

The Reflector

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



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Reflections from the Journey

In District work we often have opportunity and reason to ponder our calling and the calling of others. Across the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures we have quite a number of call narratives. In 1 Samuel 3 we have the call story of Samuel, a young lad who is serving in the temple, giving assistance to Eli, an elderly priest whose eyesight is failing. The details of this story are intriguing. The narrator begins by telling us that there's not much spiritual depth in this time in Israel's history – the word of the Lord was rare and visions were not widespread. God's people, and in this case, also Eli's family, had not been grounded very well in God, it seems. Few people proclaim the word or bring prophesy. And few people were experiencing deep spiritual moments. So even though young Samuel is serving in the temple, he may not have been exposed very much to people who were articulating the faith in a personal way. In fact, the narrator tells us that Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Samuel had not come to have a faith experience of his own yet. Perhaps Samuel is learning the rituals and the rules of the faith as he assists Eli, but Samuel did not have an encounter with God. And since there weren't many people around who were having those kinds of experiences, Samuel has no way to interpret what's happening to him as this story unfolds. You might say he's in the dark.

And the phrase "in the dark" might just be a pretty good way to think about the 1 Samuel 3 setting in a number of ways. The story is played out

at night, and there are other elements of being in the dark. What the narrator says about the lack of spiritual experiences among the people could be understood as the people as a whole being in the dark spiritually. The language that lamp of God had not yet gone out gives a sense of being in the semi-darkness with just a single, symbolic lamp burning. The possibility for clear vision in such situations is dim. And yet, with just that single lamp, there still is some light, there still is some hope. There's also reference to Eli's poor eyesight, a kind of darkness or blindness. With all of this, it might be hard for a message from God to get through. We see that it does take some doing. It takes Eli hearing young Samuel's story three times until the proverbial light bulb comes on for him. *Oh! this is God speaking to the young lad!* It's a good thing that God is persistent with the call. And it's a good thing that Samuel keeps listening. It's a good thing that he has an openness to follow Eli's instruction, because despite Eli's poor eyesight, he still has some spiritual insight and can give some guidance to young Samuel. He has the ability to direct young Samuel toward the one who calls him in the darkness.

God is used to working in the darkness. God is accustomed to bringing light into dark places to bring forth something new. God has practice in taking just one person, in this case, even a young boy, to begin something that will change the life of God's people. The way will not be easy for Samuel, but with his willingness to try to understand what's happening, and with his willingness to be obedient to the instructions of Eli, his mentor, Samuel takes the first step into a new future. Not just his own future as one who listens for God, but as one who speaks for God to God's people. In the midst of the dim possibilities and the darkness of the night, God begins a new thing in Samuel.

Samuel is open to God, and responsive even before he knows exactly what's going on. How much more might we who bear the name of God's beloved son, how much more might we be open to hearing from God?

What would it be like for each of us to be open to hearing God's voice, God's message for us? What would happen if, as congregations, as a district, we might be more fully awake and alert to how God is trying to communicate with us? If a young lad could receive a word from God, couldn't each of us also? We might not literally hear a voice, but I believe that God is communicating with all of us. That's a basic part of God's nature – to reach out in relationship to the human family. In the darkest hours, when hope seems dim, and we think that the very lamp of God is about to flicker and go out never to give light again, that is the very time that we are called to be open, to listen carefully, to be alert to what God might be doing in our midst, in our lives, in our congregations, in our district, and in the denomination. In so many of the biblical stories, it just took one open and willing person to hear and respond for the darkness to turn to light, for sorrow to turn to joy, and for despair to be transformed into energy for mission and ministry. It just takes one Samuel or one Samantha to be stirred from their sleep and respond to God's call to give a word of hope. Will you listen? Will you hear? And will you say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening?"

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

by Blaine Miner

A long time ago, when I still lived with my parents, I regularly watched the TV documentary series "Connections," featured on the local PBS station. The premise of the show, and that of a book of the same name by James Burke, was some simple, ordinary event that ended up having a major influence over time on how the world would evolve.

Connection is an integral part of our Christian faith. God continually reminds the people to look after the widow, the orphan, and the alien (foreigner, immigrant) – the latter especially as the reminder that as emigrants from Egypt they were beholden to charity from those whose land they immigrated into. When we answer God's call to extend charity, meaningful connections are made.

