3, verses 5 and 8 are found types of conduct that are less than attractive for a healthy community life. Concentrating on

these moral issues would be quite easy to do since it seems appropriate to give significant attention toward avoiding these moral dilemmas to achieve a better society. But doing so has its drawbacks, one of which is causing division within the community. Consider how this might occur. Those who adhere to the moral code are accepted into the community whereas others who fail to live up to the better conduct are pushed outside the moral boundaries.

Verse 11 suggests that a renewed ideal moves us away from this division. Renewal breaks down the barriers and we no longer view each other with contempt. Rather, all are given a place in the community with equality.

Think of renewal as more than conduct. Think of it as incarnational living. Or as we learn in Colossians, “clothe yourselves” with these attributes: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and most of all, love “which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Eugene Peterson declares, “Putting on these ‘garments’ is a witness not of our own goodness...but of the hidden reality of Christ within us.”

As we wind our way through the concerns we face as the Church of the Brethren, would we benefit from focusing less on conduct/moral code and more on incarnational clothing? Would this incarnational clothing help us find our way beyond division and live more fully into a community where we see one another as equals in Christ? How would you respond to these questions? How are you responding to these questions?

The Moderator's Column

District Conference is almost upon us and I will soon be finished with my Moderator responsibilities. This year has been such a humbling experience for me, as I have found out so many wonderful things about our District and the people who make up our wonderful churches.

There has been such excitement for me when I realize what diverse ministries we really are accomplishing all over the District. The only sad thing is still the fact that many of us are not aware of what the other churches are doing. Countless times we were invited numerous ways to share what we've been up to, but I guess we are so caught up in the “doing” we just didn't reach out and share. It was my privilege to move around and see or read your newsletters, look at your Facebook pictures, or be invited to your churches and see firsthand what is going on in your neighborhoods.

I chose this year's theme in order to get us to look around - not only our own neighborhoods, but also at how we might more readily link together for God's glory. I hear so many past stories in which a call went from a church and other churches would travel to help with the project. This enabled them to complete the project faster and enable all to rejoice in doing God's work together! We have lost this idea, except for Disaster Response, and even that doesn't have as many who are willing to take the time and go help those in need of aid. It is time that we try to see ourselves as one big “together” for the glory of God and our neighbors' good. That means for every neighbor, yours *and* mine.

I have also been intrigued by our Emerging Ministries, Parables and The Gathering Chicago. Parables teaches us all about the fact that instead of thinking of or calling out disability, we should see others just as ourselves and not exploit them but embrace them equally in all we do. The Gathering Chicago prays intensely for all people and reminds us that we do not just pray for those we like, but God tells us to pray for all people. We are called to pray together and help others with their prayers when they cannot pray. If you do not know what they are doing, you need to find out -

these churches are amazing!

Thank you to all the churches, pastors, deacons, lay leaders, members, and friends who attend the many churches in our District. May we remain committed to the strong bonds we have together to live Simply, Peacefully, and Together, as we continue to serve our neighbors both at home and together wherever they need us.

God bless everyone one of you.

Moderator Leslie Lake

POWERHOUSE

We would love to have you join us for this year's Powerhouse regional youth conference held at Camp Mack, hosted by Manchester University. This event is for Church of the Brethren youth and advisors from Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. Bring your youth group and your friends and register [HERE](#) today! If you cannot come consider forwarding this invitation to someone who can.



Camp Mack
Milford, IN



Dates:

Nov. 16-17, 2019

Location:

Camp Alexander Mack
Milford, Ind.

Who:

All youth in grades 9-12 and advisors

Cost:

\$90 youth/\$80 advisors
Register by Oct. 29 and save \$10

Speaker/Theme/Scripture:

Randall Westfall
The Chrysalis Life: What it means to
'practice' resurrection
Philippians 3:10

www.manchester.edu/powerhouse

November 8-10, 2019

Camp Emmaus

When: Registration will begin at 7 pm on Friday Night. Retreat participants will be dismissed on Sunday around noon. We are open to people coming late or leaving early so long as they are at the retreat Saturday Morning.

