
The Reflector

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



DE Ponderings

by Kevin Kessler

Lisa Sharon Harper, a self-proclaimed evangelical, wrote in an essay the following rather provocative question: And what if the call of God to white evangelicals is to stop trying to be God, to control everything and everyone, and to join the rest of humanity—beloved dust?

Those last two words, beloved dust, speak volumes. Regardless of who we are, what we profess, how we live, where we live, our origins are the same as well as will be our endings: By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return (Genesis 3:19 NRSV).

The message from Genesis is humbling. We are no less than nor more than any other human being—past, present, or future—on this earth.

Perhaps we would do well to keep all of this in mind as we navigate a global health pandemic. To defy the recommendations of learned scientists and doctors who strongly encourage and suggest that we follow certain hygiene protocols to alleviate the negative impact of a rampant virus is in essence placing the importance of others below our own. If, as we learn in Genesis, we are all dust, then isn't it incumbent on us all to value all others as we value ourselves and do all we can to display the utmost worth of all others?

There are many protocols to follow to help alleviate the infection rate of COVID-19. One that seems to prompt the most conversation and perhaps confrontation is the wearing of face masks. My view is that I wear a face mask not primarily to protect me but that I might offer a safer space for others in my presence. Wearing a mask is not about me; it is about how I value the other as much as or maybe more than I value myself.

I've also come to the following conclusion about face masks. If I learn at some future date that wearing face masks was absolutely unnecessary, and I faithfully wore one during the height of pandemic concern, I will have zero regret. Why? Because I wore a face mask not out of obedience to any prescribed law. Rather, I wore one because I valued the worth of all others. And that, in my view, is reason to do something that, honestly, I passionately dislike doing. I will have no regret knowing I have upheld the value of the rest of humanity. I am, with you, beloved dust.

The Moderator's Column

Greetings to my brothers and sisters in the Illinois/Wisconsin District!

As I sit at my desk here in the Dutchtown church office, I find myself anticipating the Independence Day weekend. In the last few months the United States - and the rest of the world - was overcome by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we may not have made all of right decisions, we as a country are enduring.

Racial tension also grew in intensity in recent weeks and we've clumsily sought to bring equality among all people. We as a nation will be made stronger as we seek to correct the injustices in our land.

We have a long ride ahead of us as Christ's Church, a ride that will continue to its "bumps along the way". Yet, Christ will prevail by working through His Church.

I don't know about you, but I need to "Ohh & Ahh" over some fireworks exploding over my head! I need to cast out a line at my local fishin' hole! I need a good BBQ and deck time this Independence Day weekend. The world's problems disappear, but with this brief weekend reprieve, might we get refreshed by Christ, preparing you and I for the work ahead of us.

May God Bless you all richly,
Moderator Rick

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN GUIDANCE ON COVID-19

Congregations in the IL/WI District are at a variety of places in matters of COVID-19 response. Some are meeting again in-person either strictly outdoors and others indoors, both with certain restrictions. Some have decided to wait until later to begin having in-person gatherings.

The Church of the Brethren denomination has posted helpful Guidelines for responding to the challenges of the pandemic. To access that information, visit this webpage: <https://covid19.brethren.org/>

Following local community guidelines, if available, is also advisable.

Utilizing best practices to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone is advised especially now that COVID cases are on the rise.

ON-LINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership – Free Webinar

Defining Set-Apart Ministry Within the Multivocational Reality:

Exploring the special rewards and challenges of pastoral ministry in a multivocational context

Thursday, August 13 at 7 pm - 8 pm (Eastern)

Presenter: Sandra Jenkins, pastor of Constance Church of the Brethren, full-time public school music teacher, and regular instructor for the Brethren Academy

Register here: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy>

0.1 CEU available to participating clergy

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

Ethics for Set-Apart Ministers: Basic Course

Webcast: September 12, 2020, 10am to 4pm, EST

Deadline to register: August 31, 2020

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

Spiritual Practices for Ministry

Presenter: Reba Herder

Offered as an online course beginning September 9

Registration deadline: August 4, 2020

Register online at: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/brethren-academy-course-registration-annual-trim-payment/>

For course brochure: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Spiritual-Practices-brochure-r021120.pdf>

For a complete listing of Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership courses:

<https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/>

PDF format listing of courses: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CourseListing060820.pdf>

Visit: <http://www.brethren.org/webcasts/>

for online learning options through Church of the Brethren Discipleship Ministries

Parables Community is Suspending All Ministry Activities

With gratitude for the last four years and in light of current circumstances, Parables Community is suspending all ministry activities at this time. Please read the following letters from [Pastor Jeanne](#) and [Board Chair Jonathan](#) for more information. Thank you for your prayerful support both past and present.

