

The Reflector

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



Reflection from the Journey

The words and images of writer/minister/artist Jan Richardson (<https://www.janrichardson.com/>) have often sustained, inspired, and challenged me over the years. I turned to her book *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons* as I was seeking some words in this season of Epiphany. I was struck by the opening words in her blessing titled "For Those Who Have Far to Travel." They echo some of the thoughts I shared last month in this newsletter. Here are the first couple sections.

"If you could see
the journey whole,
you might never
undertake it,
might never dare
the first step
that propels you
from the place
you have known
toward the place
you know not.

Call it
one of the mercies
of the road:
that we see it
only by stages
as it opens
before us,
as it comes into
our keeping
step by
single step.”

When I moved to McPherson, Kansas, to retire from full time ministry I came from a congregational experience of having twenty-three deaths connected with the congregation over the course of three years. That was in addition to all the rest of pastoral ministry that brings joys and challenges. I was going to a congregation where I was one of four pastors on a team for a small congregation. I figured I was retiring into a time of life where I'd preach once a month, play piano for worship once a month, work with the church choir, maybe a few hospital calls from time to time. Not full time ministry by any stretch of the imagination! That's what I thought was ahead on the path. But within a short time I was propelled into ministry because the other pastors' spouses were all coping with health issues. The following year there was a kidney transplant surgery and recovery that involved two of the pastoral families (a donor and a recipient). During most of that time, the fourth pastor on our team took extended vacation time with her husband. In both of those seasons of church life, I became the primary giver of pastoral care for the congregation and for the other pastoral families. My vision of what retirement might look like was challenged by what unfolded in the life of our church community. Talk about not “seeing the whole journey!” Jan Richardson's poetry rings true in my experience.

So here we are in a new phase in my life and a new phase in the life of the Illinois and Wisconsin District. No matter how the path before us unfolds, there likely will be twists and turns, unexpected joys, and perhaps deep sorrows. We may be confronted with new challenges that stretch us to learn and grow in ways that we could not have imagined. But more than anything, if we are paying attention to where God is in the midst of our life together in this season, we will be invited to a deeper examination of who we are in Jesus Christ. And we will be invited to discern what God is calling us to do and who God is calling us to be together. Jan Richardson says it this way later in her same poem:

“You cannot see it all,
cannot divine the way
it will turn and spiral,
cannot perceive how
the road you walk
will lead you finally inside,
through the labyrinth
of your own heart
and belly
and lungs.”

Yes, the Christian walk includes looking inside us. Examining our motives, our intentions, where we need to align ourselves with Christian values. All of that is part of the journey as we seek to be attuned to the Jesus whom we follow. For this interim time, I join you on this journey in seeking God's call on our lives and seeking to know ourselves better in the context of being beloved children of a loving God. Blessings for the journey!

Connie
Connie R. Burkholder,
Interim District Executive

Information about the Interim District Executive Position

Connie Burkholder is serving as Interim District Executive in a ¼ time capacity – specifically, 12 hours per week. The Leadership Team has asked her to focus her work on the following areas of ministry:

- pastoral placement
- pastoral support and credentialing oversight
- responsibilities performed in consultation with the District Leadership Team, including a focus on relationship-building
- attendance at selected district meetings. Priorities will include the Leadership Team, Program and Arrangements Committee, Ministerial Leadership and Development Team, and Church Revitalization and Development Team.
- Attendance at the Council of District Executives (CODE) meetings – winter and summer (virtual or in person as programmed)
- Other tasks are to be negotiated with the Leadership Team

Connie lives in McPherson, Kansas, so her ministry will be done by email, phone, and Zoom. Since her ministry is to be ¼ time and she has responsibilities as part of a pastoral team in McPherson, she will generally not be available for Sunday morning commitments. Special circumstances would be negotiated. Her contact information is:

Email: crburkholder56@gmail.com

Cell phone: 620-245-4600

Moderator's Musings

Extending Charity is dangerous work. By heeding God's calling, it can become subversive work. Charles Dickens' work, the "The Christmas Carol," besides being a whimsical look at Christmas traditions, is an in-your-face novel. It speaks of taking up the needs of widows, orphans, and the alien. It is a reminder that it is important to give at the end of the year – especially for those last-minute tax deductions – and to develop a charitable attitude throughout the year, as the need does not wane after the New Year is rung in.

One of the ongoing discussions regarding giving to the least of God's children is who do we give to and what will they do with it?

One of the books I have on my shelf is "Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for our Times, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition," by Howard Zehr (Copyright© 2015 by Herald Press, Harrisonburg VA). Dr. Zehr is a leading proponent of restorative justice as it pertains to criminal justice reform. What struck me in his opening chapters are the cast of characters in the drama known as the criminal legal system: the victim, the perpetrator/offender, the prosecutor, the defense attorney, the judge, and the law.