Who: Everyone currently in 9th through 12th grades plus First Year College students during the 2019-2020 school year. Friends and advisors are welcome.

Cost: \$30 for youth and adults. Make checks payable to "Illinois/Wisconsin District Youth"

What to Bring: Games, Bible, Rake, Sleeping Bag, Snacks to share, Towel, and Work clothes.

Service Project Information: We recommend dressing comfortably and in layers – it can be chilly in the morning – and you may warm up while raking leaves.

See <http://www.campemmaus.org/> for registration information.

Contact Ralph at (847) 742-0918, or via e-mail : rminer151@earthlink.net

Family Camp Weekend at Camp Emmanuel

Family Camp Weekend at Camp Emmanuel concluded Labor Day morning. More than forty

campers enjoyed a weekend of fellowship, games, worship, campfires, cookouts, crafts, fishing, and relaxation. New friendships were made and old ones rekindled as campers sat beneath swaying shade trees or ate delicious meals together. Families and singles alike gathered to enjoy an annual night of talent and rib tickling funny skits on Sunday night.

Attendees ranged in age from ten months to eighty-nine years. Between hearty meals, they were treated to ice cream and watermelon in the afternoons. The weather cooperated by providing upper 70 degree temperatures along with cool breezes yet it was warm enough for the children's swim times. Laughter and quiet conversations were punctuated by squeals of delight from little ones scampering around the porch area, playing ping pong, or enjoying the playground.

Morning devotions found the campers around a fire in the porch area or enjoying the morning at picnic tables while many nurtured cups of fresh brewed coffee. The Saturday morning forum featured David Roe, pastor of the Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren, who spoke on the challenges and God given miracles that their congregation experienced when a straight line wind destroyed their church. The rebuilding process that was nothing short of miraculous. Sunday afternoon the Peoria Church of the Brethren Praise Team in an outdoor concert, sang praises to our Lord and Saviour.

The smiles in the accompanying picture attest that all enjoyed the weekend! Come join us next year - 309-329-2291.

Submitted by: Ray Knotts, Camp Emmanuel Board - Recording Secretary

NOAC by the numbers

Church of the Brethren Newsline

September 12, 2019



Photo by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

A view of worship at NOAC 2019

686 total registration includes participants, staff, and volunteers.

\$26,702.19 was the total of offerings that were taken up during the five worship services, to benefit the work of the Church of the Brethren denomination:

\$2,452 on Monday evening,

\$4,113.25 on Tuesday evening,

\$6,351.55 on Wednesday evening,

\$8,736.39 on Thursday evening, and

\$5,049 on Friday morning.

\$5,960 was raised by the 120-some walkers and runners who participated in the early morning fundraising walk around Lake Junaluska to benefit Twa education in the Great Lakes region of central Africa. The walk was sponsored and organized by Brethren Benefit Trust. The Church of the Brethren Global Mission and Service office will distribute the funds.

1,000 hygiene kits were assembled for Church World Service (CWS) to be distributed via the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Some 70 people put the kits together as one of the NOAC service projects. The Southern Ohio and Kentucky District disaster team organized the project.

1,719 children's books were donated by NOACers to Junaluska Elementary School, and a busload of participants went to the school to read to children as one of the afternoon service projects. Libby Kinsey was a main leader for the effort. Some 30 or more people read to the school's 465 children. "The great thing about your group is just the kindness that you had," said principal Alex Moscarelli when the books were presented to him and his staff on Thursday afternoon.

8 members of the planning team for NOAC 2019: coordinator Christy Waltersdorff, Glenn Bollinger, Karen Dillon, Rex Miller, Pat Roberts, Paula Ulrich, and Josh Brockway and Stan Dueck as staff of the Church of the Brethren's Discipleship Ministries.

(All dollar amounts are pre-audit.)