In the book "A Spirituality of Fundraising," co-authors Henri Nouwen and Nathan Ball speak to the connection between asking and receiving donations. One story which intrigued me focused on a relationship Nouwen had with a banker. This banker found some books by Nouwen and was intrigued with the message he found there. He wanted to ensure that Nouwen continue writing, so he offered to be a sponsor for Nouwen's writings. The initial inquiry came while Nouwen was away for several months. However, Nouwen encouraged his assistant to go to dinner with the banker to develop a relationship. When Nouwen returned, he joined the assistant and the banker for dinner, and the banker once again issued his offer to donate money to Nouwen's writing efforts. When the banker was asked why, his response indicated that he knew about money, and that as a writer, Nouwen was not as knowledgeable about money and finances.

What struck me about this exchange was first the bias of the banker's thinking as a seeker, in contrast to Nouwen as a spiritual being. Nouwen goes on to write that they had many dinners together before money was discussed again. Nouwen was more concerned about the banker as a person than his utilitarian use as a revenue stream.

We as the church balance our lives between caring for our community – local and global – and having enough resources so that we can do our ministry. We see ourselves as a faith community as being different as compared to other social networks we belong to. When we do something on behalf of the Church, we claim to be in ministry. Nouwen writes about ministry in this way: "Ministry is, first of all, receiving God's blessing from those to whom we minister: What is this blessing? It is a glimpse of the face of God (from Here and Now)".

Related to this idea of ministry is vision. What is the Church's vision for ministry? In order for the church to give, it also needs to receive. A successful fundraising campaign needs as its base a clear vision of what program looks like and a focus on that which excites. In contrast, a stewardship campaign that focuses on building upkeep and paying a pastor begins to feel depressing. There is not excitement. But where there is a plan, a mission, and something to be excited about, giving can increase.

I find the TV show *Shark Tank* to be mildly interesting. It is a prime example of connection between the donor (The Shark) and the asker (The Entrepreneur). Both have strengths. The Shark has the money, the Entrepreneur has the vision and idea. In the asking, the Entrepreneur needs to answer questions presented by the Sharks. If the vision and idea are clear and precise, a deal is struck. If not, the connection is not made and the idea is not funded.

A lack of resources is not a reason to hang our heads, but a lack of vision may be. Let us ask for God's guidance for vision so when we ask for the resources to do the ministry we are called to do, meaningful connections are made.

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.

2021 Virtual District Potluck

Hosted by Neighborhood COB

Schedule:

March 16, 17, 18, 19: 6:30pm — 8:30pm

March 20: 10am — 12pm

Worship: March 16 @ 6:30 pm & March 20 @ 11 am

Workshops include:

Tues., March 16, 7:30 p.m. (Central time): **Bible study** on the District Potluck theme “Extend Charity to Others: Matthew 25:40” led by Christina Singh.

Wed., March 17, 6:30 p.m. (Central): **“Racism”** led by Jacki Hartley, exploring the questions “How did we get here? And how do we, as individuals and as a body of believers, move beyond good intentions to do the work of racial justice?” following last summer’s Black Lives Matter protests and the Jan. 6 attack on Congress.

Wed., March 17, 7:30 p.m. (Central): **“Indian Spices and Easy Recipes”** led by Purvi Satvedi.

Thurs., March 18, 6:30 p.m. (Central): **“IT and the Church”** led by Enten Eller, exploring the theological and technological potholes and potentials of online worship.

Thurs., March 18, 7:30 p.m. (Central): **“Leader Limits: Helping Your Pastor Thrive”** led by Jonathan Shively.

Fri., March 19, 6:30 p.m. (Central): **“Sex Trafficking”** led by Vivek Solanky, who has researched the rapid growth of the business of human trafficking.

Fri., March 19, 7:30 p.m. (Central): **“Train to Age”** led by Joni Grant, a retired IT executive who started a second career as a personal trainer when she turned 62. She will explore how to work for a future that sees you fit and active into your 80s and 90s.

Sat., March 20, 10 a.m. (Central): **“Worship as Art: How Community Energizes Practice”** led by Jonathan Shively.

Please note: the Zoom sessions will open at 6:20 pm for the evening sessions or 9:50 am for the morning session, please be logged in no later than 6:27 or 9:57. This way we will get everyone in before the sessions start.

