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# The Reflector

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



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## DE Ponderings

by Kevin Kessler

(Read Exodus 7:1-15:27)

The cost to humanity in the United States in 2020 is tremendous. Without a doubt, losing over 100,000 lives to COVID-19 is perplexing. Add to the mix intensified racial tensions sparked by inconceivable atrocities that continue to be committed against black men and women. Peaceful demonstrations calling for justice began quickly. Unwelcome violence followed with losses to property and, in some instances, loss of life.

These immediate costs must not overshadow the long-term costs endured for decades by people of color. For all too long, our siblings of color have suffered injustices as a result of systemic white privilege. The costs are experienced as disproportionate wealth, inconsistent health care, and discrimination in employment opportunities, to name a few. The sum of these costs is loss of dignity.

Compounding this loss over countless years without necessary systemic change is a recipe for the cries to grow stronger—and rightly so. The unrest being witnessed presently is difficult for many, white and privileged, to understand and fathom. As a white, privileged male, I don't fully understand it, either. How can I? But I seek to learn and to know more and to understand how as part of the problem I might find opportunity to help bring change. And if I don't, not only will my siblings of color continue to suffer, but the whole of humanity will as well. Black lives matter. If I don't believe this, then neither do I believe that any life matters.

I am reminded of the Exodus story. For centuries, the Hebrew people were enslaved by the Egyptians. They were suppressed and oppressed. They were unable to experience the privileges of their oppressors. They continued to cry out for relief and release. As the oppression pressed down upon them with more intensity, so then their cries for justice became louder and stronger. The denial of dignity had become more than they could bear.

Were the plagues that came on the heels of their loudest cries equivalent to the protests being experienced in our culture today? If so, can

we learn from that ancient story? The plagues—protests—continued as a means of trying to get the attention of the privileged oppressors. Change was needed. Each plague caused difficulty for all peoples in this story. But change did not happen until the plague—the protest—had a personal impact on the privileged oppressor. The oppressed were provided the opportunity to be relieved of this final plague. With a simple act, the plague passed over them. Finally, they received release. But the cost? All, Egyptian and Hebrew, suffered along the way. How significant it was, though, to the privileged with the final protest. Although the cost to the privileged seemed great during the previous plagues, it would have been better to take the risk then than to receive the final cost. Consider then, would not all of humanity experience a greater wholeness if we, in this present age, listen carefully and act accordingly, now?

Because of my status in society as a white, privileged male, I am not qualified to speak about these issues. I am certainly not an expert in these matters by any stretch of the imagination. I may make mistakes in the way I convey my thoughts, for which I am sorry and humbly seek forgiveness. However, I cannot remain quiet. I add my voice to those who hurt and seek justice. It is time that I accept the risk, in whatever way I can, to initiate change, so that my siblings of color will experience the dignity that is rightfully theirs and all of humanity will experience wholeness as our Creator intended.

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## The Moderator's Column

In between projects I am working on in the office I have a habit of walking around the church sanctuary and listening to a CD. It's a good way for me to pray, praise, and be filled with the holy spirit. During one of these "wondering times" I was overcome with fear and uncertainty.

I will be totally honest with you; personally, this whole Covid-19 experience hasn't been much more than a nuisance to me. I know a few folks who've had it, but no hospitalizations or deaths. I've still gone to church each day to work. My wife also works, as do my adult kids. I do not mean to diminish the price our world has paid due to this virus. It has been life changing - but eventually it will end!

However, the racial unrest that we are experiencing at the moment causes me to fear and feel anxious for our futures. This is not something we can throw a vaccination at and we cannot pass enough legislation to end it. If we could one might think we would have come up with it already!

Racism, bigotry, a lack trust in those who look different from us are all matters of the heart! Way too many of us, don't want to go through the "heart surgery" needed. We prefer to close our eyes and hope it all goes away.

I will admit as a sixty-something, middle income, white male, I am a part of the problem. However, I also need to be a part of the solution! I don't have any answers, but I am open to dialog as we search for them together.