It may be a stretch, but in the discussions of giving aid and extending charity, the fear expressed is that as givers we contribute to the offender's lifestyle. We are guarded that we do not become victimized by our giving.

Dr. Zehr, as he walks his readers through the victim's response to becoming a victim, lists six questions (page 32) victims must ask in order to begin the process of healing. The questions are: 1. What happened? 2. Why did it happen to me? 3. Why did I act as I did at the time? 4. Why have I acted as I have since that time? 5. What if it happens again? 6. What does this mean for me and for my outlook (my faith, my vision of the world, my future)? Maybe we need to ask ourselves these same questions as we struggle with how to respond in our giving.

There are times when I feel Scrooge-like. I do not always treat members of society as God wants me to treat them in Matthew 25. I have my guard up. I want to rationalize and debate the issue of giving without being a victim. I want to be that cheerful giver we are told about and desired by God.

This past Christmas season the Dixon Church of the Brethren took on a project to aid several nursing homes in our area. The project was met with enthusiasm and our goal was exceeded. When we presented our gift to each facility, it was received with immense gratitude. Our desire was to help these homes enhance their mission during this season of the COVID pandemic. Using language from Diana Butler-Bass's book "Grateful," we were benefactors bestowing gifts. The nursing homes as beneficiaries were grateful recipients. There was no angst about whether the gift might be misused.

But what about the rest of our community? What about those neighbors who have no access to those institutions we are so willing to support?

As we ask ourselves these questions – if we look into our hearts and seek God's response to that which causes us to question our charity – where will we come out?

For the victim in this drama, wholeness takes place when answers can be given. The work is slow and hard. Will we trust in the God who knows us to provide comfort and healing and to show the way to forgiveness? Or do we want to qualify our charity? I think Matthew 26 answers that question quite definitely.

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.

A Prayer for Troubled Times

God of all humanity and all creation, you call us to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God."

Help us to remember that we must balance justice with mercy and temper mercy with justice; to hold those who do harm accountable but not seek revenge, and to always humbly seek your wisdom in discerning this balance.

Help us to remember that you love both perpetrators of harm and those who have been harmed, and help us to pray for all concerned.

Remind us that you are our refuge and strength, and grant us your peace that passes understanding to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Keep us free from all anxiety as we both take good care of ourselves and continue to serve you peacefully, simply, together.

In the name of the Crucified One, we pray.

Amen.

Shared with permission from pastor Bobbi Dykema, 1st Church of the Brethren, Springfield, Ill.

Church of the Brethren General Secretary issues a statement on the events of Jan. 6

Church of the Brethren Newslines

January 9, 2021

The following is a statement from David Steele, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren:

Wednesday was Epiphany, the day marking the arrival of the Magi, seekers of the young Prince of Peace. Yet the violent actions in our nation's capital revealed the violence of Herod rather than the peace of God.

While the Church of the Brethren has always had an ambivalent relationship to institutions of power and government, we have consistently sought "the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42). Brethren address the government on matters of justice in our commitment to care for all people, and we participate in nonviolent protest when necessary. But the recent actions were not nonviolent protest. They laid bare racism and hatred, and breached the country's democratic processes.

May we together confess our brokenness, that the deep divisions within our country are also present in our church; and commit to pray for the healing of our country and our church as we all together pray and work for the peace of Christ—the *shalom* of God.

CV Bible Studies

The Compelling Vision Team is developing a 13-session Bible study series around the Compelling Vision. Designed for use by youth and adults, the series will be available at no cost on the Compelling Vision webpage in February 2021. (Sample sessions will be posted in mid-

January.) Recognizing the importance of discerning the mind of Christ through communal study of scripture, it is our hope that this Bible study series will serve a two-fold purpose: to help congregations engage more deeply with the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision and to help congregations and their delegates prepare for the conversations to take place at Annual Conference as we move toward affirmation of the vision.

Each of the thirteen sessions has as its focus a question that invites participants to explore a different word or phrase in the vision and has been written by a different person, creating a series that is rich in both breadth and depth. The project is being edited by Joan Daggett. Plans are also underway to translate this resource into both Spanish and Haitian Kreyol. We are grateful for the role each member of this diverse team has played in bringing this project to fruition.