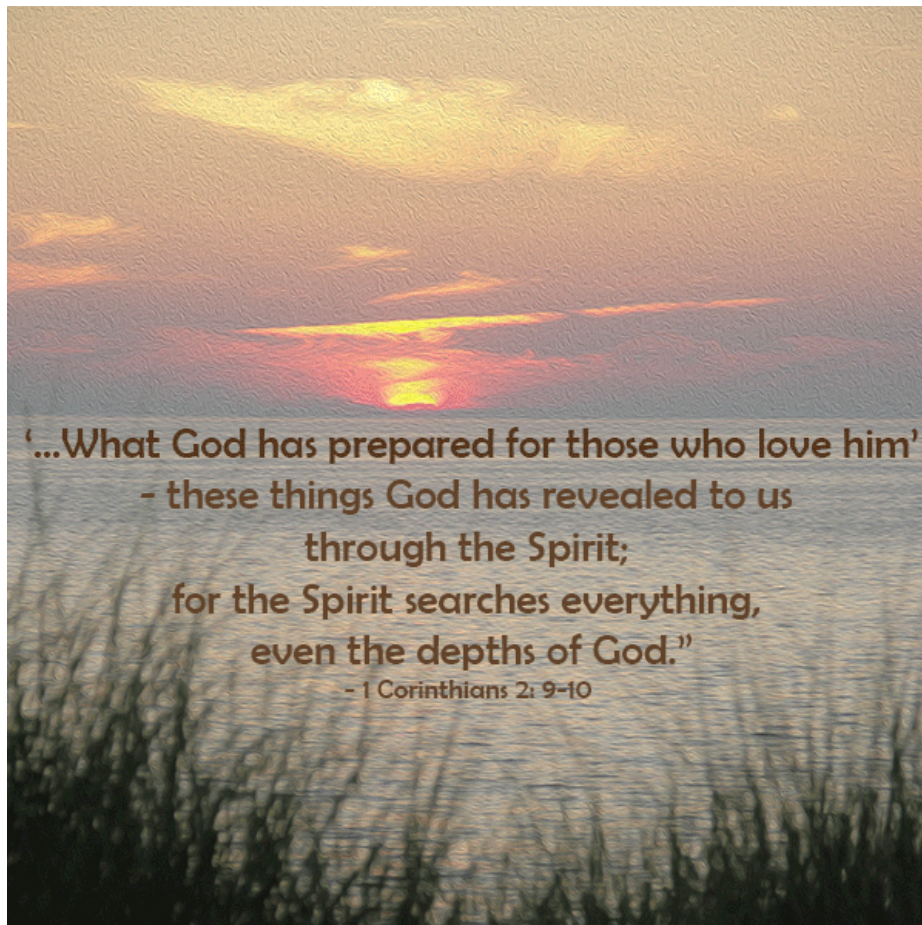
More details will be made available at www.iwdcob.org.

(From Newslines)

Pastoral Installation

Rodney Caldwell will be installed as pastor of the Mt. Morris Church of the Brethren on Sunday, March 7 at 9:30 pm. Jonathan Shively will be representing the Illinois/Wisconsin District for the installation. We rejoice with Rodney and the Mt. Morris Church!

Denomination-wide online worship gathering titled ‘Venturing Forth Boldly as a Faith Family’ is set for Feb. 27



January 29, 2021

The Program and Arrangements Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has announced a denomination-wide online worship gathering titled "Venturing Forth Boldly as a Faith Family," scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 27, at 8 p.m. (Eastern time). In a season of disruption and despair, the service will assure us of what "God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9) and how we can faithfully respond.

The theme is taken from the proposed compelling vision for the Church of the Brethren, with its call for Brethren to "venture forth boldly as a faith family, expectant and innovative, serving others and the God who makes all things new." The scripture theme is 1 Corinthians 2:9-10: "But, as it is written, *'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*"

Congregations are invited to consider using this for their own Sunday morning worship service on Feb. 28, or any later date. Links will be shared in February, including separate links for the service in English and in Spanish.

Featured speakers include preachers Kurt Borgmann, pastor of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind., and Audri Svay, Bethany Seminary student and co-pastor of Eel River Community Church of the Brethren in Silver Lake, Ind.; worship leaders Cindy and Ben Lattimer, co-pastors of Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa.; and an array of people from around the denomination who will offer additional expressions of worship leadership.

A children's time will direct the theme to a younger audience.

A wide array of music will include selections by Leah Hileman and Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren.

A "behind the scenes" story from Nancy Faus Mullen will tell how the hymn "For We Are Strangers No More" was included in the 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book* published jointly by Brethren Press, Faith and Life Press, and the Mennonite Publishing House.

