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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

The announcement has been made that I've resigned my District Executive position effective Dec. 31, 2020. The concept of retirement entered the mix as well and for all intents and purposes, I guess, I've retired as District Executive. However, I'm continuing as the pastor of the Canton congregation. In addition, I'm developing a small, independent business doing "handyman" work and services. I may even try my hand at doing some writing. All said, I plan to remain active and engage in work and activities that I enjoy doing but seem not to have the time presently to do. I'm also looking forward to "meetingless" Saturdays that hopefully will provide more family-oriented opportunities.

I can honestly say that these past 14 years serving as District Executive have been rewarding. I value all the many connections and friendships and relationships that I've developed with so many of you across this district. The DE work has also opened the door to engage more intentionally denominationally, resulting in many more connections and relationships that I'll carry with me and cherish.

These have been growth years as well. I entered the DE role with visions of what the position entailed and quickly discovered I had much to learn. So I grew into the work with the support and kind guidance of Council of District Executive colleagues, and the grace of this district. In many ways I learned much more about the denomination and the way it functions as I was privileged with the opportunity to serve on committees tasked with denominational work.

I arrived in this role when the district, in my view, was seeking attentive leadership. I've striven to be available and to follow through, although I missed the mark at times along the way. However, I sense I fulfilled this purpose. The district, and the denomination, are in a different place today with, again in my view, the need for leaders with the passion, energy, and drive to carry forward new vision. I find I have less energy and passion to step into such visionary leadership and that it is time to give those who do have the energy and passion to lead this district into the next chapter.

All in all, I will take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to this district for allowing me to serve as District Executive for 14 years. I am thankful for all of your support, for the many opportunities of serving with you, and for the diversity among us that provides us with countless gifts to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, and together.

Grace and peace to all of you as you strive together in faithful service.

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## The Moderator's Column

To My District Faith Family,

We have weeks on the calendar, sometimes even entire months dedicated to this group or that one. We rightly celebrate our nurses, teachers, and first responders. We also honor small businessmen, administrative assistants, and farmers, to name just a few more.

However, do you know what group of people we are about to show appreciation to come October? If you get this answer wrong, "thirty lashes with a wet noodle" awaits you! Plus, maybe a good tongue lashing from your District Moderator! The answer is: October is Pastor Appreciation Month. I've been in this District for thirty-five years now and at times my heart has been broken, as I have heard from pastors that not only do they feel unappreciated, but at times they are left to take the blame for whatever may be going wrong at the church.

Across the spectrum of denominations out there, there is a shortage of pastors. One of the main reasons we are losing pastors is a lack of appreciation.

I love pastors and the commitment they have to Christ, but also to His Church -your Church! I pray for them daily and so should you. This October I want to encourage you as churches to find creative ways to celebrate your pastor - to lift them up, build them up, to "Gift" them with your appreciation! Come this October may your Pastor know your love and care for them.

Love y'all,  
District Moderator Rick

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## \*\*\*\*\*2020 DISTRICT CONFERENCE\*\*\*\*\*

The 2020 District Conference scheduled for Nov. 6-7, 2020, will be held virtually on Saturday, Nov. 7 from 9:30am to 12:00pm. Zoom will be the online platform used. Delegates and non-delegates need to register which can be done online at <https://forms.gle/3Sn5F7E8tiiE2aGs7> (delegates) or <https://forms.gle/AcnQVABRWg1FLeHKA> (non-delegates) As conference information becomes available it will be shared and distributed.

Putting together a virtual rather than an in-person conference may have the appearance of being less strenuous. Be assured this is not the case. Granted, the allotted time for conference is significantly less. However, determining how to provide complete information, offer business as "usual", and have meaningful worship stretches the creative imaginations of all those involved in planning the conference. In addition, knowing who will be present as well as who will be serving as delegates is vitally important, especially since delegates will not be seated in a designated area. Screen observers will be tasked with identifying delegates among the many who will gather virtually. While it is always very important to know who registered, this year it is even more important. Additionally, it is vital that registrations are made well in advance.

The registration deadline is already past. Please, if you plan to attend, register soon! Registering only a few days before conference, especially if you are a delegate, may hinder your opportunity to cast a vote. Tellers will need to be able to identify delegates for voting, thus it will be important to know who delegates are prior to the conference.

