

The Reflector

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



Reflections from the Journey

Things that sound the simplest may be the hardest to do. Love God; love your neighbor. This distillation of the Ten Commandments from Jesus sounds simple enough, right? Yet it continues to be a challenging part of the journey of faith.

In the final chapter of his book, *Who Will Be a Witness?*, Drew Hart has a chapter he titles "The Politics of Love." He writes of this commandment to love, noting that in the gospel of John (John 13: 34-35) it's clearly understood that disciples love their neighbor. He says,

"For John, this is not about whether disciples of Jesus should love their neighbors. This is what disciples of Jesus do; they love. It is their defining characteristic. They are a community of love. They give, receive, and share love. Love grounds their lives. They practice love and are good at it. They show people the way to live by embodying love. They persevere through challenges with it. It is their lasting mark and eternal legacy (p. 334, *Who Will Be a Witness?*)."

I've heard that message for years. I've *preached* that message for years! Maybe not in those exact words, but with that same intent. And yet,

Hart's expression gave new meaning, and emphasis, and challenge for me as I participated in a book study with some other pastors who explored this book together. As I write this article, the challenge of the words arises in me again. What does it mean to love my neighbor when their views of how to live in pandemic times are so different than mine. Can I love my neighbor, my brother in Christ who tells me that wearing masks is silly when all scientific evidence proves otherwise? Can I love my neighbors when they say hateful, untruthful things on Facebook? Or do I "unfollow" them and forget about it? Can I love my neighbor who holds views that are diametrically opposed to the very values I have learned as a disciple of Jesus and a member of the Church of the Brethren? If love is going to be my defining characteristic, as Drew Hart says, then how will I live in these times when cultural tensions are so high?

Perhaps for some, it's always been that way. They've *always* experienced cultural tensions - - the exclusions, the hateful language, the threat of violence, or actual violence, the injustices all around them. Those have all been present for persons of color, immigrants, LGBTQ folks, and other marginalized people. Whether we experiences those injustices or not, Drew Hart calls us to be a witness in the world. He calls us, as Jesus does, to embody love, to make our love for God real through our love for others.

I came across an interview done by John Dear for the Sojourners community. He interviews the late Rep. John Lewis. Lewis is quoted as saying,

"I happen to believe that God is love, that love is God. Hate is too much of a burden to bear. If you start hating, in the end, how are you going to decide who you are going to hate today and love tomorrow? When you fail to accept the Christian doctrine of love and nonviolence as a way of life, as a way of living, and merely a tactic, it becomes like a faucet that you can turn on and off. Love in action, Christian love, is a better way, a more excellent way, and it's more redemptive. I don't know how to explain it, but I somehow came to that point, as I grew in my faith, that this is the way. This is the way out, and the way out is the way in."

I'm not a beginner in this faith journey. Far from it! And yet I find myself very challenged right now to live out this simple command to love my neighbor. For me part of it is a continuing self-awareness of my points of stress and my own woundedness. My own failings and fumbblings. Some of it may be the times we're living in. Whatever the reason, I need the community of faith to support me as I continue to grow into the loving child of God I was created to be. I'm there on the journey with you. Let's support one another and grow together.

Connie R. Burkholder
Interim District Executive

Information about the Interim District Executive Position

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

One of the lessons I learned in seminary about reading scripture was to pay attention to thoughts which are repeated. One such thought focuses on the care towards the foreigner, the widow, and the fatherless. In the Old testament there are stern admonishments to care for these folks and to not take advantage of those who might be considered helpless.

In Matthew 25, the gospel scripture that is the focus of this year's District Conference theme, Jesus makes his point twice. In the passage subtitled "the judgment of the nations," the Son of Man is sitting on the throne of glory with the angels. As the people and nations come before him, they are separated as sheep and goats. Jesus tells those in each group why they are in the group that they

have been assigned.

“When I was hungry, you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25:35-36). Then Jesus states it again in verses 42-43, this time with a negative twist.

The sheep and the goats are surprised by the selection process. As they stand before the Son of Man, they both say, “when did we do (or not do) what you say?” It is implied that had they recognized the opportunity to feed, provide drink, clothing, care, and visitation, they would have done so. I find it interesting how Jesus re-states here the admonishments found in the Old Testament regarding the foreigner, the widow, and the fatherless. The challenge to extend charity as a matter of practice is encouraged. As a matter of their daily activity, when presented with the opportunity the sheep gave, and the goats did not.

In the book of James, the writer encourages his readers to be active participants. When you hear of a need or see a need, you should respond. The expectation is action – there will be consequences for inaction. In this passage there were no excuses accepted. Not recognizing those in need as worthy of assistance because they did not look like the Son of Man was not a reason to withhold help.

We do get to make choices. Most of the time our choices are made depending on how comfortable we are interacting with the unknown. Jesus encourages us to act in a compassionate manner. Trusting in doing the righteous is never a bad thing. When we come to the throne, will we be surprised by which group we will be sorted into?

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 District of Illinois & Wisconsin Virtual District Potluck

Registration Form

Extending Charity to the least who are members of my family. Matt 25:40

Our District Potluck Committee has worked hard to prepare an engaging, informational, and exciting program for this year. You'll find the details below, so be sure to register and attend! We do want to acknowledge that the Thursday evening session of the Potluck event overlaps with the Annual Conference Moderator's Town Hall event. Actually, you can attend both as both will be recorded. To access the Town Hall event, you'll need to register for it to receive the link to the recording. We hope to see you at the Potluck sessions!

All new gathering for 2021. We have gone virtual to be able to offer more options in a safe and more convenient. There will be some of the same things as past Potlucks – opening and closing worship experiences; a variety of sessions to attend. WHAT IS NEW – will be on Zoom; more sessions to select from; CEU's for Pastors; sessions will be recorded; no travel; option to watch a session or worship at a later time.