Moderator-elect David Sollenberger will explore by video what online worship means for Church of the Brethren congregations, which historically have thrived on person-to-person interaction. The report will examine stories of congregational faithfulness and innovation in Arizona, Colorado, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The worship gathering is being planned by the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: elected members Emily Shonk Edwards, Carol Elmore, and Jan King; the Conference officers, moderator Paul Munday, moderator-elect Dave Sollenberger, and secretary Jim Beckwith; and Conference director Chris Douglas as staff. Find out more about Annual Conference at www.brethren.org/ac.



New & Renew Conference 2021 is Virtual

Join us for the New & Renew Virtual Conference, **May 13-15, 2021**.

New and Renew is an opportunity for pastors and leaders of new church plants and established churches to come together for worship, learning, and networking.

The conference theme is **The Reward of Risk**, developed from the Gospel of Matthew 25.28-29a. Often in our conversations around church planting and church renewal, we talk about the possibility of failure regarding risk. But have we ever stopped to ponder the possibility of reward amid risk? What might it look like to celebrate those who have taken the risk for the Kingdom of God? Join us as we explore the Reward of Risk and celebrate those who risked for the Kingdom of God.

The three-day virtual conference has more than 20 sessions to broaden your knowledge of church planting and congregational renewal. Besides the workshops, inspirational worship and keynotes will invigorate your calling and passion for ministry.

Unable to attend the conference? No problem! Registration means you can access the recorded sermons, keynotes, and workshops recordings for six months after the event. That means you can watch recorded presentations that are helpful for your ministry context and earn CEUs.

If you are looking for new and practical ways to engage your community and congregation, look no further than the New & Renew Conference 2021. You don't want to miss out on this great experience!

New & Renew Conference Pricing

\$79 per person

\$10 for individuals wanting CEUs.

Stan Dueck
Leadership/Personal Coach
Director, Organizational Leadership
Church of the Brethren
sdueck@brethren.org
847-429-4343

[Learn more](#)

For conference updates, schedule and more, go to: www.brethren.org/newandrenew

For questions please contact:

Delegate Registration for the 2021 ONLINE Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, June 29-July 4, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Registration for both delegates and non-delegates for the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will open at 12:00 Noon Central Time on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. The delegate registration fee is \$305 per delegate. Registration will stay open through the end of conference.

Delegate registration fees provide each delegate with a Conference booklet and the business materials packet. Each congregation registering a delegate will also receive a copy of the 2021 Annual Conference minutes.

Please note: Unique to this year's ONLINE Annual Conference, each delegate MUST HAVE THEIR OWN PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS, A COMPUTER OR TABLET, AS WELL AS ADEQUATE WIFI SERVICE IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN CONFERENCE. Please ensure that your selected delegate meets these requirements to participate so that your congregation can be fully represented at Annual Conference.

We are aware that some congregations do not have much access to the Internet and we hope delegates from those congregations will be able to participate. Perhaps your district office will have counsel as to how you can obtain individual Internet connections for each of your delegates.

One online site will be used for all business, insight sessions, networking groups, concerts, Bible studies and more. A link and password for access to the site will be emailed to each registrant in the days prior to the start of Conference. Training sessions will be provided in the weeks before Conference begins for those wanting to learn how to navigate the site. The many details of the event will be frequently updated on www.brethren.org/ac. Please check back often! Also watch for weekly emails sharing information about all that Annual Conference will have to offer online.

Registering a Delegate

Beginning Tuesday, March 2, at 12:00 noon Central Time, congregations may register their delegates online at www.brethren.org/ac. Click the "Registration" button and then choose "Delegate Registration." Payment options include paying by credit card or sending a check. Each delegate's complete name, address, email, and phone contact are required. **Please use the delegate's own email address, not the church email!** If you need assistance, call the Annual Conference Office at 800-323-8039 ext. 366, or 847-429-4366.

Delegate Eligibility and Allotment

Delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The number of delegates for each congregation is based on the membership statistics as reported in the 2020 Church of the Brethren Yearbook. The number allowed is as follows:

Up to 200 Members	1 delegate
201-400 Members	2 delegates
401-600 Members	3 delegates
601-800 Members	4 delegates

Non-Delegate Registrations

Non-delegate registration opens the same day as delegate registration. When registering anyone other than a delegate, click on the "Non-Delegate Registration" button. This year's reduced price of \$99 for non-delegates provides access to the business sessions, insight sessions, networking groups, concerts, Bible studies and more.

All five worship services will be available free of charge to all registered and non-registered persons.

New Delegates

Please encourage delegates who have never been or have not recently been to Annual Conference to attend the New Attendee Orientation session, online at 3:30 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday afternoon, June 29.