Love y'all,  
Moderator Rick

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## Lombard Mennonite Peace Center to Offer Workshop

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will offer four sessions of *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders* this year between August and November on the following weeks: August 3-7, August 31-September 4, October 5-9, and November 16-20, 2020. Early-birds registrants can receive a **\$200 discount**. To learn more, please consult this [MSTI brochure](#). To register online for any of our events, go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/720852>. With questions or concerns, please contact our office at 630-627-0507 or [Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org](mailto:Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org).

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## CONSIDERING RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

Our district includes two states: Illinois and Wisconsin. Each state has its own set of dynamics related to the COVID-19 pandemic and thus considering the resumption of in-person gatherings of our communities of faith should take into consideration respective state guidelines. In addition, the welfare of our congregational constituencies needs to be considered during decision-making, as well.

Our district has not made a statement or created a document with definitive guidelines to use for resuming in-person services. However, a list of resources, including some helpful questions, has been compiled for your use as you enter into a decision-making process. As we become aware of new information, we will make it available to you through the newsletter and/or occasional memos.

If your congregation has developed guidelines or statements that you are willing to share, send them to the district office indicating this intent, and we will be

happy to distribute it.

### **Questions to consider**

- 1) What are the professionals in our area advising at this time? What do governmental leaders say is safe? What do the medical experts in our communities advise as it relates to gathering in person? How will we weigh and balance what may be conflicting information?
- 2) If we were to resume in person gatherings what do we see as the risks? What do we see as the gains? What steps will we need to take to provide a safe and healthy space and experience for people?
- 3) What portion of the congregation would feel safe in returning to in person gatherings? What portion should not feel safe returning at this time because of their age or other medical conditions? Are there commitments we can make as a congregation that would help people feel safe and included?
- 4) If we were to resume in person gatherings how do we provide for those who have been able to be with us in our current forms of gathering but would not feel comfortable coming to the building and being together in the same room?
- 5) If we are to resume in person what will we require of those who attend? How will we support safe practices when together? What is the maximum number of persons we can have in the worship space and abide by government and health guidelines?
- 6) If we resume in person activities, will it only be for worship at this time? What about other aspects of our ministry such as children's, youth groups, Sunday School, meetings, and more?

### **Resource List**

Guide to Returning (Wisconsin)

<http://content.delivra.com/etapcontent/WisconsinCouncilofChurches/attachments/WCC%20Guide%20to%20Returning%20to%20Church%20-%20Ministry%20During%20COVID19.pdf>

Information from Lewis Center for Church Leadership

<https://www.churchleadership.com/tag/covid-19/>

Article from Congregational Consulting Group

<https://www.congregationalconsulting.org/caught-between-anxiety-and-anger/>

Information from Church Mutual

<http://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20200518/aa/78/b9/76/a691037ea57238bafccae0cd/CM0308-2020-05-RC-Recommendations-for-a-Safe-Return-to-Worship.pdf>

Information from Brotherhood Mutual

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/general-health-and-injury-prevention/coronavirus/before-we-gather/>

Shenandoah District Best Practices

<http://images.acswebnetworks.com/1/929/BestPracticesReopening2020.pdf>

State of Illinois Guidance for Places of Worship

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/Church%20Guidance.pdf>

Restore Illinois – Phases 1-5 explained

<https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/restore-illinois-introduction>

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## **Participate in the Church of the Brethren Virtual Choir!**

Recently, Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday announced plans for a denominational virtual choir. Three hymns are projected to be a part of the overall project: "Blessed Assurance," "I See A New World Coming," and "Move In Our Midst."

The three hymns will be used in the Virtual Denominational Worship and the Virtual Denominational Concert on July 1 and 2. You can find more information about them at: [www.brethren.org/news/2020/denominational-worship-service-to-be-virtual-event.html](http://www.brethren.org/news/2020/denominational-worship-service-to-be-virtual-event.html)

Now we need your participation, as we join together to worship the Living God, in Christ, during these challenging days!

In summary, a virtual choir is produced by each individual person recording themselves singing along with the hymn, and then all those submissions are painstakingly put together into one grand compilation that includes all the voices. Each of us gets to contribute our small part to help make up the whole (much

like with the church!). As it is with large choirs, individual voices will not be heard, just all of us together.

We've set ambitious goals for this project, and are working on three hymns at once. We welcome your submissions as soon as possible

- The Early-Bird Deadline is June 7, 2020;
- The Final Deadline is June 14, 2020.

