



## DE Ponderings

by Kevin Kessler

I recently finished a novel written by Richard Powers entitled *The Overstory*. The novel is about the need to care for creation with special attention given to trees. Powers presents a strong case that nature needs trees in order to thrive. Trees have communication mechanisms giving them the ability to protect themselves as well as the environment around them. Trees cleanse carbon from the air and release oxygen, helping to keep a needed balance of gases in our atmosphere. Even trees that have reached the end of their lives and fall to the forest floor provide food for fungi and insects and other living organisms. I learned more about trees in 500 pages of a novel than I've known in six decades of life, and how vitally important and valuable trees are to the sustainability of life.

Within the novel, Powers uses a Chinese proverb: The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is now.

There are times when we bemoan the fact that if I had done thus and so some time ago then this would be the reality today. The reality is that we can't change the past, but we can take responsibility for present, the now.

With ruptures in our environment presently, we may find ourselves wishing we'd have done something more to protect it years ago. But that day is past. Inaction then does not preclude action now. Now *is* the time to act. And action now can give us the opportunity to say somewhere in the future that we are glad we took action then. The tree *was* planted twenty years ago.

To act now is never too late; to never act perhaps is.

Certainly, this is a vital understanding with regard to nature and the created order. And I see it as vital for the church, as well.

Frequently I hear stories of how vital and alive the church was in the past, which implies that today the church is experiencing the opposite. Subsequently implied, what if we had done years ago some new things, planted some seeds or “trees” that today would be at a new level of maturity? Prevailing is this sense of hopelessness. But hopelessness will only prevail if missed planting of “trees” years ago is not given attention now.

Rather than be concerned with what could have been, imagine the outcomes years down the road if the emphasis is to act now, to plant now. Plant a tree, an idea, an action, today. *Now* is the time.

What we do now widens the horizon for the church to thrive and be experienced as a tree of life for generations to come extending beyond our wildest imaginations.

## The Moderator's Column

“Being the Church”

I spent the first full week of February on a Disaster Relief Project in Lumberton, North Carolina. The folks at Dutchtown COB have fully embraced this ministry for a variety of reasons, one being that at the end of each day results are observable. This makes us want to come back day after day.

We are a people who measure success by being able to look back at the end of the day, and to see the fruit of our labors. Yet, during the orientation, we are reminded - and even encouraged – to listen to the homeowner’s story! This could be the most valuable thing you do all week.

When we first started going on these trips and a homeowner wanted to visit “My Guys” would gently point me in the direction of the Homeowner to listen to their story because for they had work to do. However, over the years they slowly but surely took that time to “listen”. Now they count themselves blessed when they have this honor!

“Being the Church” happens in many ways. I’ve learned that one is that willingness to “sit” with someone as they tell their story.

Love y’all,  
Moderator Rick

# **MODERATOR'S FORUM SLATED FOR APRIL 18, 2020**

ELGIN, IL – Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday has announced that he will be hosting a Moderator's Forum this spring. The event will take place at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA. The date is April 18, 2020 from 1-9 p.m.

The forum's focus is "Historical Themes Impacting Today's Church." It will feature leading Brethren historians who will address a variety of historical themes impacting present-day congregations, districts, and national structures. Particular attention will be given to Brethren history and themes relevant to the current reality of Brethren communions, with special emphasis on the Church of the Brethren.

Themes to be addressed include accountability, compelling vision, division, forbearance, and nationalism.

Historians participating include Jeff Bach, Director, Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Elizabethtown College; William Kostlevy, Director, Brethren Historical Library and Archives; Stephen Longenecker, Edwin L. Turner Distinguished Professor of History, Bridgewater College; Carol Scheppard, Professor of the College, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Bridgewater College; and Dale Stoffer, Emeritus Professor of Historical Theology, Ashland Theological Seminary.

The forum will conclude with an evening worship service and a message from Dennis Webb, a leading Church of the Brethren preacher and pastor of Naperville (Illinois) Church of the Brethren.

The forum is open to both clergy and laity. Registration cost, which includes dinner, is \$30.00. For those attending the entire event, point six (0.6) CEU's (Continuing Education Units) are also available for an additional cost of \$10.00. The evening worship, beginning with hymn singing at 7 p.m., is open to the public without cost or registration and will be held in the Gible Auditorium on the Elizabethtown College campus. This event will also be available via live stream for a registration fee of \$15. To register or secure a forum brochure, please visit: [tinyurl.com/modforum2020](https://tinyurl.com/modforum2020). The registration deadline is April 9, 2020. Space for the main sessions (other than worship) is limited to 150 participants, thus you are encouraged to register early.

## **TRAIL THOUGHTS TREKKING TOWARD GOD'S ADVENTUROUS FUTURE**

The Winter edition of Trail Thoughts has arrived!