Online Information

Please check out our webpage at www.brethren.org/ac2021 for more information about Annual Conference, including leadership, themes, schedule, concerts and much more. New information is added regularly so check back often.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding registration.

Debbie Noffsinger, registration coordinator
Annual Conference Office
Church of the Brethren
1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
Dial direct: 847-429-4366
Toll free: 800-323-8039, x366
dnoffsinger@brethren.org

PINECREST COMMUNITY'S 2021 RENZ SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Applications are now being received for the James E. Renz Pinecrest Memorial Scholarship. This \$1,000.00 scholarship strives to honor and recognize a graduating high school senior who intends to pursue an education in healthcare, social services, or ministry studies.

Eligible graduates will be either 1) a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the northern region of the Illinois and Wisconsin District; 2) or an Oregon High School senior; 3) or a Pinecrest employee or dependent; 4) or a home schooled or private school student from within the Oregon school district.

The Pinecrest Board of Directors established the scholarship, first awarded in 2014, to recognize the lifetime contributions of Mr. Renz, which include 40 years on the board, 24 years as secretary.

Read more about the requirements and download the application on Pinecrest's website: <https://www.pinecrestcommunity.org/News-Releases/2021-Renz-Scholarship-Applications-Now-Accepted>

Register for February course

The February course from the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson College will be "The Gift of Multivocational Ministry" to be taught by Dana Cassell, part-time pastor of the Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren in Durham, North Carolina, and part-time manager for the Church of the Brethren's "Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church" program.

In the Church of the Brethren, more than three-quarters of congregations are served by multivocational (part-time) pastors. That statistic might sound discouraging, but multivocational ministry is actually a gift and grace, for both ministers and congregations. This course will highlight current realities, encouraging possibilities, and theological roots of shared ministry for today.

The class will be held online **Saturday, February 20 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Central Time**. Continuing education credit is available. During the registration process, you will have the opportunity to pay for CEUs and give an optional donation to the Ventures program.

All previously held Ventures courses are available through the archive at www.mcpherson.edu/ventures/courses. They are a wealth of insight and information. These recordings are now eligible for CEU credit through the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. If you desire CEU's, please work directly with the Academy to fulfill their requirements.

Registration for all courses and more information about Ventures in Christian Discipleship is available at www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

CV Bible Studies

The Compelling Vision Team of the denomination 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

Annual Conference office releases two ballots to be presented to 2021 delegate body



February 5, 2021
Timothy Botts

The logo for Annual Conference 2021. Art by

The Annual Conference office has released two ballots to be presented to the delegates at the Church of the Brethren annual meeting on June 30-July 4, 2021. The event is online-only (www.brethren.org/ac).

When last year's Conference was cancelled because of the pandemic, the Nominating Committee recommended deferring the 2020 ballot to 2021. Each person on the 2020 ballot has been asked their willingness to be considered in the 2021 vote. People holding positions elected by Annual Conference whose terms expired in 2020 have been asked their willingness to extend their terms until the election in 2021.

This has resulted in two ballots coming before the delegate body this year: the 2020 deferred ballot and the 2021 ballot.

Those elected from the 2021 ballot will serve the usual term for their office.

Those elected from the 2020 deferred ballot, except for the moderator-elect, will serve one year less than the usual term.

Here is the 2020 deferred ballot:

*For Annual Conference moderator-elect: **Tim McElwee** and **Paul Liepelt**.*

Liepelt is a pastor at Anville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. He has been a member of the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board, and has served on the executive committee. In past experience on the denominational staff, he taught at Kulp Bible College in Nigeria 2004-2007. He is an ordained minister and holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary.

McElwee lives in Wolcottville, Ind. Now retired, his leadership in the church includes a number of roles at Manchester University over more than 30 years, including vice president for advancement and for academic resources, and associate professor of peace studies. While an ordained minister he served as campus pastor. He has been chaplain for the Timbercrest retirement community. In the 1990s he was denominational staff in Washington, D.C. He also has been senior director of development for Heifer International. He holds a master of divinity from Bethany Seminary and a master's and doctorate from Purdue University.

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

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

*For the Mission and Ministry Board, Area 1: **Josiah Ludwick**, Harrisburg, Pa.; **Mandy North**, Manassas, Va.*

*For the Mission and Ministry Board, Area 4: **Daniel L. Butler**, Grundy Center, Iowa; **Kathy A. Mack**, Rochester, Minn.*

*For Bethany Seminary trustee, representing clergy: **Chris Bowman**, Manassas, Va.; **Frances R. Townsend**, Onekama, Mich.*

*For Bethany Seminary trustee, representing laity: **Irene Beltran**, Pomona, Calif.; **Jacki Hartley**, Elgin, Ill.*

For the Brethren Benefit Trust board: **Janis Fahs**, North Manchester, Ind.; **David L. Shissler**, Hummelstown, Pa.