Photo by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

The planning team for the 2019 National Older Adult Conference, in a photo taken prior to the event: (back row, from left) Stan Dueck (staff), Glenn Bollinger, Karen Dillon, Rex Miller, Josh Brockway (staff); (front, from left) Pat Roberts, Christy Waltersdorff (coordinator). Not shown here: Paula Ulrich.

Pleasant Hill Village Files Chapter 11

Due to unprecedented and sustained non-payment from Illinois Medicaid, Pleasant Hill Village has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. After closing its nursing home in August 2018 under the burden of \$2 million of non-compensated care, Pleasant Hill Village now seeks bankruptcy protection in the interest of its ongoing Girard ministries of Senior Independent Living and Senior Assisted Living. Established in 1905 as a home for orphans and the elderly, Pleasant Hill Village is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren.

The Board and leadership of Pleasant Hill Village wish to express our gratitude for the support and loyalty of our residents, families, employees and friends at this challenging time. Pleasant Hill Residence, our Senior Independent and Assisted Living facility, continues to operate 48 apartments on our Girard campus. This important ministry has served many residents and families since its construction in 2002. It is our intention and plan to continue these stable and comfortable Independent and Assisted Living apartments for our residents and the community.

Piano Concert and Lasagna Dinner at Cerro Gordo

You are invited to a piano concert, given by Jocelyn Watkins, and a following lasagna dinner! Come to Cerro Gordo COB on October 20 to join in the fun. [Click here for more information.](#)

CROP Hunger Walks - stepping up to end hunger since 1969

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the national CROP Hunger Walk movement, CROP Hunger Walks continue to raise millions of dollars each year to help end hunger and poverty through long-term sustainable approaches to significantly reduce or eliminate hunger. In each CROP Hunger Walk community, 25% of money raised comes back to local agencies. Across the country, over 1600 local agencies receive funds from CROP Hunger Walks

This year some 800 communities nationwide are joining together in interfaith CROP Hunger Walks around the theme "Stepping up to End Hunger Since 1969." The CROP Hunger Walk was started in 1969 by a group of energized young people in Bismarck, North Dakota who wanted to mobilize their community to fight global hunger. Today, the CROP Hunger Walk is a national movement raising funds for the global hunger-fighting work of Church World Service and local hunger-fighting agencies. Last year, over 800 events raised over \$8 million dollars.

For more information or to find a local Walk at www.crophungerwalk.org.

New Ventures in Christian Discipleship season to begin September 28

The Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson (Kan.) College is moving into its eighth year of providing useful, affordable education to small church congregations. The first two online courses of the year will focus on Creation Care. All classes are donation-based and continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course.

On September 28 at 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. CST, Kirk MacGregor will present the course "God's Relation to the Natural World and Creation Care." Many philosophers and theologians view God's relation to the natural world as parallel to the relation between our souls and our bodies. This course will examine this notion and explore its implications for creation care. Putting this notion in conversation with Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46), this course will argue that what we do, positively or negatively, to the natural world, we do to Jesus himself.

Dr. Kirk MacGregor is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion and Department Chair at McPherson College. He is the author of five books, the most recent of which is *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction* (2019). Kirk is a member of the McPherson Church of the Brethren. On October 26 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. CST, Sharon Yohn will present the course "Faith Through Action: Effective approaches to solving the climate challenge." God calls on us to act when our brothers and sisters are in need. The destabilization of our climate is already causing immense human suffering, leaving us with a clear call to action. But how? When faced with a problem this large and complicated, it is hard to feel like our actions are meaningful. In this course we will explore three types of meaningful action you can take and the resources available to support those actions.

Dr. Sharon Yohn is an active member of the Stone Church of the Brethren in central Pennsylvania, as well as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Juniata College. She earned her B.S. in Environmental Science at Juniata College, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Geosciences from Michigan State University. Called to action by both her scientific understanding and her faith, Sharon has been acting as an advocate for climate action for several years. Sharon co-wrote a series of articles on faith and climate change for the Church of the Brethren magazine, *The Messenger*, and served on a denominational Creation Care Committee. She is the group leader for the Juniata Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby, a non-partisan organization building political will for a livable future.