	Theme	Question Prompt	Writer(s)
1	Vision	What is vision? Why is it important for the faith community to have vision?	Brandon Grady
2	"Together...."	What binds us together in Christian community?	Audrey and Tim Hollenberg-Duffey
3	"...as the Church of the Brethren...."	How does scripture and tradition inform our current denominational identity?	Denise Kettering Lane
4	"...we will passionately live and share..."	What does it mean to be spiritually passionate?	Kayla and Ilexene Alphonse
5	"...the radical transformation..."	What does it mean to be radically transformed through Jesus Christ?	Thomas Dowdy
6	"...and holistic peace..."	What is the nature of the holistic peace of Jesus Christ and how are we called to embody it?	Gail Erisman Valeta
7	"... of Jesus Christ..."	How do we understand Jesus as Redeemer?	Jennifer Quijano West
8	"... of Jesus Christ..."	How do we understand Jesus as Teacher?	Val Kline
9	"... of Jesus Christ..."	How do we understand Jesus as Lord?	Ryan Cooper
10	"...through relationship-based neighborhood engagement."	How does the example of Jesus Christ challenge us to build life-changing relationships with our neighbors?	Becky Zapata
11	"To move us forward, we will develop a culture..."	How is God calling us to reshape the underlying culture of our life together?	Andy Hamilton
12	"...a culture of calling and equipping disciples..."	What does it mean to call and equip disciples for the strengthening of the body of Christ?	Bobbi Dykema
13	"...disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless."	How does God call us to be innovative, adaptable, and fearless?	Eric Landram

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."

First Church Chicago Member Christopher Crater named one of this year's 40 Game Changers of Chicago

We have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate with Christopher Crater, a life-long member of First Church & newly elected Board Member. He has been named a part of this year's **40 Game Changers of Chicago!**

Here is what Christopher reports:

As I reflect on my one year anniversary of joining the Obama Foundation. I am beyond elated to announce that I was selected by WVON 1690AM - The Talk of Chicago and Ariel Investments as one of this year's 40 Game Changers of Chicago! I can't even begin to express how humbling it is to be recognized alongside so many incredible leaders including one of my Mentors Cory L. Thames.

You can watch the ceremony on Friday, January 15 at 7 pm.

Tune in live this Friday to www.VON.tv or (#ROKU) to see the 40 Game Changers! **The Visual Award Presentation** is powered by Wvon Midway Broadcasting Ariel Investments BMO Harris Bank #40gamechangers #wvon #40under40 #Chicago

Congratulations to Christopher!

Joyce Cassel & Mary Scott Boria, Servant Leadership Board, co-chairs.

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.

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>

District Leadership Team Meeting Places 2021

January 9, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

February 6, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

April 10, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

June 5, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

August 7, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

October 9, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

November 13, 2021: 9 a.m., Zoom

District Leadership Team

Moderator (1 year term): Blaine Miner, Dixon

Contact: blaineminer86@gmail.com

847-404-6635

Moderator-elect (2 year term): Harold Rose, Canton

Contact: hrose@cantonusd.org

309-357-3590

Clerk (3 year term): Kristi Kellerman, Highland Ave.

Contact: kristi.kellerman@gmail.com

815-814-1360

Recording Secretary: Jan Dietrich, Mt. Morris

Contact: jdiet220@hotmail.com

815-738-2365

Standing Committee (3 year term): Dennis Webb, Naperville

Contact: djkrwebb@hotmail.com

630-236-8166

Financial Secretary (3 year term): Christine Knotts, Peoria

Contact: knotts.christine@gmail.com

309-253-6802

Treasurer (3 year term): Ellis Boughton, Yellow Creek

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815-864-2049

Interim District Executive: Connie Burkholder

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620-245-4600

Andrea Garnett, Administrative Assistant

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309-649-6008

Carol Kussart, Chair; Cerro Gordo
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217-855-3258

Phyllis Batterton, Vice-chair; Woodland
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309-759-4897

Ed Watkins, Peoria
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309-397-2401

Mary Dulabaum, Highland Ave.
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Kyle Brinkmeier, Yellow Creek
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Jonathan Shively, Highland Ave.
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847-644-1174

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!

Camp Blue Diamond Seeks Executive Director

Camp Blue Diamond is seeking a gifted and visionary individual with a passion for outdoor ministry to serve as the next Executive Director. Camp Blue Diamond is a family campground nestled within the Rothrock State Forest near Petersburg, PA. The mission of Camp Blue Diamond is to encourage discipleship of Jesus Christ and to facilitate growth and healing in each person's relationship with God, others, themselves, and the created world.

The duties of the Executive Director include but are not limited to the overall development and operation of the camp and family campground; financial management; promotion and fundraising; coordination of summer camp, retreats, rentals, and other events; hosting of Shaver's

Creek Outdoor School; and supervision of staff and volunteers. The Executive Director is accountable to the Camp Blue Diamond Board of Directors.

Qualifications for this position include strong skills in administration, organization, communication, hospitality, and leadership, along with a basic knowledge of marketing, program development, computer skills, and finance. A Bachelor's Degree is required, along with camp leadership experience. The applicant should be a Christian and a member of the Church of the Brethren or have an appreciation and understanding of Brethren beliefs and values.