For the On Earth Peace board: **Ruth Aukerman**, Union Bridge, Md.; **James LeFever**, Los Angeles, Calif.

Here is the 2021 ballot:

For the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: **Kim Ebersole**, North Manchester, Ind.; **Nathan Hollenberg**, Broadway, Va.

For the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, representing laity: **Robert S. McMinn**, Huntingdon, Pa.; **Kevin Schweitzer**, Dayton, Ohio.

For the Mission and Ministry Board, Area 3: **Karen Shively Neff**, Gotha, Fla.; **Phillip C. Stone Jr.**, Linville, Va.

For the Mission and Ministry Board, Area 5: **Barbara Daté**, Eugene, Ore.; **Annali Topf**, Los Angeles, Calif.

For Bethany Seminary trustee, representing laity: **Drew Hart**, Harrisburg, Pa.; **Nohemi Flores**, Pomona, Calif.

For Bethany Seminary trustee, representing colleges: **Katharine Gray Brown**, North Manchester, Ind.; **Steve Longenecker**, Harrisonburg, Va.

For the Brethren Benefit Trust board: **Sara Davis**, La Canada Flintridge, Calif.; **Carl Eubank**, Dayton, Ohio.

For the On Earth Peace board: **Rudy Amaya**, Pasadena, Calif.; **Alyssa Parker**, Harrisburg, Pa.

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

By Janet Ober Lambert, Director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership



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."

Chris Douglas to retire from the Church of the Brethren staff

Church of the Brethren Newslines



February 4, 2021

Chris Douglas

Chris Douglas will retire from the Church of the Brethren staff on Oct. 1. She has worked for the denomination for more than 35 years, since 1985. Most recently, she has served as director of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference.

Douglas began her work for the denomination as staff for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Urban Ministry in Jan. 1985. She went on to serve full-time as director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for 20 years, from 1990 to 2009. During that time, she took on expanded responsibilities for leadership development events, increased attendance at National Youth Conferences, and expanded the youth workcamp program. Among her accomplishments, she mentored numerous Brethren Volunteer Service workers as they coordinated six National Youth Conferences.

She became Annual Conference director on Sept. 6, 2009, and by the time of her retirement will have directed 11 Annual Conferences (the 2020 event was cancelled because of the pandemic). Her final Conference will be the 2021 event. As the first Conference ever to be held virtually, it represents a closing challenge in Douglas' tenure.

Her organizational skills have been evident in her work with the Conference, negotiating with host sites in various locations across the country, overseeing the work of many volunteers and committees, making sure the Conference goes smoothly, doing onsite trouble-shooting, and more. As Conference director, she has been staff support for the Program and Arrangements Committee, for the Conference officers, and for the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team.

She has been a member of the Religious Conference Managers Association for many years. She is a graduate of Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., and holds a master of divinity and a doctor of ministry from Bethany Theological Seminary. An ordained minister, she also has served as a pastor in the Church of the Brethren.

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://d31hzlkh6di2h5.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
Contact: ellis.boughton@live.com
815-864-2049

Interim District Executive: Connie Burkholder
Contact: crburkholder56@gmail.com
620-245-4600

Andrea Garnett, Administrative Assistant
Contact: andreag.iwdcob@gmail.com
309-649-6008

Carol Kussart, Chair; Cerro Gordo
Contact: ckussart@gmail.com
217-855-3258

Phyllis Batterton, Vice-chair; Woodland
Contact: pjbatterton@gmail.com
309-759-4897

Ed Watkins, Peoria
Contact: watrkinsedwardjc@gmail.com
309-397-2401

Mary Dulabaum, Highland Ave.
Contact: mdulabaum@gmail.com
847-695-2652

Kyle Brinkmeier, Yellow Creek
Contact: brinkky@hotmail.com
815-291-4664

Jonathan Shively, Highland Ave.
Contact: shively.jonathan@gmail.com
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.