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.

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>

Brethren Press digital curriculum for the Fall offers Christian formation options during pandemic

Church of the Brethren Newsline

June 26, 2020

A release from Brethren Press

The Shine curriculum from Brethren Press is helping congregations provide Christian formation while maintaining social distancing. With the Sunday school landscape changing, most churches will either rely on parents to teach their own children or have teachers host online classes. These new downloadable options from Shine work in conjunction with the fall curriculum and will assist leaders by supplying useful resources to accommodate multiple formats and class settings.



"It may be some time before we know what worship and faith formation will look like in the future," said Joan Daggett, Shine project director. "We have curriculum pieces that are well suited for such a time as this. What we have to do is show churches how to use them."

On June 19, Shine announced two of the new digital resources: "Shine at Home" and "Shine Connect."

"Shine at Home" is a new, simple option for families to do at home if congregations are not resuming regular Sunday school this fall. "Shine at Home" includes weekly mini-sessions, complete with a prayer practice, ideas for sharing the Bible story, questions and conversation prompts, media suggestions, and four activities that help children and families explore the Bible

story. Use with Shine's storytelling, music, and student resources for a fun learning experience. "Shine at Home" is now available for preorder and will be released Aug. 1 as a downloadable PDF to email to all the families in the purchasing congregation.

"**Shine Connect**" is a new free resource for those faith formation teachers leading children through online Sunday school sessions. "Shine Connect" materials are free with the purchase of any Shine teacher's guide starting with Fall 2020 materials. The early childhood resource includes a two-page outline and tips for creating fun, online sessions for preschoolers using the activities in the teacher's guide and storytelling pictures in the resource pack. A more robust guide with weekly online session plans for elementary children accompanies the primary, older elementary, and multi-age teacher's guides. "Shine Connect" for junior youth provides a simple framework and tips for facilitating discussion around the Bible story and connecting via the at-home devotional, "Quest." The "Shine Connect" free resources will become available when the fall curriculum ships on July 1.

"Shine staff continue to monitor the needs of churches and welcome feedback and suggestions as we move forward," Daggett says. "Our goal is to help churches keep connections strong with their children, youth, and families during these challenging times."

All Shine printed curriculum and digital resources can be found at www.shinecurriculum.com or www.brethrenpress.com.



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.

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

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

Called Member	3 years	Carol Kussart (Cerro Gordo)	12129 Angle Crossing Rd. Cerro Gordo, IL 61818	ckussart@gmail.com	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

-- **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 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 .

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."

-- 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 .

-- 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 . Contact Dana Cassell, program manager, with questions at dcassell@brethren.org .

-- 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> .

-- 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 and the church-related colleges and universities at 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 .

-- 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 .

--**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 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 .

-- **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 . Join the On Earth Peace prison justice Facebook group 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 .

-- **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 . 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.

-- **The Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center** is offering upcoming events to do skills training for church leaders. "Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders" on Aug. 3-7 will be an intensive 5-day event to help clergy and other church leaders deal more effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of group conflict. "Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches" on July 18 will include sessions on "Finding Renewal in Conflict" and "How to Be Effective when People Are Angry," among others. "Healthy Congregations" on July 21 will teach participants how to keep anxiety within their congregations from becoming infectious, put limits on invasive behavior, manage reactivity, focus on strengths, and more. "Breaking Free: Finding Resilience in an Era of Collective Trauma" on July 16 and July 30" is founded in Family Systems Theory and offered in the context of COVID-19 and the aftermath of George Floyd's killing, to help participants identify the impact of trauma on themselves and others, discuss strategies to break free from trauma, and find resilience. Go to <https://lmpeacecenter.org> , call 630-627-0507, or email Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org .

-- **Church World Service (CWS) seeks an executive assistant** who will provide executive-level support to the senior vice president, senior director for Resource Generation, and director for Policy and Advocacy, as well as the resettlement and integration team. The position manages expenses, answers routine correspondence, and assembles and manages highly confidential and sensitive information including legal documents and attorney-client privileged materials. The position also deals with a diverse group of important external callers and visitors as well as internal contacts at all levels of the organization. Independent judgment is required to plan, prioritize, and organize a diversified workload, and exercise independent thinking and decision making. The ideal candidate will have several years of experience in handling a wide range of key administrative, research, and executive support-related tasks, and be exceedingly well organized, flexible, and scrupulous with time management. Must be able to function effectively, and within a timely manner, in a dynamic, fast-paced environment under minimal supervision. Find a link to the full position description at <https://cws-careers.vibehcm.com/portal.jsp> .