Trail Thoughts is a quarterly resource provided by Church of the Brethren Moderator Paul Munday.

Written as a pastoral letter, Trail Thoughts addresses topics related to the church in a concise, relevant, yet biblical manner.

The pastoral letter is designed to be used for personal devotions and/or a resource for Sunday School classes, small groups, or congregational committees/teams and publications.

Discussion starters/questions are included with each letter, along with options for “digging deeper,” to encourage engagement and reflection.

Click on the link that follows to access the Winter edition of Trail Thoughts. Two formats are offered for download: [one in black and white](#) and [one in color](#).

For an online version of Trail Thoughts, go to [www.brethren.org/ac/2020/moderator](http://www.brethren.org/ac/2020/moderator).

You are encouraged to distribute Trail Thoughts widely, not only as a handout, but also as a bulletin or newsletter insert, along with a posting on your congregation’s website and/or social media sites.

Moderator Paul Munday’s social media sites follow. Join him on his Moderator journey by accessing one or more of these outlets.

Paul can be reached directly at [moderator@brethren.org](mailto:moderator@brethren.org).

## **Annual Conference ballot for 2020 is announced**

**Church of the Brethren Newsline**

**January 31, 2020**

The Annual Conference office has announced the ballot to be presented at this summer’s Conference on July 1-5 in Grand Rapids, Mich. Topping the ballot are two candidates for Annual Conference moderator-elect: **Paul Liepelt** and **Tim McElwee**. Candidates for numerous additional offices also have been announced.

**Paul Liepelt** is a pastor at Annville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, and lives in Annville. He is on the executive committee of the denomination’s Mission and Ministry Board; his term ends during the 2020 Conference. In past experience on the denominational staff, he taught at Kulp Bible College in Nigeria for three years 2004-2007. He is an ordained minister and holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary.

**Tim McElwee** is retired and lives in Wolcottville, Ind. His leadership experience in the Church of the Brethren includes a number of roles at Manchester University over more than 30 years, including vice president for advancement, vice president for academic resources, and associate professor of peace studies. While an ordained minister he served as Manchester’s campus pastor and later as a chaplain at Timbercrest, a Church of the Brethren retirement community. In the 1990s he was denominational staff in Washington, D.C. He also has worked as senior director of development for

Heifer International. He holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Seminary and a master's degree and doctorate from Purdue University.

*Additional nominations:*

**Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee:** Beth Jarrett of Harrisonburg, Va., and Walt Wiltschek of Easton, Md.

**Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, representing laity:** Richard E. Allison of Claysburg, Pa., and Arthur Fourman of Dayton, Ohio.

**Mission and Ministry Board, Area 1:** Josiah Ludwick of Harrisburg, Pa., and Mandy North of Manassas, Va. **Area 4:** Daniel L. Butler of Grundy Center, Iowa, and Kathy A. Mack of Rochester, Minn.

**Bethany Seminary trustees representing clergy:** Chris Bowman of Manassas, Va., and Frances R. Townsend of Onkama, Mich. **Representing laity:** Irene Beltran of Pomona, Calif., and Jacki Hartley of Elgin, Ill.

**Brethren Benefit Trust board:** Janis Fahs of North Manchester, Ind., and David L. Shissler of Hummelstown, Pa.

**On Earth Peace board:** Erick Flores of Hermitage, Tenn., and Drew G. I. Hart of Harrisburg, Pa.

For more information about the Annual Conference go to [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac).

## **DR. TOD BOLSINGER AND DR. MICHAEL GORMAN TO SPEAK AT 2020 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

ELGIN, IL – Dr. Tod Bolsinger and Dr. Michael J. Gorman, two nationally acclaimed church leaders, will be featured resource persons at the 2020 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference to be held July 1-5, 2020, at DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dr. Bolsinger will be the featured speaker at an all-conference equipping session on Friday, July 3, where he will address “Doing Church in Uncharted Territory.” On Thursday, July 2, he will speak at the Moderator’s Dinner on the topic of “Adventure or Die” and lead an insight session themed “Standing the Heat, Surviving the Sabotage.” He will also speak at a breakfast event Friday morning, July 3, on “The Fire and the Anvil.”

Dr. Gorman will resource the Church of the Brethren Minister’s Association pre-conference on June 30 and July 1. His focus will be “1 Corinthians: Challenges for Today’s Church.” He will also serve as Bible study leader each morning for the entire Annual Conference on selected passages from the book of Revelation. In addition, Dr. Gorman will lead an insight session on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings on the topic “Reading the Bible Missionally.” On Saturday, he will speak at a luncheon on the theme “Non-Violence in the Writings of Paul.”