— **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.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks a full-time director for the Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA)** at the denomination’s General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Responsibilities include promoting the history and heritage of the Church of the Brethren by administering the archive and by facilitating research and the study of Brethren history. Required skills and knowledge include extensive knowledge of Church of the Brethren history and beliefs; familiarity with Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision of the Church of the Brethren; familiarity with library and archival disciplines; customer service skills; research and problem-solving skills; proficiency in Microsoft software; experience with OCLC products; at least 3-5 years of experience in a library or archives; a master’s degree in library science, archival studies, or a public history related program; a graduate degree in history or theology and/or certification by the Academy of Certified Archivists. Applications are received immediately and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org, Office of Human Resources, 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.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks a full-time coordinator of short-term service** to oversee and administer short-term service experiences and placements including the Faith Outreach Expeditions or FaithX (formerly the Workcamp Ministry), and support recruitment of volunteers for Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). Required skills and knowledge include grounding in Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and practices; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision of the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren; strong interpersonal skills; ability to take initiative without regular supervision; strong attention to detail; organizational skills; communication skills (verbal and written); administrative and management skills; ability to provide faith/spiritual leadership in group settings; recruitment experience in a college or equivalent volunteer service setting preferred; understanding of managing a budget required with experience of managing a budget preferred; willingness to travel extensively; ability to work well in a close team office setting; flexibility with evolving program needs. Required experience includes leading service work experiences or mission trips; working with youth; recruitment and assessment of individuals; and experience with word processing, database, and spreadsheet software. Previous BVS experience is helpful but not required. A bachelor’s degree is expected, a master’s degree or equivalent work experience is helpful but not required. This position is based at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Applications will be received beginning immediately and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org, Office of Human Resources, 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.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks a part-time, hourly assistant for the Buildings and Grounds department at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.** Responsibilities include providing support for services such as maintenance, warehouse operations, shipping, mail, supplies, equipment, and other work at the direction of the manager of Buildings and Grounds. Required skills and knowledge include ability to relate with integrity and respect within and beyond the organization;

knowledge and experience in building operation and facilities management; knowledge of electrical work, plumbing, HVAC, and mechanical systems is helpful but not required; ability to bend, stoop, climb, lift 50 pounds, and work in extreme environments in or out of doors; ability to handle hazardous materials and exposure to hazardous situations; ability to access, input, and retrieve information from a computer; ability to work with minimal supervision; skills in oral and written communication; at least five years of Buildings and Grounds operations experience helpful but not required; high school diploma or equivalent required. Applications will be received beginning immediately and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Send a resume to COBApply@brethren.org, Office of Human Resources, 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.

— **The Church of the Brethren's Illinois and Wisconsin District seeks a district executive minister.** The district includes 35 congregations and 2 fellowships ranging from southern Illinois to Wisconsin, and is theologically, geographically, and politically diverse. This is a half time position (approximately 25 hours per week). Office location is negotiable. Travel is required both within and outside of the district (once travel is again advisable). Responsibilities include direction, coordination, management, and leadership of the district ministries, as authorized by the District Conference and implemented by the District Leadership Team; work with congregations in calling and credentialing ministers, and in the placement/call and evaluation of pastoral staff; providing support and counsel for ministers and other church leaders; sharing and interpreting program resources for congregations; providing a link between congregations, district, and denomination by working collaboratively with the Council of District Executives, Annual Conference and its agencies, and their staff. Qualifications include ordination through an accredited program, with a master of divinity degree preferred; skills in organization, administration, and communication; commitment to the Church of the Brethren locally and denominationally and willingness to work ecumenically; demonstrated leadership skills; pastoral experience preferred. Apply by sending a letter of interest and resume to Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, Director of Ministry, via email at officeofministry@brethren.org. Applicants are requested to contact three people to provide letters of reference. Upon receipt of a resume, a Candidate Profile will be sent that must be completed and returned before an application is considered complete. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

— **An updated edition of the Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity**—with footnotes instead of endnotes for easier research—is now available at www.brethren.org/ac/ppg.

— **“Archives Live: 19th Century Notables” is the title of the next virtual tour** hosted by the Brethren Historical Library and Archives at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The event takes place on Facebook on Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m. (Central time). “During this edition of Archives Live, we will be diving into the 1800s with special focus on people and events that impacted the church,” said an announcement. “This time period was one of westward expansion and increasing emphasis on publications and education. We will explore antebellum Brethren historical sources such as the writings of Peter Nead, John Kline, and Henry Kurtz. We will discuss the founding of denominational magazines that are still being published and the figures involved, especially the Messenger.” For more information go to www.facebook.com/events/705814510093607.

— **Find the latest Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) newsletter** with stories from the work of volunteers around the world and an “alumni corner” at www.brethren.org/bvs/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2021/01/Volunteer-winter-2021.pdf.