Please pay careful attention to these deadlines for sending in your submissions, because we are on a very tight timeline as we hope to have the final choir pieces ready for our worship celebration July 1.

To make your submission go to the following web link: [www.brethren.org/VirtualChoir](http://www.brethren.org/VirtualChoir)

For general questions about the Virtual Choir project, please contact [cobvirtualchoir2020@gmail.com](mailto:cobvirtualchoir2020@gmail.com). For technical assistance, please contact: [assistance@LivingStreamCOB.org](mailto:assistance@LivingStreamCOB.org).

Please pray for the project overall, and the project core team consisting of Enten Eller, Paul Munday, and Dave Sollenberger.

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## DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING NEWS

The Leadership Team met via ZOOM June 6, 2020. Co-Chair Mary Dulabaum led the meeting. The following agenda items were given attention:

- During a time of sharing, it was learned that a few congregations in the district are now gathering for in-person worship services or offering drive-in/outdoor services with safety protocols. Some congregations continue to discern when it is best to return to in-person gathering. It was noted that we share concern regarding present racial tensions and injustices.
  - Reviewed financial reports. Reserves were negatively affected by market fluctuation several weeks ago but have rebounded significantly. The balance of reserves as of May 31: \$470,145.27
  - Agreed to take the 4% draw on the Endowment Fund now.
  - DE reported the he is working primarily from home during the COVID pandemic. Continues meeting with various teams (via Zoom) and working with 2 congregations on pastoral placement.
  - Work continues on making appointments to various teams.
  - Budget work will begin soon so that it is ready to be published in District Conference materials.
  - District Conference will be held virtually this fall. Information and details will be sent out in the district soon.
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## District Leadership Team Meeting Places 2020

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

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

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

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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:watkinedwardjc@gmail.com">watkinedwardjc@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			

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## 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!

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## Newsline

-- **Discipleship Ministries staff have shared a prayer request for the Church of the Brethren-related retirement communities.** "We ask that the church be in prayer for the 21 retirement communities that are part of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes," said Joshua Brockway, co-coordinator of Discipleship Ministries. "Please pray for the administrators as they steward their resources to provide care in the midst of a pandemic. Pray for the nurses and staff as they care for the community members physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And most of all, pray for the mental and physical wellbeing of the community members themselves. May God watch over each one, granting wisdom and peace."

Go to [www.brethren.org/homes/directory.html](http://www.brethren.org/homes/directory.html) for the listing and web addresses for the 21 communities in the Fellowship of Brethren Homes.

**-- Retirement communities have been sharing suggestions for ways to help their residents and staff during the pandemic:**

Financial donations for purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) may be particularly helpful during this time. Several of the church-related communities, including Fahrney Keedy Senior Living Community in Boonsboro, Md., have made such requests.

Some retirement communities are welcoming donations of home-sewn masks for staff and residents. There are many websites offering instructions for making masks, here is one recommended by Pinecrest, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Mount Morris, Ill.: [www.regmedctr.org/webres/File/031920%20Properfit%20Clothing%20Co\\_%202\\_5%20PM%20Surgical%20Mask%20Sewing%20Instructions.pdf](http://www.regmedctr.org/webres/File/031920%20Properfit%20Clothing%20Co_%202_5%20PM%20Surgical%20Mask%20Sewing%20Instructions.pdf) .

Also from Pinecrest comes this suggestion to help residents who may be feeling isolated as their facilities are closed to visitors. "If you're looking for ways to keep your children busy while they are off school, would you consider having them make a card or a picture for our residents? You could mail them to 'Any Resident,' Pinecrest Manor, 414 S. Wesley Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054."

**-- A Weekly Virtual Campfire is being held by Camp Mack via Facebook Live each Sunday at 7 p.m. (Eastern time).** "Join us singing along, enjoying your popcorn, and being in community," said an invitation. Go to [www.facebook.com/events/2491707141142969](https://www.facebook.com/events/2491707141142969) .