Dr. Tod Bolsinger serves as Vice President and Chief of Leadership Formation at Fuller Seminary in

Pasadena, California. Previously, he served the seminary as Vice President of Vocation and Formation and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology. Holding both a PhD in Theology and Master of Divinity from Fuller, Dr. Bolsinger also serves as an executive coach for corporate, nonprofit, educational, and church organizations in transformational leadership. He has authored three books, including his most recent, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. For seventeen years, he was the senior pastor of San Clemente Presbyterian Church in San Clemente, California, after serving for ten years at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. Dr. Bolsinger and his wife Beth have two children.

Dr. Michael J. Gorman holds the Raymond E. Brown Chair in Biblical Studies and Theology at St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore, Maryland. He has taught at St. Mary's since 1991, as well as serving as the Dean of St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute from 1995 to 2012. Dr. Gorman is the author of nearly twenty books and scores of articles, including several books on Paul; books on Revelation, the Gospel of John, and the atonement; volumes on biblical interpretation; and short books on topics in Christian ethics. Dr. Gorman received his B.A. in French from Gordon College and his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, where he taught Greek. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and an elected member of the Society for New Testament Studies. A United Methodist layperson, Dr. Gorman is a frequent lecturer at churches, institutions of higher education, and clergy gatherings of many traditions in the U.S. and abroad. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Nancy, and they have three adult children.

For more information on the 2020 Annual Conference, entitled "God's Adventurous Future," visit the Annual Conference website at [www.brethren.org/ac/](http://www.brethren.org/ac/).

## Ventures online courses to focus on society and the environment

### Church of the Brethren Newsline

January 27, 2020

By Kendra Flory

The February and March online courses offered by Ventures will focus on society and the environment. Ventures in Christian Discipleship is a program of McPherson (Kan.) College.

In February, the Ventures online course will be **"Examining the Disconnect Between Society and the Environment."** The environment is our home, and we rely heavily on it for all aspects of our lives. Technology is becoming so much a part of our everyday lives that some experience nature simply through images on a screen. Running items across the scanner or clicking "Buy Now" has made the purchase of products from foods to electronics to vehicles so easy it comes often without a second thought—without thought of excess, of where these products come from, or of the natural and social environments impacted in the making of the products. This course will explore the disconnect between society and the environments on which we are so dependent and don't even realize it anymore.

The class will be held online on Saturday, Feb. 29, at 9 a.m. to 12 noon (central time) and taught by Dustin Wilgers, associate professor of biology at McPherson College. Wilgers has been on the faculty since 2011 teaching a variety of courses in biology and environmental stewardship. He has a passion for conservation and efforts that lead toward sustainability. He strongly believes that most people do the best they can for their situation but simply may not be aware of the implications of their everyday actions. Much of his work in and out of the classroom and with students of all ages focuses on increasing awareness of our impacts on the environment.

The March course will be **“Creation Care and the Gospel of John.”** This course looks to the Gospel of John as a resource for renewing our love for God’s creation and overcoming complacency about the current environmental crisis. We will learn from John’s prologue that Jesus is the embodiment of the divine wisdom that gives light and life to all creation. The prologue can then serve as our guide for reading other portions of John, including stories where Jesus continues to work for the transformation of humanity and the healing of creation.

The class will be held online on Saturday, March 21, at 9 a.m. to 12 noon (central time) and taught by Dan Ulrich, Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary. Ulrich has taught at the seminary since 1996. He is writing a book about the four gospels as guides for envisioning life-giving ministries in the 21st century, and recently completed a chapter on the Gospel of John. Hiking, camping, and canoeing are activities that have nurtured his love for God and God’s creation since childhood. He has enjoyed continuing those activities, when possible, with his spouse, Paula, and their young-adult children. Ulrich is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren with a doctorate in biblical studies from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Va.

All classes are donation-based and continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course.

To learn more about Ventures and to register for courses visit [www.mcpherson.edu/ventures](http://www.mcpherson.edu/ventures) .

*– Kendra Flory is advancement assistant at McPherson College.*

## **Ventures Online Course to Focus on Society and the Environment**

The March course from the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson College will be “Creation care and the Gospel of John.” This course looks to the Gospel of John as a resource for renewing our love for God’s creation and overcoming complacency about the current environmental crisis. We will learn from John’s prologue that Jesus is the embodiment of the divine wisdom that gives light and life to all creation. The prologue can then serve as our guide for reading other portions of John, including stories where Jesus continues to work for the transformation of humanity and the healing of creation.

The class will be held online Saturday, March 21 at 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. CST and taught by Dan Ulrich, Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary, where he has taught since 1996. He is writing a book about the four gospels as guides for envisioning life-giving ministries in the 21st century, and has recently completed a chapter on the Gospel of John. Hiking, camping, and canoeing are activities that have nurtured Dan's love for God and God's creation since childhood. He has enjoyed continuing those activities, when possible, with his spouse Paula and their young-adult children. Dan is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren with a Ph.D. in biblical studies from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

All classes are donation-based and continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course. To learn more about Ventures and to register for courses, visit [www.mcpherson.edu/ventures](http://www.mcpherson.edu/ventures).