Please spread the word that all are welcome to participate in this virtual conference from the comfort of home!

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## Kevin Kessler resigns from leadership of Illinois and Wisconsin District

Church of the Brethren Newsline

August 22, 2020

Kevin Kessler has resigned as district executive minister of the Church of the Brethren's Illinois and Wisconsin District, effective Dec. 31. He has filled the half-time role for 14 years while also serving as pastor of Canton (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, a role he will continue to maintain.

Kessler began his service with the district on Jan. 1, 2007, and is one of those with the longest tenure on the Council of District Executives. He currently serves the council as historian as well as representative to the Brethren Benefit Trust board, and has served on numerous committees of the council including the executive committee. He also has served on the Ministry Advisory Council during the creation of the denomination's 2014 Ministerial Leadership polity.

His accomplishments in the district have included consistent work toward unity, enabling the district to achieve a cohesiveness in the midst of differences. In recent years he supported the establishment of two new church plants and encouraged the formation of a district endowment fund. He has served as co-chair of

the Illinois Conference of Churches.

Kessler was ordained in 1997. He completed his ministry preparation in the Education for Shared Ministry program with the Canton congregation.

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## 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.

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## Moderator's Town Hall

Thursday, September 17th

We are excited to announce the next Moderator's Town Hall on September 17th, 2020, at 7:00 PM EDT. The featured speaker will be veteran civil rights leader and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young.

The focus of the Town Hall will be: "Racism: Deeper Awareness, Bolder Action."

Andrew J. Young has earned worldwide recognition as a pioneer in and champion of civil and human rights. Ambassador Young's lifelong dedication to service is illustrated by his extensive leadership experience of over sixty-five years, serving as a member of Congress, African American U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Mayor of Atlanta, and ordained minister, among other positions.

During the 1960s, Young was a key strategist and negotiator during civil rights campaigns that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Appointed as an Ambassador to the United Nations in 1977, Young negotiated an end to white-minority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe and brought President Carter's emphasis on human rights to international diplomacy efforts.

Ambassador Young also serves on several boards, including the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change. In 2003, he and his wife Carolyn McClain Young founded the Andrew J. Young Foundation to support and promote education, health, leadership, and human rights in the U.S., Africa, and the Caribbean.



He currently lives in Atlanta and serves as the Chairman of the foundation. He is also a father of three daughters and a son, a grandfather of nine, and a great grandfather of one.

The author of three books, Andrew Young is sought after as an advisor to world leaders along with being active as a speaker on the lecture circuit. An ordained minister with the United Church of Christ for over six decades, he continues to preach and considers the work of his foundation an extension of his ministry and of the Civil Rights movement itself.

To register for the town hall, please visit: [tinyurl.com/modtownhallsep2020](https://tinyurl.com/modtownhallsep2020)

You are encouraged to sign up early, as the event is limited to the first 500 registrants.

The Town Hall will once again feature a Question & Answer format. You are invited to submit your questions for Ambassador Young during the Town Hall, or you can send them in advance. To send your questions prior to the Town Hall, please email: [cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com](mailto:cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com). Though we cannot commit to answering every question, we'll do our best to use what is submitted.

Questions or issues related to registering for the Town Hall can be emailed to [cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com](mailto:cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com) as well.

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## Making webinars count: announcing new policy for clergy continuing education credit

By Janet Ober Lambert

It has long been the practice of the Church of the Brethren to require live participation in educational events in order for clergy to receive continuing education units (CEUs). However, a new policy from the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, in partnership with the Ministry Advisory Council, is changing that.

Recognizing that live participation is becoming increasingly difficult for multivocational ministers and given the growing library of recorded webinars available from denominational agencies, the Brethren Academy is offering clergy the opportunity to view and report on prerecorded webinars and other educational events for CEUs. A standardized reporting process will provide the necessary accountability.