-- **An article "All About York Center Co-op"** has been published by the Lombard (Ill.) Historical Society. The co-op was begun by a Church of the Brethren member and over the course of its existence from 1947 to 2010 included, among others, members of York Center Church of the Brethren and people related to Bethany Theological Seminary--which formerly was located in Oak Brook, Ill. "In 1947, an idea for establishing a cooperative community was conceived by a man named Louis Shirky, a member of the Church of the Brethren," the article begins. "He learned that a DuPage county dairy farm, owned by the Goltermann family, was for sale, just to the south of the town of Lombard in an unincorporated area of the county known as York Center. Fourteen families raised \$30,000 to purchase the property and began the work of creating their own neighborhood.... The bylaws were written by a Black attorney, Theodore 'Ted' Robinson, who lived in Chicago with his wife, Leya, a Jewish social worker, and their two daughters." The history goes to tell of the co-op's struggle to become and maintain an inter-racial and multicultural community, including a lawsuit that went all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court. Find the article at www.lombardhistory.org/blog/2020/6/16/all-about-york-center-co-op?fbclid=IwAR3JJPPzY7liY4fqeYj4mUiHkXNbUjTonaMVsQ64_akQ9G8e2WW-Tqdt_I .

-- **Church of the Brethren denominational staff will continue to work from home** at least through the end of August, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and the office building at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., remain closed to visitors. A few staff are working in the office buildings, only if their responsibilities require it. The Materials Resources staff and Brethren Press order fulfillment staff are working in their respective warehouses.

-- **The document "Checklist for Reopening Church Buildings"** offers practical suggestions for congregations navigating the transition of returning to their church buildings. Now available in both Spanish and English, the resource was developed by members of the Recovery Response Task Team of the Church of the Brethren denominational staff: Stan Dueck and Joshua Brockway of Discipleship Ministries, Roy Winter of Global Mission and Service and Brethren Disaster Ministries, and Nancy S. Heishman of the Office of Ministry. Go to <https://covid19.brethren.org> .

-- **Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) seeks an assistant director of Financial Operations** to fill a full-time salaried position based at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The primary function is to review and coordinate the reporting of all accounting and financial transactions related to the operations of the programs and administration of BBT. Duties include producing monthly financial statements; managing payroll; monitoring and managing cash flow; preparing detailed account analyses; reviewing journal entries, bank and investment account reconciliations; preparing tax forms and maintaining tax return files and the general ledger; partnering with cross-functional groups to drive and influence business solutions and best in class process improvements; assisting in annual budget and auditing; developing and maintaining a working knowledge of all financial systems; completing other duties as assigned and providing backup for other positions in the Finance Department. Qualifications include an undergraduate degree in accounting and finance. A CPA is required or the process for obtaining certification has been started. The ideal candidate will possess strong technical and professional skills with at least five years of experience, a strong working knowledge of fund accounting, an intense attention to detail, a track record in developing first-in-class operating processes across product lines within a complex enterprise, strong verbal and written communication skills, leadership/supervisory skills, be a confident self-starter with ability to work with minimal supervision, excellent problem-solving and analytic skills, impeccable integrity, and a collegial and engaging demeanor. Nonprofit accounting experience is a plus and current and active membership in a faith community is preferred. Salary and benefits are competitive with Church Benefits Association agencies of comparable size and scope of services. A full benefits package is included. Send a letter of interest, résumé, three professional references, and salary range expectations to Michelle Kilbourne at mkilbourne@cobb.org . For more information about BBT see www.cobb.org .

-- **In place of its annual luncheon** during the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference this year, the Womaen's Caucus Steering Committee announced a "virtual luncheon" in the form of an online panel discussion on the topic "Speaking Truth to Power." "We are sad to not get to meet with you all in person this year," said an invitation. "Annual Conference is a great time for connection and one of the ways that we can see our supporters and members in person. We are happy that we were able to move our panel to a virtual space with the great help and support of Livingstream Church of the Brethren!" Leading the online panel discussion were Gimbiya Kettering, Debbie Eisenbise, and Madalyn Metzger. The event was recorded and is posted at www.womaenscaucus.org .

Extra Tidbits

[2020 IRS Mileage Rates](#)

[Pinecrest Renz Memorial Scholarship Winners](#)

[BBT Assistant Director of Financial Operations Position Announcement](#)

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

July 28, 7 p.m. - P&A Meeting, Zoom

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