## **Brethren Academy updates course listing for 2020 into 2021 Church of the Brethren Newsline**

January 16, 2020

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership has updated its course listing for 2020 into 2021. Courses are offered for continuing education credit (2 units per course), for personal enrichment, and for TRIM/EFSM credit. To register and pay for courses go to [www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy) or contact [academy@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:academy@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1824.

The updated course listing is as follows:

"Science and Faith," a weekend intensive, is offered April 29-May 3, 2020, at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., taught by Bethany professor Russell Haitch. The registration deadline is March 26.

"The Reward of Risk: Church Planting and Revitalization Emerging in Today's Current Dynamics," a directed independent study concurrent with the church planting conference, will be held May 13-15, 2020, at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., with instructor Stan Dueck, co-coordinator of Discipleship Ministries for the Church of the Brethren. The registration deadline is April 8.

"The Church in 1 Corinthians: Challenges for Today," a directed independent study concurrent with the Minister's Association annual meeting in advance of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, is held June 30-July 1, 2020, in Grand Rapids, Mich., with Bethany professor Dan Ulrich. The registration deadline is May 26. Cost is \$100 plus the registration fee for the Minister's Association event.

"Spiritual Practices for Ministry," an online course, is offered Sept. 8-Nov. 2, 2020, with instructor Reba Herder. The registration deadline is Aug. 4.

"Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures," an online course, is offered Oct. 14-Dec. 9, 2020, with instructor Matt Boersma. The registration deadline is Sept. 9.

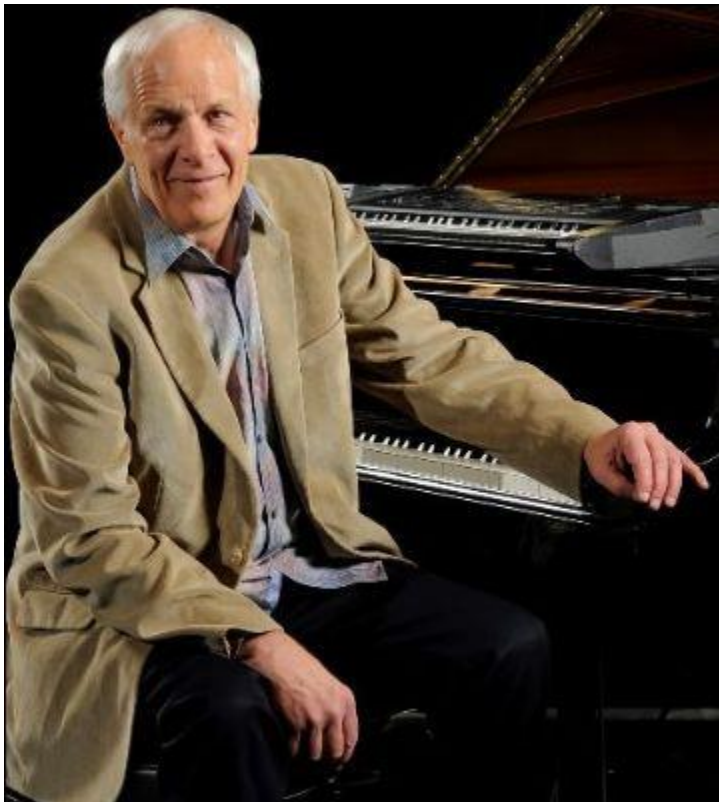


"Introduction to Theopoetics," an intensive at Bethany Seminary on Nov. 20-22, 2020, is taught by Bethany professor Scott Holland. The registration deadline is Oct. 15.

"Introduction to Preaching," an intensive at Bethany Seminary on Jan. 13-15, 2021, is taught by Bethany professor Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm. The registration deadline is Dec. 9.

For more information go to [www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy) .

## **Ken Medema Concert for Parables Community Sunday, April 19**



We are thrilled to announce that Ken Medema will be performing a concert for Parables Community on Sunday, April 19, 4 pm, at the First Congregational Church in West Dundee (900 South Eighth St/Hwy 31). Save the date for this fun event!

Ken is a professional pianist and singer who improvises in many different styles of music. His concerts are engaging and fun for all ages. Ken is blind and has a special heart for people with disabilities. We're so blessed to have him come perform for us. Invite everyone you know - bring your family and friends. It's going to be an amazing evening.

Admission is free. An offering for Parables Community will be collected the evening of the event.