To learn more about Ventures in Christian Discipleship and to register for courses, visit www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

Serving together for a purpose

By Kim Gingerich, long-term disaster project leader
Brethren Disaster Ministries long-term project leaders Steve Keim and Kim Gingerich (first row from left) enjoy watching friendships develop among volunteers coming from different districts and backgrounds as they share God's love together.

Photo by Brethren Disaster Ministries staff

As a long-term volunteer project leader with the Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) Rebuilding program, I have had the privilege of experiencing this ministry from the "inside" for more than five years. I've been given the opportunity to see our denomination through different eyes: the eyes of service, compassion, and love. The one thing that keeps standing out to me is how we are united, as opposed to how we might be divided. The "we" are volunteers who come from different districts across the denomination to serve together each week. I often comment to them during our end-of-week debriefing that this ministry is the best-kept secret of our denomination.

Why do I say that? Because those who come to serve strive for a common goal that we fulfill together. What is that common goal? To glorify God as we serve with our hands, feet, and hearts to help restore hope in our clients and the communities in which we serve. Because we have that common goal, we are united. Despite our differences, we are united. We are united because we are motivated by love—God's love for us and our love for Him—which in turn compels us to love our neighbor as ourselves. As Galatians 5:13-14 tells us: "Serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself."

This is how we build the body and unite the church, week after week: through acts of service that provide opportunities to break down barriers and build relationships. Serving. United. Being the church.

Since BDM has combined its two project sites into one in Lumberton, N.C., we have received a lot of feedback from volunteers that illustrates this unity through service. Here are just a few:

- We are working with people for a common goal—an extraordinary goal.
- It's the Holy Spirit taking human form, out of our hearts and into our hands.
- We're so different but we have so much in common.
- Volunteers are like-minded people.
- We come as strangers but leave as friends or family.
- We are stronger together.

Together, across districts and denominations, we come. Different but the same, bound together by love, serving for a purpose, restoring hope, and being the church as we build homes and relationships. These are the real ministries the Rebuilding program of Brethren Disaster Ministries.

This reflection was originally featured in the summer issue of Bridges newsletter produced by Brethren Disaster Ministries. Learn more about the Rebuilding program at www.brethren.org/bdm/rebuild or support it today at www.brethren.org/bdm/givenow .

Call for District BDM Volunteers

North Carolina, December 1-7. 2019

At the November 2018 IL/WI District Conference, the delegates, in an informal vote, indicated overwhelming support for continuation of District participation in the Church of the Brethren denomination-wide Brethren Disaster Ministries program. People in the District will have the opportunity to put into action that strong support by volunteering to spend the week of December 1-7, 2019, in the ongoing rebuild of homes in North Carolina damaged by recent hurricanes Matthew and Florence. The District has committed to provide up to 10 volunteers for the week of December 1-7. The Indiana South/Central District providing additional volunteers to fill out the team. Cost to the volunteers is minimal with food and lodging at the project site provided by BDM, and transportation cost subsidized by the District and typically the volunteer's the home church. If you or others you know could possibly commit to a week of BDM service in NC, or would like more information, contact the District office, or Loren Habegger, the District Disaster Response Coordinator (ilwi.ddc.lh@gmail.com).

Additional information is also available at <http://www.brethren.org/bdm/>

District Website

When is the last time you visited the [IL/WI District Website](#)? There you'll find helpful information about your district including but not limited to:

- [District Calendar](#)
- [Eco-Stewardship](#)
- [District Newsletter](#)
- [Ministries](#)

Don't delay! Check it out! See what you can learn about your district!

Supporting Your District

The IL/WI District is active in a variety of ministry and mission efforts, both directly and indirectly. For these efforts to continue, resources are needed. Assets available to keep ministry and mission moving along include you (people serving people), tools (tool trailer w/ tools for disaster response work), knowledge and wisdom (years of experience and access to institutions of learning), and, of course, money (endowment, reserves, congregational and individual giving, bequests).