For recordings to be eligible for CEUs, they must: 1) have been created by a Church of the Brethren agency, 2) be no more than 10 years old, and 3) have been originally offered for CEUs according to the criteria set forth by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

After viewing a recording that meets these criteria, clergy may go to the Brethren Academy webpage at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy> to complete a "Continuing Education Report for Recorded Material." This fillable form requires the clergyperson to demonstrate knowledge about the material viewed. Completed forms may then be printed and mailed to the Brethren Academy along with the certificate fee. All submissions will be reviewed by the academy's director.

Viewing a recording after the event will be equivalent to the credit awarded for attending a live presentation. For example, attending a one-hour live webinar is worth 0.1 CEU. Viewing that same webinar after the fact also is worth 0.1 CEU.

CEU certificates will not be awarded for quantities of less than 0.2 CEUs. Two one-hour recordings may be combined for a total of 0.2 CEUs or one longer recording may be viewed. A separate "Continuing Education Report for Recorded Material" is required for each recording.

The CEU certificate fee is \$10 per submission, with a limit of four recorded events, of any length, per submission. Paper certificates will be mailed to clergy and records of these certificates will be kept by the Brethren Academy.

Participating in live events continues to be valuable for the Church of the Brethren. Gathering in person provides opportunities to ask questions, exchange ideas, build relationships, as well as pray and worship together. The Brethren Academy hopes this new opportunity will supplement rather than replace live events. The intent is to expand opportunities to learn for all who minister, for the glory of God and our neighbor's good.

To read the full policy, visit <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy> and scroll down to the section on "Continuing Education."

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## New Ventures in Christian Discipleship season theme to focus on “Change”

The Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson (Kan.) College is moving into its ninth year of providing useful, affordable education to small church congregations. The 2020-21 season theme is “Change,” which ironically was chosen in the fall of 2019. All classes are donation-based and continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course.

On September 19 at 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. CST, Erin Matteson will present the first course of the season “Self-Compassion for a Change...Making Better Choices for a More Balanced Breath for All.” As people of faith we are called not to be selfish. Yet we are also called not to be self-less. Integrating scripture, theology, work from a variety of authors, art, guided meditation and more, we will explore why ministerial leaders and laity alike don't typically practice self-compassion well, why we not only need but are called to this as we live, and practices to help us deepen such a commitment. Authors Joyce Rupp, Christina Feldman, Kristin Neff, Tara Brach, Brené Brown among others, artists, poets and musicians help us deepen and widen the model and call of Jesus as they offer inspirational and challenging companionship on the journey of being more self-compassionate Followers of the Way. Come explore healthy understandings and a more faithful practice of self-compassion toward creating and living a healthier personal life, congregational lives, and ultimately contributing to a healthier global way of being together in the midst of rapid changes that are constant in all dimensions of living.

Erin Matteson is ordained in the Church of the Brethren and currently engaged in a ministry of focused spiritual formation work as a spiritual director, retreat leader, writer and speaker. She has a passion for creating safe space for deep listening and compassionate companionship with individuals and groups of various sizes for the deepening of faith, healing, learning and community. Her denominational work currently includes curriculum writing for Brethren Press, serving on the Spiritual Directors Network Committee and as a Circuit Rider for the Church of the Brethren program, Part-time Pastor, Full-Time Church. Previously, Erin served for nearly 25 years as a pastor in the Church of the Brethren and in various other leadership capacities such as Moderator of the Pacific Southwest District and as Music Coordinator, Worship Coordinator and preacher for Annual Conference. She received a B.M. from Millikin University, an M.Div. from Bethany Theological Seminary, certification as a spiritual director from Mercy Center in Burlingame, California, and has attended numerous events with Joyce Rupp including the four-day Boundless Compassion Retreat and a facilitator training where she became a certified teacher of the program. She has two daughters and lives in Modesto, California with her life partner, Russ. Erin loves spending time with creation gardening, at the ocean or in the woods, walking or running, and watching the Chicago Cubs play baseball whenever she can.

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

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## 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.

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

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."

**-- 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 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) .

**-- 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](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."

-- **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>.

-- **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.

-- **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=IwAR3JJPPzY7liY4fqeYj4mUiHkXNbjUjTonaMVsQ64\\_akQ9G8e2WW-Tqdt\\_I](http://www.lombardhistory.org/blog/2020/6/16/all-about-york-center-co-op?fbclid=IwAR3JJPPzY7liY4fqeYj4mUiHkXNbjUjTonaMVsQ64_akQ9G8e2WW-Tqdt_I) .