## **DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING NEWS**

The District Leadership Team met Saturday, November 9, at Pleasant Hill Village in Girard, IL. The Team was reorganized with Carol Kussart (Cerro Gordo) and Mary Dulabaum (Highland Avenue) being called as co-chairs and Jan Dietrick (Mt. Morris) as secretary. Phyllis Batterton (Woodland) and Ed Watkins (Peoria) were welcomed as the newly called members to the team.

Agenda items to which the team gave attention are as follows:

- Approval of previous minutes
- Review of financial reports (financial secretary, treasurer, Brethren Foundations Funds)
- Reserves held as of Oct. 31, 2019: \$499,378.49 of which \$262,394.04 is in the Endowment Fund
- Total reserves and cash: \$522,371.87
- Received DE Report (of interest: 5 congregations in or completing the pastoral search process)
- Discussed at length ways to enhance ministry with the youth, young adults, and families in the district
- Approved a 4% draw from the Endowment as per the endowment charter and recommendation of the Property and Asset Management Team
- Agreed to do a fundraising emphasis prior to year end
- Reviewed appointments to leadership positions the Leadership Team is responsible for
- Thanked Pleasant Hill Village for being a gracious host. Thanked Dawn Smith for giving us a tour of the facility.

## **District Leadership Team Meeting Places 2020**

Apr. 18, 10 a.m., York Center COB

Jun. 6, 10 a.m., First COB, Springfield

Aug. 8, 9 a.m., Zoom Conference

Oct. 10, 10 a.m., First COB, Peoria

Nov. 14, 10 a.m., Pinecrest Community

District Leadership Team					
Position	Term	Name (Congregation)	Address	Email	Phone
Moderator	1 year	Rick Koch (Milledgeville)	P.O. Box 365 Milledgeville, IL 61051	<a href="mailto:revrick4433@gmail.com">revrick4433@gmail.com</a>	815-225-7812
Moderator Elect	2 years	Blaine Miner (Dixon)	115 N. Union St. Elgin, IL 60123	<a href="mailto:blaineminer86@gmail.com">blaineminer86@gmail.com</a>	847-404-6635
Clerk	3 years	Kristi Kellerman (Highland Ave)	380 S. Oriole Trail Crystal Lake, IL 60014	<a href="mailto:kristi.kellerman@gmail.com">kristi.kellerman@gmail.com</a>	815-814-1360
Recording Secretary	Appointed	Jan Dietrich (Mt. Morris)	2770 W West Grove Rd. Mt. Morris, IL 61054	<a href="mailto:jdiet220@hotmail.com">jdiet220@hotmail.com</a>	815-738-2365
Standing Committee	3 years	Dennis Webb (Naperville)	2407 Oakfield Dr. Aurora, IL 60503	<a href="mailto:djkrwebb@hotmail.com">djkrwebb@hotmail.com</a>	630-236-8166
Financial Secretary	3 years	Christine Knotts (Peoria)	2214 W Riviera Dr. Peoria, IL 61614	<a href="mailto:knotts.christine@gmail.com">knotts.christine@gmail.com</a>	309-253-6802
Treasurer	3 years	Ellis Boughton (Yellow Creek)	25156 Spring Valley Rd. Shannon, IL 61078	<a href="mailto:ellis.boughton@live.com">ellis.boughton@live.com</a>	815-864-2049
District Executive		Kevin Kessler (Canton)	135 Ingersoll Blvd. Canton, IL 61520	<a href="mailto:kevink.iwdcob@gmail.com">kevink.iwdcob@gmail.com</a>	309-224-4828 (C) 309-649-6008 (O)
Administrative Assistant		Andrea Garnett (Lutheran)	269 E. Chestnut St. Canton, IL 61520	<a href="mailto:andreag.iwdcob@gmail.com">andreag.iwdcob@gmail.com</a>	309-649-6008
Called Member	3 years	Ed Watkins (Peoria)	1013 W. Wonderview Dr. Dunlap, IL 61525	<a href="mailto:watkinsedwardjc@gmail.com">watkinsedwardjc@gmail.com</a>	309-397-2401
Called Member	3 years	Phyllis Batterton (Woodland)	8441 E. Sand Branch Rd. Ipava, IL 61441	<a href="mailto:pjbatterton@gmail.com">pjbatterton@gmail.com</a>	309-759-4897
Called Member	3 years	Mary Dulabaum (Highland Ave)	401 North Worth Ave. Elgin, IL 60123	<a href="mailto:mdulabaum@gmail.com">mdulabaum@gmail.com</a>	847-989-7723
Called Member	3 years	TBD*			
Called Member	3 years	Prudy Widlak (York Center)	448 Raintree Ct., Unit 3J Glen Ellyn, IL 60137	<a href="mailto:pramwid@gmail.com">pramwid@gmail.com</a>	630-790-1897
Called Member	3 years	Ginny Haney (Mt. Morris)	313 W. Main St. Mt. Morris, IL 61054	<a href="mailto:pastorginny1@frontier.com">pastorginny1@frontier.com</a>	815-677-0975
Called Member	3 years	Carol Kussart (Cerro Gordo)	12129 Angle Crossing Rd. Cerro Gordo, IL 61818	<a href="mailto:ckussart@gmail.com">ckussart@gmail.com</a>	217-855-3258
		*TBD = to be determined			