**-- 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) .

**-- The World Council of Churches (WCC) is seeking young songwriters** to enter a song-writing competition for its 11th Assembly. The Worship Planning Committee together with the WCC Youth Engagement program are presenting a creative opportunity to young people between the ages of 18 and 35 who attend a WCC member church--which includes the Church of the Brethren. "The Youth Song Writing Competition at the 11th Assembly in 2021 is an intentional effort of the WCC to engage young people in every aspect of what we do in the life and works of the whole fellowship," said Joy Eva Bohol, WCC program executive for Youth Engagement. Contestants are expected to compose their songs around the assembly theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity." The top eight songs selected from each region will be included in assembly worship resources. Songs can be written in any language but must be accompanied with an English translation. Every submission will be reviewed by a dedicated committee. The top three entries may be invited to lead and perform their songs in a musical event during the assembly. Download the entry form at [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/youth/entry-form\\_songwriting-competiton-for-youth](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/youth/entry-form_songwriting-competiton-for-youth) . Download the Guidelines and Mechanics form at [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/youth/guidelines-and-mechanics-song-writing-competition](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/youth/guidelines-and-mechanics-song-writing-competition) . Download the competition flyer at [www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/flyeryouthcontestdoc.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/flyeryouthcontestdoc.pdf) . Submission deadline is June 30.

**-- The Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry invites pastors to apply** to participate in its Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church program. Open to any Church of the Brethren pastor serving in a congregational role that is less than full-time, the program offers support, resources, and companionship for the 77 percent of the denomination's clergy who serve as multivocational pastors. Pastors who join the program will receive one-on-one encouragement and consultation with a regionally based "circuit rider" who will schedule an in-person visit to encourage and help identify specific challenges and places where some extra support could be helpful. The circuit rider will work to connect pastors with colleagues, educational resources, and experts who can offer guidance, companionship, and encouragement. This grant-funded program is free of charge to Church of the Brethren multivocational pastors. Find more information and the online application form at [www.brethren.org/part-time-pastor](http://www.brethren.org/part-time-pastor) . Contact Dana Cassell, program manager, with questions at [dcassell@brethren.org](mailto:dcassell@brethren.org) .

**-- "Coronavirus worries got you down? Social distancing making you feel, well...distant?** We've just started a brand new season of the Dunker Punks Podcast!" said an invitation to listen to Brethren from across the country talk about life and the struggles of a modern-day Anabaptist. In Episode 94, titled "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?" the podcast features a conversation about Brethren Volunteer Service from the McBride triplets who are all currently in BVS. The most recent episode delves into "The Making of a Dunker Punk" as Ben Bear talks to Donna Parcell about her life as a counter-cultural Brethren and her joys and struggles with raising another Dunker Punk. Listen to these episodes and the podcast's extensive archive of almost 100 episodes at [arlingtoncob.org/dpp](http://arlingtoncob.org/dpp) or on iTunes at [bit.ly/DPP\\_iTunes](https://bit.ly/DPP_iTunes) . Participate in the continuing conversations on social media by searching @dunkerpunkspod.

**-- The National Council of Churches**, of which the Church of the Brethren is a member denomination, is offering daily scriptures, prayers, and meditations by Christian leaders from a wide variety of church traditions. Yesterday's meditation, for example, was written by Timothy Tee Boddie, a minister at the Alfred Street Baptist Church and immediate past general secretary and chief administrative officer of the Progressive National Baptist Convention in Washington, D.C. Find this daily devotional resource at <http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/topics/daily> .

**-- Allison L Snyder will begin June 22 as the 2020-2021 intern in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives.** She is a graduate of McPherson (Kan.) College with a bachelor of arts in history and English. She currently works as a lead/co-teacher for Little Tigers Learning Center and volunteers as a youth advisor for Panther Creek Church of the Brethren.

**-- Messenger magazine is offering online puzzle pages for children and families staying safe-at-home during the pandemic.** The two pages of puzzles have been put together with help from Zoe Vorndran, intern at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, based on the Church of the Brethren camps at [www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/puzzles-brethren-camps.html](http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/puzzles-brethren-camps.html) and the church-related colleges and universities at [www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/crossword-brethren-colleges.html](http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/crossword-brethren-colleges.html) . "Zoe, thank you for the challenging clues!" said a note from the Messenger editorial team. Messenger is the denominational magazine of the Church of the Brethren.-- **The World**

**Council of Churches (WCC) has announced a webinar and a new e-book offering examples of “best practices”** from churches across the world that are taking their ministry and services online because of COVID-19.