This full-time, salaried position includes health benefits, a generous PTO/holiday package, and on-site housing and utilities. Review of applicants will begin on March 1, 2021. It is expected that an appointment will be made in June with an anticipated start date in October 2021. For a full description, and information on how to apply, visit www.campbluediamond.org/openings%2Fapplications. You may also contact David Meadows, Search Committee Chair, at david.dex.meadows@gmail.com or call 814-599-6017.

Newsline

-- **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-one-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>.

-- **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/ekKEaBZ>.

-- **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>.

— **A new video resource from the Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church program** features congregational leaders sharing about the joys and challenges of calling part-time pastors. Intended to be encouragement and guidance for congregations that either have called part-time pastors or are considering a shift in how to call ministerial leaders, this conversation addresses both practical considerations and spiritual opportunities of becoming a "full-time" congregation. The video features leaders from Forest Chapel Church of the Brethren in Shenandoah District, Eel River Church of the Brethren in South Central Indiana District, and Cabool Church of the Brethren in Missouri and Arkansas District. View and download the video at <https://vimeo.com/464363428> or learn more about Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church at www.brethren.org/ministryoffice.

— **Terry Goodger has resigned as program assistant for Brethren Disaster Ministries**, as of Dec. 31. She is leaving to take another job. She has been the program assistant for the disaster rebuilding program for more than three years, since June 2017. Her work has included scheduling and interacting with weekly volunteer groups and district disaster coordinators, tracking and updating rebuilding program information, among numerous other tasks to help keep the rebuilding project sites running. Goodger previously worked for the Church of the Brethren's Material Resources program for 10 years, starting in Sept. 2006 and ending in Sept. 2016, serving as office coordinator. Her work for the Church of the Brethren has been at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

— **Creation Justice Ministries, the ecological justice counterpart to the National Council of Churches, is currently hiring for three positions:** A new **Washington, D.C.-based advocate** to help facilitate faith communities' ocean-climate action, embedding in the Washington Inter-religious Staff Committee and establishing strong relationships in the Biden-Harris Administration and with key committee staff in Congress (see www.creationjustice.org/join-our-team-public-witness-advocate.html). Two fellowships based in California; if an applicant emerges who is well-qualified to complete the scope of work in both job descriptions, Creation Justice Ministries is open to employing the same person to do both for up to a total of 1,000 hours: **A California Conservation Equity Fellow** to center narratives of Black and Indigenous peoples in California, helping to form a network of relationships with California stakeholders for equity in the US public lands and waters system, with a particular focus on Indigenous and Black leaders, among other tasks (see www.creationjustice.org/join-our-team-conservation-equity-fellowship.html). **A California Truth and Healing Fellow** to closely follow the work of the California Truth and Healing Council, as well as the Reparations Task Force, among other tasks (see www.creationjustice.org/join-our-team-truth-and-healing-fellowship.html).

— **Brethren Volunteer Service is inviting Church of the Brethren congregations and members to help support BVS volunteers** this Christmas by sending cards and greetings. "Our volunteers love receiving cards and greetings from Brethren congregations!" said an announcement. For a list of current BVSers and their mailing addresses, formatted for printing on labels, contact bvs@brethren.org.

— **The Parables Community**, a fellowship of Illinois and Wisconsin District that has focused on serving those with disabilities and their families, will close on Dec. 31. "The COVID pandemic contributed heavily to the decision to close," said an announcement from the fellowship's board. "The Parables Community ministry incorporates many sensory elements when meeting for worship and other events. When in-person gathering ceased because of the pandemic, using non-sensory virtual methods for meeting were inadequate to meet the needs of ministry participants. In addition, a significant fundraising event, which would have helped to sustain the ministry, had to be canceled due to pandemic restrictions. The converging of the aforementioned factors impeded the ability of Parables Community to sustain operations." The board expressed hope that the fellowship has helped the district learn and grow "in ways which will translate into future opportunities for unique ministries to emerge and serve among us." The closure will be affirmed at the 2021 district conference.

Extra Tidbits

[2020 IRS Mileage Rates](#)

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!

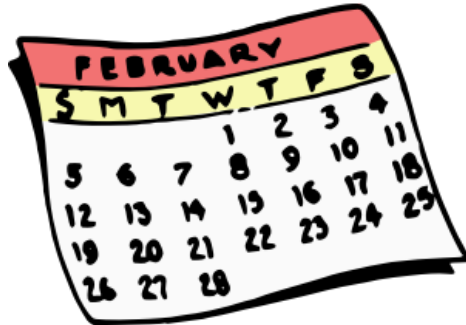
District Mission and Mortar Grant/Loan Program

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

January 9, 2021: Leadership Team Mtg, 9 a.m., Zoom

January 19, 2021: P&A Mtg, 7 p.m., Zoom

January 23, 2021: MLDT Mtg, 9 a.m., Zoom