## 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!

## Newsline

-- **Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) has contracted with Sara Cook** to coordinate BVS Europe as of Jan. 1, 2020. The work will include accompanying BVS volunteers in Ireland and Northern Ireland and sustaining partnerships with all current and future project sites there. Originally from Corona, Calif., Cook was a BVS volunteer in Northern Ireland from 2001-2003 and has been living there since that time. For the last decade she has been in Belfast, where she attends a Presbyterian congregation. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work and history from Anderson University and a master's degree in social work and nonprofit leadership from Boston University. For the past two years she has been doing consultancy work in the area of conflict response, including teaching, training, facilitation, and mediation in Northern Ireland and internationally. In previous work, she was involved in peacebuilding in Northern Ireland in the period following the Good Friday agreement, directing an organization that brought together people who were affected by the conflict for storytelling and dialogue encounters. For more about Brethren Volunteer Service go to [www.brethren.org/bvs](http://www.brethren.org/bvs) .

-- **The Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA) seeks an archival intern** to work at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The purpose of the Archival Internship Program is to develop interest in vocations related to archives and libraries and/or Brethren history. The program will provide the intern with work assignments in the BHLA and with opportunities to develop professional contacts. Work will include processing archival materials, writing descriptive inventories, preparing books for cataloging, responding to reference requests, and assisting researchers. Professional contacts may include attending archival and library conferences and workshops, visits to libraries and archives in the Chicago area, and participation in a Brethren Historical Committee meeting. BHLA is the official repository for Church of the Brethren publications and records with a collection of more than 10,000 volumes, 3,500 linear feet of manuscripts and records, 40,000 photographs, plus videos, films, DVDs, and recordings. The intern's term of service is one year beginning June 2020 (preferred). Compensation includes housing, a stipend of \$550 every two weeks, and health insurance. A graduate student is preferred, or an undergraduate with at least two years of college. Requirements include an interest in history and/or library and archival work, willingness to work with detail, accurate word processing skills, and ability to lift 30-pound boxes. Submit a resume to [COBApply@brethren.org](mailto:COBApply@brethren.org) ; Office of Human Resources, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367. All submissions must be completed by April 1.

-- **Registration opened Thursday, Jan. 16**, for this summer's Church of the Brethren workcamps. "Jump in to serve this summer!" said an invitation from the Workcamp Ministry. Find out about this summer's workcamp opportunities and register at [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps) .

-- **Children's Disaster Services (CDS) training workshops** begin in February at several locations around the country. The workshops train prospective volunteers to serve with CDS to care for children and families affected by disasters. Find an interactive map of the next round of CDS workshops at [https://maps.esp.tl/maps/\\_CDS-Training-Workshops-2020/pages/map.jsp](https://maps.esp.tl/maps/_CDS-Training-Workshops-2020/pages/map.jsp) .

-- **A new Bible app is making this year's "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" accessible** to on-the-go people across the globe, according to a release from the World Council of Churches (WCC). The special week of prayer starts Jan. 18. The app is available for phones, computers, and tablets using the YouVersion Bible-reading app. Users can explore the theme for the week, "They Showed Us Unusual Kindness" (Acts 28:2) in a digital format. "The app, which has already been installed on more than 400 million devices by users in all countries of the world, allows users to read the Bible, share verses via social media, and bookmark favorite passages," said the release. Find out more at [www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/bible-app-brings-week-of-prayer-to-on-the-go-people-across-the-globe](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/bible-app-brings-week-of-prayer-to-on-the-go-people-across-the-globe) . Access the app at [www.bible.com/en-GB/reading-plans/17933](http://www.bible.com/en-GB/reading-plans/17933) .

-- **"Mark your calendars! National Young Adult Conference** will be here before you know it!" says a Facebook post from the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministries. The conference known as NYAC is planned for May 22-25, 2020, on the theme "Love in Action" (Romans 12:9-18). Find out more at [www.brethren.org/yac](http://www.brethren.org/yac) .

-- **The Workcamp Ministry has published and mailed its 2020 brochure** with detailed information about workcamps planned for next summer. The large, poster-sized brochure lists the dates and locations for the 20 workcamps including events for junior and senior high youth, young adults, intergenerational and adult groups. There is one correction to the information in the brochure. "We apologize for any confusion!" said a follow up announcement made via Facebook. "The correct dates for the We Are Able workcamp in Bethel, Pa., are June 22-25."