**A new publication by one of the featured speakers at the webinar, Heidi Campbell**, professor of communication at Texas A&M University and director of the Network for New Media, Religion, and Digital Culture Studies, is called “The Distanced Church: Reflections on Doing Church Online.” This e-book was created with input from 30 practitioners and researchers sharing their current experiences and observations. Contributors come from 10 different countries, representing 12 different Christian denominations. “The goal is to get this material out to those who will most benefit from a project of this nature--religious communities wrestling with the sudden move from offline to online ministry through digitally-mediated contexts,” said Campbell.

Find out more at [www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/taking-your-ministry-online-webinar-new-publication-will-give-solid-how-tos](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/taking-your-ministry-online-webinar-new-publication-will-give-solid-how-tos) .

-- **Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) has added a number of new resources** for children and families to its COVID-19 resources page. Go to <https://covid19.brethren.org/resources-for-children-families> .

-- **Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.**, has been instrumental in advocating for a handwashing station for residents who don’t have shelter in downtown Elgin. Cheryl Gray, a church volunteer who leads the congregation’s Community Engagement Team and ongoing Soup Kettle ministry, helped advocate with city leaders to provide restroom and hygiene facilities for the homeless population. Reported Gray in the church newsletter: “As businesses and other facilities shuttered mid-March at the urging of our Governor, Elgin residents who lived unsheltered in downtown Elgin found themselves without any restroom facilities. Even the lobby of the Elgin Police Department was deemed off-limits due to COVID-19. The City placed two port-o-lets in Carleton Rogers Park but were reluctant to provide more facilities for handwashing because of potential vandalism or other misuse.” After some weeks of communications with city officials, a creative handwashing station was built by the city’s Public Works Department. The newsletter described the handwashing station as having three spigots and a drinking fountain that use a fire hydrant as a water source. The church is providing bars of soap that hang by the water spigots in nylon stockings--“a Brethren-like move,” the newsletter commented. Signs posted at the site indicate that users can get individual bars of soap at the Soup Kettle.

-- **Illinois and Wisconsin District disaster response coordinator Loren Habegger** has shared an urgent message from the state’s VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) on the need to support food banks and pantries. “The food bank /pantries are facing imminent substantial shortages from an increased demand in part related to families with bread winners being unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said the email. “Food banks are seeing 70 percent more people seeking assistance with 40 percent of people first-time users.” The email went on to list the eight regional food banks that are coordinated by Feeding Illinois, for the purpose of sending donations. Each state will have its own list of regional food banks in need of donations and volunteer support at this time. “Alternatively, donations can be made directly to various local food pantries in your area that coordinate with the regional banks. Donation of ‘shelf-stable’ items to local pantries is also encouraged,” said the email. “Thank you for considering your participation in addressing this urgent need.” Find a national listing of food banks at [www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank) .

--**Mary Scott Boria of First Church of the Brethren in Chicago, Ill.**, has sewn 1,000 COVID-19 masks, “and counting!” report fellow church members Joyce and John Cassel. “Masks for hospital workers, prison inmates, anti-violence street workers, senior citizens in public housing, postal workers, police detectives, disabled people, grandchildren, and others. Masks were sent to Boulder, New York City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Puerto Rico, Chicago, suburban Chicago, and other locations.” Boria is a longtime member and a strong leader in the congregation. She has “always loved fabric, and loved to sew,” the Cassels write. “Across the years Mary created many artistic and creative pieces, like the Pentecost banner she made for First Church.” They report that sewing has been an important part of life for Boria, who has had connections to the Textiles Department of the Chicago Art Institute, and at one point owned four sewing machines. Her project to sew face masks started when a friend expressed frustration, via Facebook, about not being able to find a mask for her disabled brother. “Mary said to herself, ‘I can make a mask.’ And she improvised two for her friend.” After her friend wrote a post appreciating Boria’s mask-making gifts, other people started to contact her asking for masks, “and the requests exploded.”

-- **About the latest Dunker Punks Podcast:** “Need ideas for some wholesome fun? Having trouble finding a silver lining? Susu and Annika chat about experiencing community during a pandemic, rekindling their love and excitement towards nature, connecting with old friends, and a lot more. For your daily dose of positivity!” Listen at [bit.ly/DPP\\_Episode98](https://bit.ly/DPP_Episode98) or subscribe on iTunes.