-- **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](mailto:mkilbourne@cobb.org). For more information about BBT see [www.cobb.org](http://www.cobb.org).

-- **In place of its annual luncheon** during the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference this year, the Women'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](http://www.womaenscaucus.org).

-- **"Messenger" magazine has posted a racial justice page** at [www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/racial-justice.html](http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/racial-justice.html). This page offers a collection of the magazine's articles addressing race in recent years, plus some excerpts and images from key pieces.

-- **A staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 at Pinecrest Community**, a Church of the Brethren retirement community in Mount Morris, Ill. "No residents with symptoms have been reported as of Monday, July 13," reported the "Ogle County News." Pinecrest CEO Ferol Labash reported the case in a letter to residents and resident representatives, the newspaper said, reporting that last week, Pinecrest "performed COVID-19 testing of residents and staff to establish a baseline as recommended by CMS. It received the results of 202 tests and is still waiting for the results on 60 tests." Read the article, which includes details about Pinecrest's extensive COVID-19 protocols, at [www.oglecountynews.com/2020/07/15/pinecrest-staff-member-tests-positive-for-covid-19/atp55ot](http://www.oglecountynews.com/2020/07/15/pinecrest-staff-member-tests-positive-for-covid-19/atp55ot).

-- **Steve Lipinski, manager of Brethren Foundation Operations for Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT)** for nearly 13 years, has announced his retirement, effective Aug. 5. His last day of work at the BBT offices at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., was July 20. **Sherri Crowe, client manager for the Brethren Foundation**, will assume the duties of manager of Brethren Foundation Operations on Aug. 5. BBT has announced an opening for a new client manager for the Brethren Foundation.

-- **The Church of the Brethren seeks an executive director of Global Mission** to fill a full-time salaried position based at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The major responsibility is to guide and implement the international mission program of the Church of the Brethren; direct and administer denominational mission efforts; generate a responsive and integrated denominational mission structure with grassroots support and involvement; and nurture an ongoing conversation about mission (evangelism, church-planting, service, peace, and reconciliation) among membership. Required skills and knowledge include grounding in Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision and mission of the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board; significant understanding of mission theology and practice, with specific knowledge of relief, development, and/or church planting mission operations in the international context; extensive management and organizational skills developed through experience supervising multiple staff and administering multi-site programs; skills to coach highly educated and self-motivated professionals, many of whom are off-site domestically and internationally; ability to coordinate multiple processes and projects; strong skills in verbal and written communications; knowledge of cross-cultural adjustment, dependency issues, ecumenical cooperation, and interfaith challenges gained from working internationally; language capabilities in addition to English. A seminary degree or master's degree in a relevant field is required. Applications are being received and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to [COBApply@brethren.org](mailto:COBApply@brethren.org) or to Human Resources Manager, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039 ext. 367. The Church of the Brethren is an Equal Opportunity Employer.v

-- **Almost all of the district conferences across the Church of the Brethren denomination have been canceled or are online this year.** According to a calendar that is kept by the General Secretary's office:

**Holding district conferences online** are Atlantic Northeast (Oct. 2-3, led by moderator Karen Hackett), Illinois and Wisconsin (Nov. 6-7, led by moderator Rick Koch), Michigan (Aug. 14-15, led by moderator Mary Lorah Hammond), Missouri and Arkansas (Sept. 11-12, led by moderator Paul Landes), Northern Plains (July 31-Aug. 2, led by moderator Lucinda Douglas), Pacific Northwest (Sept. 18-20, led by moderator Ben Green), Pacific Southwest (Nov. 13-15, led by moderator Mary Kay Ogden), Southern Ohio and Kentucky (Oct. 9-10, led by moderator Sandy Jenkins), Virgina (Nov. 13-14, led by moderator Cathy Huffman), and Western Plains (July 23-26, led by moderator Vickie Samland).

**Cancelling their district conferences** are Atlantic Southeast, Northern Indiana, South/Central Indiana, Mid-Atlantic, Northern Ohio, Middle Pennsylvania, Southern Pennsylvania, Shenandoah, and West Marva.