Assets are abundant but unless these gifts are cared for there is potential for depleting them. Therefore, district teams and the combined efforts of many work diligently to ensure asset sustainability.

Still, it is important to know where gaps exist, or a little extra boost would be helpful. For instance, our district has deep interest in and long-standing support of disaster relief efforts. A separate fund is established to assist folks who give of their time and travel great distances to assist. The district's Disaster Relief Fund is hovering around \$1,000.00. Sending a team to serve on a disaster response site can cost nearly \$500 or more. To ensure the sustainability of this important ministry, designated gifts to this fund are welcomed and deeply appreciated. Having funds available to assist with travel may be the difference of someone sharing their gifts or staying home. Consider making a contribution!

Other options are available for contributing, as well, including the following:

- Endowment Fund
- Mission and Mortar Fund
- General Fund
- Emerging Ministries
- Ministry Training

Every gift regardless of size is a significant boost to the abundance of assets in our midst. All contributions ensure that our district goes beyond the plateau of survival to the pinnacles of thriving, providing ample opportunities to serve faithfully.

District Mission and Mortar Grant/Loan Program

Is your congregation beginning a new mission outreach program but a little short on cash? Is your

congregation faced with a major repair or capital improvement project that exceeds your congregation's capacity to pay for it? Did you know that the district has a program to assist with your needs? It's called the Mission and Mortar Grant/Loan Program and is available to help meet the needs mentioned above.

Grants are available up to \$2,500.00 and non-interest bearing loans up to \$5000.00. A congregation that applies must provide financial data and be a regular contributor to the district. Applications are considered on a first-come first-served basis and are reviewed/approved by the district Leadership Team.

If you would like more information or wish to apply, visit the [district website](#). Send completed applications to the IL/WI District Office, 269 E. Chestnut St., Canton, IL 61520.

GIFTS DISCERNMENT AND CALL COMMITTEE

The Gifts Discernment and Call Committee (GDCC) is commissioned to discern the gifts of persons for the purpose of inviting and calling them in to positions of leadership and team/committee participation. The GDCC delves into this work based on the names and information available to them. The likelihood is that gifted persons are not invited and called to serve because the GDCC lacks names and information. If you feel compelled to serve in the district and have not been asked, you can connect to the district [webpage](#) and learn how to share your name and information with the GDCC. Simply complete the online profile form after clicking on the "online profile form" link in the website article. Or call the district office (649-6008) and a profile form will be emailed to you.

Do you know someone you believe has gifts to serve at the district level? Invite them to visit the district webpage or share their name with the GDCC or district office.

Serving is rewarding!

Newsline

-- **The Church of the Brethren seeks an executive director of Organizational Resources and chief financial officer (CFO).** This full-time salaried position is located at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and reports to the General Secretary. The position supervises the operations of the finance office, information technology department, buildings and grounds, and the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, and serves as corporate treasurer, overseeing all aspects of the organization's finance and asset management and organizational resources. Required skills and knowledge include a commitment to operating out of the Church of the Brethren vision, mission, and core values and dedication to denominational and ecumenical objectives; an understanding and appreciation of Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; and integrity, excellent financial management skills, and confidentiality. A bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, business administration, or a related field, and a master's degree in business administration or a CPA is required, as well as ten years or more of significant proven financial and administrative experience in the areas of finance, accounting, management, planning, and supervision. Active membership in the Church of the Brethren is preferred. Applications are being received and reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org ; Human Resources, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60142; 800-323-8039 ext. 367. The Church of the Brethren is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

-- **The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership seeks a quarter-time coordinator of Spanish-language ministry training programs.** The academy is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary. Responsibilities are to administer nongraduate, certificate-level ministry training programs in Spanish through regular communication with students, instructors, translators, program partners, and district personnel; discern developing leaders for the future of ministry training and recommend them for additional education; and work with the director of the academy to revise existing and develop additional Spanish-language programs as needed. Qualifications include fluency in Spanish and English, both in oral and written communication; experience in the Spanish-speaking church, either in the United States or abroad; completion of a ministry or theological training program in the Anabaptist tradition; practical experience in pastoral ministry; ability to travel to meet with students and supervisors as needed; ability to travel to the Bethany campus and to the Church of the Brethren General Offices as needed. A complete job description is available on the Bethany Seminary website at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/about/employment> . To apply, send a cover letter and resume to spanishacademy@bethanyseminary.edu .