— **McPherson (Kan.) College has announced a Carolyn Beach Endowed Scholarship Fund that will provide approximately 10 health science scholarships.** The estate gift of nearly \$1.7 million creates “a permanent fund to award scholarships annually to students, especially women—pursuing careers in the health science field,” said a release. Beach attended McPherson from 1958 to 1960. She passed away on Aug. 20, 2020. “As a student at McPherson College, Beach fondly remembered several science professors, specifically, Dr. John Burkholder and Dr. Wesley DeCoursey, who laid a solid foundation for her future career in health care,” the release said. “She also competed in basketball and softball. She was influenced by Dr. Doris Coppock, a long-time former teacher and coach. Beach chose to attend McPherson College because of its strong connection to the Church of the Brethren. She later transferred to the University of Iowa to follow her dream of earning a degree in medical technology. She lived most of her adult life in California where she enjoyed a rewarding career as a medical technologist with Kaiser Permanente.” The release also noted that Beach was impressed that \$1 million in local support had been committed to the college’s new Health Science program, which offers majors in

health science and health care management. Partnerships with local and regional health care agencies provide students with hands-on educational opportunities in a variety of health care settings. Find the full release at www.mcpherson.edu/2021/01/gift-funds-scholarships-for-future-women-leaders-in-health-care.

— **Creation Justice Ministries is hiring for the Faithful Climate Action Fellowship.** Creation Justice Ministries is an environmental ministry connected with the National Council of Churches (NCC). “Are you a young Christian concerned about the climate crisis?” said the announcement. “Do you know a young adult who would be a good fit? Join us in exploring how our faith traditions can support and guide our climate activism.” Young Black, Indigenous, and people of color (age 18-26) in the Midwest and Southeast are invited to apply. Fellows will engage in nine months of joint study, leadership training, and action. Monthly interactive webinars will provide a chance to meet young faith and climate leaders in the fellow’s region, and both peer leaders and professional mentors will guide in developing a voice as a faith and climate activist. The time commitment of only two to three hours per month is designed to fit with fulltime employment or school work. Fellows will receive a \$500 stipend. Application deadline is Feb. 15. Go to www.faithfulclimateaction.org/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=498d887c-8bae-47b9-a3a0-11e4e4272cde.

— **Also from Creation Justice Ministries is an online workshop titled “ResiLENT Worship: Preaching Our Way to Climate Resilience,”** on Feb. 18 at 6-7 p.m. (Eastern time). “This Lent, let us discover together how the church might become a hub of resilience in the midst of the spiritual and physical storms of the climate crisis,” said the announcement. “The work of climate resilience in the church starts with the center of Christian life: worship. The structure of our communal life lies in the heart of Christian worship. The ways we structure our worship life resonates beyond the walls of the sanctuary. Incorporating elements of climate education and worship of God through Creation can develop norms that support God’s people and Creation in the midst of the climate crisis.” The event is free and will include three mini-sermons on climate resilience, worship music for the era of climate change, and tools for incorporating climate-resilient worship in your community. Speakers include Leah Schade, assistant professor of Preaching and Worship at Lexington Theological Seminary; Melanie Mullen, director of Reconciliation, Justice, and Creation Care for the Episcopal Church; Ched Myers, ecumenical activist, theologian, popular educator, writer, teacher, and organizer; Christian McIvor, minister of Worship, Music, and the Arts at Greystone Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtdOqorjgoHNc2Y2iBJilark_QJT9KUpeF?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=31f0a4e3-b96b-4f8e-8775-bef0d07495d0.

The group’s March 25 virtual workshop at 6 p.m. (Eastern time) is on the topic “**Climate Justice on Sacred Ground: The Role of Church Lands in Resilience and Adaptation.**” Find out more at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZakde6upjgtHtTKVJoAfZ1j0-vz1YbozLr4?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=31f0a4e3-b96b-4f8e-8775-bef0d07495d0>.

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.

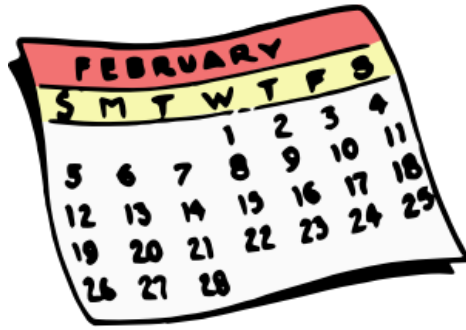
Serving is rewarding!

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

*Logo designed by Debbie Noffsinger

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Canton, IL 61520-2730

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