-- **"Do you love Brethren workcamps?"** said an announcement for the position of 2021 assistant workcamp coordinator. The position is open to those who will serve through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) to help plan and lead the 2021 summer workcamp ministry of the Church of the Brethren. Application deadline is Jan. 27, 2020. A link to the application form and a position description are online at [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps) .

-- **Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS)** is inviting Church of the Brethren congregations to send Christmas cards and holiday greetings to the current BVS volunteers. "Our volunteers love receiving cards and greetings from Brethren congregations!" said an

announcement. To request a list of the current BVS volunteers contact [bvs@brethren.org](mailto:bvs@brethren.org) .

-- **Registration opened Dec. 2 for the 2020 Christian Citizenship Seminar.** This event for high school-age youth and their adult advisors takes place in New York City and Washington, D.C. It is designed to give youth the chance to explore the relationship between faith and a particular political issue and then act from a faith perspective regarding that issue. This year's seminar focuses on pursuing economic justice. Dates are April 25-30, 2020. Go to [www.brethren.org/yya/ccs](http://www.brethren.org/yya/ccs) .

-- **Jan. 20 is the opening date to register for the 2020 National Young Adult Conference,** to be held May 22-25 at Montreat (N.C.) Conference Center. The theme is "Love in Action" (Romans 12:9-18). Speakers will include Drew Hart, Paul Shaffer, and Richard Zapata, among others. Worship coordinators are Jessie Houff and Tim Heishman. Music coordinator is Jacob Crouse. The planning team is the Young Adult Steering Committee: Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred, Briel Slocum, Jenna Walmer, Karly Eichenauer, Krystal Bellis, and Mario Cabrera. Registration cost varies depending on the participant's travel distance. Some scholarship assistance may be available. "Early bird" registration discount is available during January only. The conference is for participants ages 18 to 35. Infants up to 12 months old are welcome with a parent participant; childcare is not provided, contact the Youth and Young Adult Ministries office at [cobyouth@brethren.org](mailto:cobyouth@brethren.org) . Registration and more information will be posted at [www.brethren.org/yac](http://www.brethren.org/yac) .

-- **The Church of the Brethren's Michigan District seeks a district executive minister.** The district includes 20 congregations in the lower peninsula of Michigan, north of the southern tier of counties. Camp Brethren Heights is associated with the district and the district office location is negotiable. The district is theologically diverse and seeks creative and biblically centered leadership with a broad, unifying perspective to find common foundation to continue to build God's Kingdom together. This half-time position of approximately 25 hours per week is available on March 30. Travel is required both within and outside of the district. Responsibilities are in three main focus areas: 1. Direction, coordination, management, and leadership of the district program, as authorized by District Conference and implemented by the District Leadership Team; 2. Work with congregations in calling and credentialing ministers and in the placement/call and evaluation of pastoral staff, providing support and counsel for ministers and other church leaders and sharing and interpreting program resources for congregations; 3. Providing a crucial link between the congregations and the district and the wider church by working collaboratively with the Council of District Executives, Annual Conference and its agencies and their staff. Qualifications include ordination through an accredited program, with a master of divinity degree preferred; skills in



organization, administration, and communication; commitment to the Church of the Brethren locally and denominationally, along with ecumenical skills; demonstrated leadership skills; pastoral experience preferred; biblical leadership. To apply, send a letter of interest and resume to Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, Director, Office of Ministry, via email at [officeofministry@brethren.org](mailto:officeofministry@brethren.org) . Applicants are requested to contact three or four people willing to provide a letter of reference. Upon receipt of a resume, a candidate profile will be sent that must be completed and returned before the application is considered complete. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

**-- Bethany Theological Seminary seeks a communications and marketing coordinator** as part of the Institutional Advancement Department. Responsibilities include interacting with and developing materials for a myriad of constituencies, developing and maintaining web content and a social media plan, creating copy for various print and digital communications, managing advertising campaigns, assisting in fundraising and donor communications. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree; development, alumni relations, admissions, and/or marketing experience; experience with design software, web design software, e-communications, and social media; excellent communication abilities; strong project management skills; affinity with the values and mission of the seminary, required; understanding of the Church of the Brethren in the Anabaptist-Pietist tradition, preferred. A full job description is at [bethanyseminary.edu/about/employment](http://bethanyseminary.edu/about/employment) . Application reviews will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. Send a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three references to [gailc@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:gailc@bethanyseminary.edu) .