-- **The Office of Ministry invites clergywomen to a Clergy Women's Retreat** on Jan. 6-9, 2020, in Scottsdale, Ariz. "We are looking forward to gathering as Church of the Brethren clergywomen for a time of spiritual growth and renewal," said the announcement. "Please join us at the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale." The planning committee includes Connie Burkholder, Kathy Gingrich, Rebecca House, LaDonna Nkosi, Leonor Ochoa, Sara Haldeman-Scarr, and Nancy S. Heishman as director of the Office of Ministry. Clergywomen are invited to be involved in the months leading up to the retreat by volunteering to help with worship planning (contact Rebecca House at rebecca@pleasantvalleyalive.org or Leonor Ochoa at leo8amontan@hotmail.com); or by joining the prayer team for the retreat (contact LaDonna Nkosi at revladonna@thegatheringchicago.org). "Invite others to join since prayer team members don't necessarily have to be clergywomen or planning to attend the retreat," the announcement said. "The hope is that part of the prayer team will be interceding for the retreat from their locations even when the retreat is in session and as participants arrive and return home." Also invited are donations to support the scholarship fund as well as plans to provide childcare for children under age 2 who accompany their mothers. Visit <https://churchofthebrethren.givingfuel.com/give-ministry> to contribute financial support. Go to www.cognitofirms.com/ChurchOfTheBrethren1/ClergyWomenRetreat2019 to register.

-- **There is a new Dunker Punks podcast, featuring a story from Jos, Nigeria.** "Life's too short to not have unique, fulfilling experiences. That's why Sharon Flaten took advantage of Bethany Theological Seminary's online classes and off-campus learning centers to move to Jos to study," said an announcement. Ben Bear interviews Flaten about her story and how it came about. Listen at bit.ly/DPP_Episode87 and subscribe at bit.ly/DPP_iTunes.

Extra Tidbits

[A Message from Messenger Magazine](#)

[BCM Peace Job Announcement](#)

[Church of the Brethren Job Opening: Executive Director of Organizational Resources and Chief Financial Officer \(CFO\)](#)

[Church of the Brethren Job Opening: Manager, Office of Global Mission and Service](#)

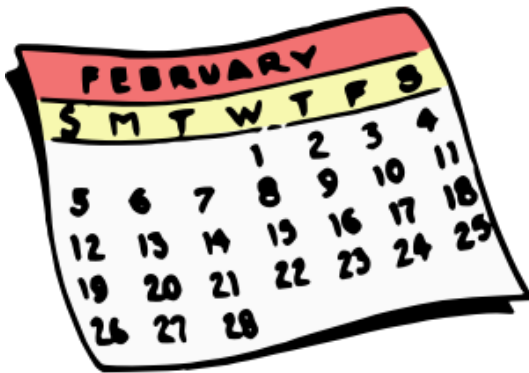
District Newsletters

[York Center](#)

[Canton](#)

[Mt. Morris](#)

[Franklin Grove](#)



Upcoming Events

October 2 - District Newsletter Articles Due

October 20, 5:30 p.m. - LaDonna Sanders Nkosi
Ordination

September 17, 7 p.m. - PAM Meeting, Zoom

October 31-November 1 - Fall Continuing Education Event, Dixon COB

November 1-2 - District Conference, Dixon COB

November 6 - District Newsletter Articles Due

November 9, 10 a.m. - Leadership Teaming Meeting, Pleasant Hill Village

December 4 - District Newsletter Articles Due