-- **The Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) has named Jeanne Davies as its new executive director**, effective June 1, following Eldon Stoltzfus’ resignation for health reasons as of May 1. Davies is currently the ADN program director and will increase her time commitment as she assumes new responsibilities. In addition to her current responsibilities for resources, advocacy, volunteer coordination, and social media, she will be adding organizational leadership and fundraising. Davies is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and also serves as pastor for Parables Community, an accessible and inclusive new church start in Dundee, Ill. She holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary and is working on a Certificate in Disability and Ministry at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich. ADN relates to multiple denominations and supports church congregations, families, and individuals touched by disabilities to nurture communities where everyone belongs. Find out more at [AnabaptistDisabilitiesNetwork.org](http://AnabaptistDisabilitiesNetwork.org) .

-- **On Earth Peace’s prison justice group will be hosting** an eight-week community engagement and development program online beginning May 26. This program provides opportunities for building connections with a network of other people concerned about prison

justice issues, learning more about the challenges facing prisoners and preparing as a leader through exposure to principles of nonviolence and tactics of advocacy, and taking action in the community through completing program engagement activities. The program is intended for those interested in getting more involved in their communities, prison justice awareness, and taking action. Program activities correlate to point values, and participants who earn enough points will win a free On Earth Peace Prison Justice t-shirt. Group activities include watching short prison justice analysis videos and discussing them as a group, reading and discussing short excerpts from "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, and attending webinars on principles of Kingian Nonviolence. For more information contact Jennifer Weakland at [PrisonJustice@OnEarthPeace.org](mailto:PrisonJustice@OnEarthPeace.org). Join the On Earth Peace prison justice Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/oep.prisonjustice](https://www.facebook.com/groups/oep.prisonjustice).

-- **Brethren Disaster Ministries is asking for help with supplying cloth face masks.** "Whenever serving is possible again, these will be used to provide to those volunteering on rebuilding project sites who do not have their own," said an announcement. "Depending on the supply available, more could be provided to homeowners, other partners in the areas of our sites, or other places as identified. Two suggested options with instructions on how to make the masks can be provided." If you, a group at your church, or your district can help with making and supplying masks contact Terry Goodger at 410-635-8730 or [tgoodger@brethren.org](mailto:tgoodger@brethren.org).

-- **The former associate director of Children's Disaster Services (CDS), Kathy Fry-Miller**, has published a new children's picture book about the coronavirus titled "Helpers Win: Yucky-rus Virus." Fry-Miller is the author of the book that is illustrated entirely by children. The book also is a fundraiser, and donations are being received to CDS. Find out more at <https://lnkd.in/ekKEaB7>.

-- **The latest Messenger Radio "CoBcast"** is online at [www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/today-we-have-a-sponge-cake.html](http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2020/today-we-have-a-sponge-cake.html). It features Office of Ministry director Nancy Sollenberger Heishman reading her Potluck piece for the June issue of Messenger, "Today, we have a sponge cake."

-- **Eli Kellerman, a graduating senior and member of the youth group at Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.**, who plans to study to become a nurse and midwife, has received the James E. Renz Pinecrest Memorial Scholarship from the Pinecrest Retirement Community Board.

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## Extra Tidbits

[2020 IRS Mileage Rates](#)

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## District Newsletters

[Franklin Grove](#)

[York Center](#)

[Mt. Morris](#)

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## 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.

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## 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!

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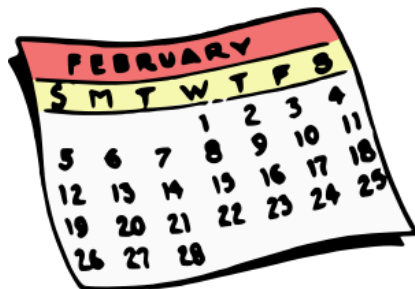
## District Mission and Mortar Grant/Loan Program

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.

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## Upcoming Events

July 1-5 - COB Annual Conference

August 8, 9 a.m. - District Leadership Team Meeting, Zoom

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[Read More](#)

[Donate to the IL/WI District](#)