**-- Registration opens Feb. 6 for the New and Renew Church Planting and Church Renewal Conference** on May 13-15 at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. "Are you looking for a spiritually rich and creative space to worship, learn, network, and grow?" said an invitation. "Are you looking to be in conversation with other Jesus followers who are exploring new forms of mission, church planting, church renewal and shaping community? If so, be sure to join us." The theme is "The Reward of Risk." Early registration will be available through April 15 with a special rate of \$179 that includes two lunches and an Intercultural Celebration Dinner. On April 16 all registration rates will return to the regular rate of \$225. Attendees are responsible for their own housing; conferences rates are available at local hotels but reservations must be made by April 19. To register and for more information Go to [www.brethren.org/churchplanting/2020](http://www.brethren.org/churchplanting/2020) .-- **Ted & Co. is touring over coming months, with Church of the Brethren districts and congregations among hosting groups.** Ted & Co. is led by Ted Swartz, a Mennonite comedian and a favorite at many Church of the Brethren conferences.

On Feb. 29, at 7:30 p.m., Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill., will host

a performance of **"We Own This Now,"** which looks at love of land, loss of land, and what it means to "own" something. Accompanying Swartz in this production is Michelle Milne. Said an announcement, "Chris has farmed the land his grandmother found as a home in Kansas after fleeing Russia almost 100 years ago; his daughter Riley is learning more about who was on that land before her Oma arrived, and the jarring connections she has to the fate of those people. We follow Chris and Riley as they navigate their changing relationship to each other and to the land their family has farmed for several generations." Admission is free.

-- On March 15 at 7 p.m., a new Ted & Co. and Ken Medema production called **"Can We Talk?"** is hosted by Southern Ohio/Kentucky District at Northmont High School Auditorium in Clayton, Ohio. Said an announcement: "Can We Talk?" is a rollicking 90 minutes of story, song, laughter, and moments of serious reflection around listening and conversation, especially when there is seemingly so much disagreement on issues in the church and society. The show includes classic and new material from Ted Swartz and Ken Medema. You will never be more than a few minutes from a laugh or a moment that makes you hold your breath. Don't miss this opportunity." Donations will be received to the district's Brethren Disaster Ministries Memorial Day Tornado Relief project.

-- **"The Fierce Urgency of Now" is the theme for Creation Justice Ministries resources** to equip congregations to celebrate Earth Day Sunday 2020. "Our 2020 materials include theological insights on what it means to live in this kairos moment for God's creation, stories of faith communities taking action, sermon starters, liturgy ideas, and action steps," said an announcement. The landing page and supplemental materials are at [www.creationjustice.org/urgency](http://www.creationjustice.org/urgency) . Find more information about Earth Day Sunday, including materials from previous years, at [www.earthdaysunday.org](http://www.earthdaysunday.org) .

## Extra Tidbits

[Archival Intern Opening](#)

[2020 IRS Mileage Rates](#)

[2020 Church Planting Conference](#)

[James E. Renz Pinecrest Memorial Scholarship](#)

[Ken Medema to perform at Parables](#)

[Ted and Company Performance at Highland Avenue COB](#)

## District Newsletters

[Franklin Grove](#)

[York Center](#)

[Mt. Morris](#)



# 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.

## 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.

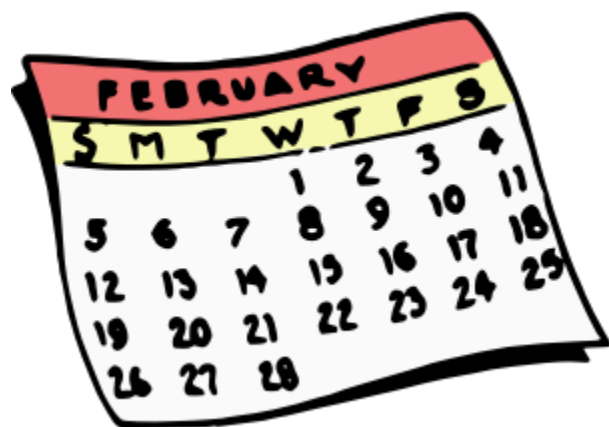
Serving is rewarding!

## 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.



## Upcoming Events

Feb. 15 10 a.m. Gifts Discernment and Call Committee meeting at Highland Ave. COB

Feb. 26 Ash Wednesday

Feb. 29 10 a.m. Program and Arrangements Committee meeting at Highland Ave. COB

Mar. 1 First Sunday in Lent

Mar. 8 Second Sunday in Lent

Mar. 13-16 Mission and Ministry Board, General Office, Elgin

Mar. 15 Third Sunday in Lent

Mar. 15 One Great of Hour Sharing offering

Mar. 22 Fourth Sunday in Lent

Mar. 29 Fifth Sunday in Lent

Apr. 5 Palm Sunday

Apr. 9 Maundy Thursday

Apr. 10 Good Friday

Apr. 12 Easter

Apr. 18 10 a.m. Leadership Team meeting