Idaho and Western Montana District's decision whether to meet virtually is pending, and date and location of Puerto Rico's district conference are yet to be determined.

Southern Plains has postponed its district conference to January 2021 at Antelope Valley Church of the Brethren in Billings, Okla., led by moderator Matthew Prejean.

-- **In related news, the Northern Indiana District Board** sent the following announcement on Aug. 12: "Last night, after much discussion, the board made the difficult decision to cancel our District Conference for 2020. We will not be meeting in person or online this year. While we will miss the opportunity to gather together for conversation and worship, we feel like this is the course that will ensure that everyone remains safe and that we avoid the risk of spreading infection across the district." However, a live-streamed district worship service will be held Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. with Evan Garber preaching. Also, the district will deal with two items of business by mail: electing leadership and affirming the district budget for 2021.

-- **Sarah Farahat**, who has been a member of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill., but who is living in Oregon, had a part in the state's roll call video on Tuesday evening at the Democratic National Convention. Farahat headed up a team of artists who created the mural that provided the backdrop for the video. The mural, titled "We Choose Love," is at the Hollywood Transit Center in Portland, "where white supremacist Jeremy Christian killed two men on a MAX train in May 2017, after they and others stepped in to defend fellow passengers who were the targets of Christian's racist slurs," according to a "Portland Monthly" piece on how the video was made.

See [www.pdxmonthly.com/news-and-city-life/2020/08/how-oregons-contribution-to-that-viral-dnc-roll-call-video-came-together](http://www.pdxmonthly.com/news-and-city-life/2020/08/how-oregons-contribution-to-that-viral-dnc-roll-call-video-came-together) . Find a TriMet story about the mural's significance at <https://trimet.org/tribute> .

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## Extra Tidbits

[2020 IRS Mileage Rates](#)

[Pinecrest Renz Memorial Scholarship Winners](#)

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

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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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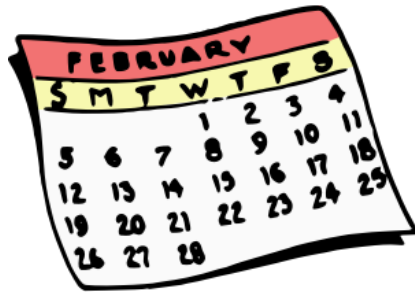
## District Mission and Mortar Grant/Loan Program

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

September 22, 7 p.m. - P&A Meeting, Zoom

September, 29, 9 a.m. - District PotluckTeam Meeting, Zoom

October 10, 10 a.m. - District Leadership Team, Zoom

# Being the Family of God

## Job 2:11-13



### DISTRICT BOOK STUDY

**“Conversations on Race--Engaging and Transforming the Beloved Community”**

**Facilitators:** Dennis Webb, pastor of the Naperville congregation and Christy Waltersdorff, pastor of the York Center congregation

**Book:** WHITE FRAGILITY: WHY IT'S SO HARD FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT RACE, by Robin DiAngelo

**Dates:** 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the following Thursdays via Zoom

Nov. 12

Dec. 3, 17

Jan. 7, 21

Feb. 4

**Description:**

A white woman named Christy Waltersdorff. A black man named Dennis Webb. Dennis was born and grew up in a country where almost everyone was black and familiar. Christy grew up in a country where white people were the dominant culture, and familiar to her. God would have it that the Church of the Brethren has brought us together. We met first as pastoral colleagues and chose to become friends. We have chosen to make our racial and cultural differences become a blessing, instead of an anemic, made-up, foundationless racial separation. We bring this as a part of our offering to you as the facilitators of this conversation.

We confess that we don't know it all. We would like to learn from you and with you, concerning this issue of race. Why? When the barrier of racial separation is overcome, its reality leads us closer to God's vision of the beloved community. We see each other 'face to face'-as God intended. We are not yet there. We all need help. And we are convinced that the book "White Fragility--Why It's So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism," will help us greatly. We invite you to participate with us in this conversation. Truly listening and sharing with one another is the first necessary step to becoming the beloved community. Please join us.

**For More Information or to Sign up for the Book Study- please contact the district office.**