Scheduled for Tuesday, March 16th through Saturday, March 20th. Tuesday through Friday will be 6:30 to 8:30 PM and Saturday will be 10:00 AM to noon.

We are not asking for a fee for this year's Potluck. However, we do still have expenses to cover. We are asking to please give a donation. Please indicate on your gift "District Potluck".

For Pastor's to receive a certificate for CEU's, there is a \$10.00 processing fee. Payable to the District. Contact District Office for details.

Here is how you can make your donation: send check to 269 E Chestnut St, Canton, IL 61520-2725 or by this PayPal link

([https://www.paypal.com/donate?](https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=B2neDSOCE2wtol3DaibwIDNgYyuCOmDuNbpIlttNZvl4Q3XTwTruIWPr5k1wsHJ9Gr3cgRT7vL0UViLG0)

[token=B2neDSOCE2wtol3DaibwIDNgYyuCOmDuNbpIlttNZvl4Q3XTwTruIWPr5k1wsHJ9Gr3cgRT7vL0UViLG0](https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=B2neDSOCE2wtol3DaibwIDNgYyuCOmDuNbpIlttNZvl4Q3XTwTruIWPr5k1wsHJ9Gr3cgRT7vL0UViLG0)).

This is the link you will need to attend each day's sessions: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89516952666?pwd=U2RKeTJXSDFobDJXSWVVT25yaIBOUT09>

Meeting ID: 895 1695 2666 Passcode: 411441

One tap mobile +13126266799, 89516952666#, *411441# US (Chicago)

Tuesday – Mar 16th

6:30 PM Central **Opening Worship**

7:30 PM Central **Bible Study** Led by Christina Singh

Wednesday – Mar 17th

6:30 PM Central **Racism** Led by Jackie Hartly

7:30 PM Central **Indian Spices and easy recipes** Led by Purvi Satvedi

Thursday – Mar 18th

6:30 PM Central **IT and the Church** Led by Enten Eller

7:30 PM Central **Leader Limits: Helping Your Pastor Thrive** Led by Jonathan Shively

Friday – Mar 19th

6:30 PM Central **Sex Trafficking** Led by Vivek Solanky

7:30 PM Central **Train to Age** Led by Joni Grant

Saturday – Mar 20th

10:00 AM Central **Worship as Art: How Community Energizes Practice** Led by Jonathan Shively

11:00 AM Central **Closing Worship**

How the small Highland Avenue Church in Elgin has thrived during the pandemic

-By James Fuller

From the Daily Herald: <https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210301/how-the-small-highland-avenue-church-in-elgin-has-thrived-during-the-pandemic>

Caroll Ann Bailey looks forward to Sundays more than any day of the week. She puts on her church clothes, grooms her purple-streaked hair and thinks about the coffee and "intentional family" she'll get to hug and talk to.

Services at the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin typically feature only about 100 people. But Bailey likes having a smaller congregation where you can really get to know people.

"I like to get there early and sit in the sanctuary and just soak up the sunshine," she said. "And one day I got all dressed up, and I drove to the church, and it was locked. I just sat in the parking lot and cried. I was like, 'Oh my God. COVID's got us.'"

That was in March. Infections and death spurred shutdowns throughout Illinois and the country. The Highland Avenue Church found itself facing the same questions as other faith communities -- how do you remain a community when all the traditions you've put in place, all based

on gathering in large groups, now pose a health risk that forces you to be apart?

To read the rest of the article, please follow the link from the Daily Herald: <https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210301/how-the-small-highland-avenue-church-in-elgin-has-thrived-during-the-pandemic>

DE on Vacation

Interim District Executive Connie Burkholder will be on vacation during Holy Week, March 29 – April 4. Contact Andrea Garnett, Administrative Assistant, during this time at andreas.iwdcob@gmail.com for assistance.

Wisconsin's "Working for Peace"

The Interfaith Peace Working Group, an associate member of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, which works to promote the understanding and practice of nonviolence throughout Wisconsin, recently sent out the Spring 2021 issue of its newsletter. We encourage you to read it. To do so click [here!](#)

News from The Gathering Chicago

In February, The Gathering Chicago, an emerging ministry in our district, launched the [Globalcast Videocast](#). Check out the series launch here in Rev. LaDonna's interview with Artist and Leader Jeffery Beckham, Jr. He is Interim CEO of Chicago Scholars (chicagoscholars.org) and shares with us "The Power of Telling Our Stories. The Power of Telling Black Stories. Check out the series on our new website at TheGatheringChicago.org.

Death Row Support Project – be a pen pal

Did you know that the Church of the Brethren sponsors a ministry to death row prisoners? This is a ministry that has been coordinated by Rachel Gross of Liberty Mills, Indiana. She receives requests for pen pals from persons on death row and then passes along that contact information to persons who are willing to commit to writing letters. This project provides connection and friendship for those who often have been incarcerated for many years, perhaps even decades, and who may be confined for up to twenty-three hours each day alone in a small cell. Letters from a pen pal can bring a ray of hope to the darkness of death row. Sometimes prisoners have little contact with family or friends, and a friendly, kind letter gives them a connection that can make a difference in their lives. For those on the outside, learning to know just one prisoner can dispel some of the misconceptions and fears about prisons and the people locked away inside of them. Sister Helen Prejean, a Catholic Sister who has ministered to death row inmates for years puts it simply, "Everybody on death row needs someone at their side."

Are you desiring to expand your connections and do a ministry in this time of pandemic? This is the perfect time to begin! You can do it in your home and reach out to the world of someone in need to a positive relationship in their life. Contact Rachel Gross through the information below for more information or to become a pen pal through DRSP.

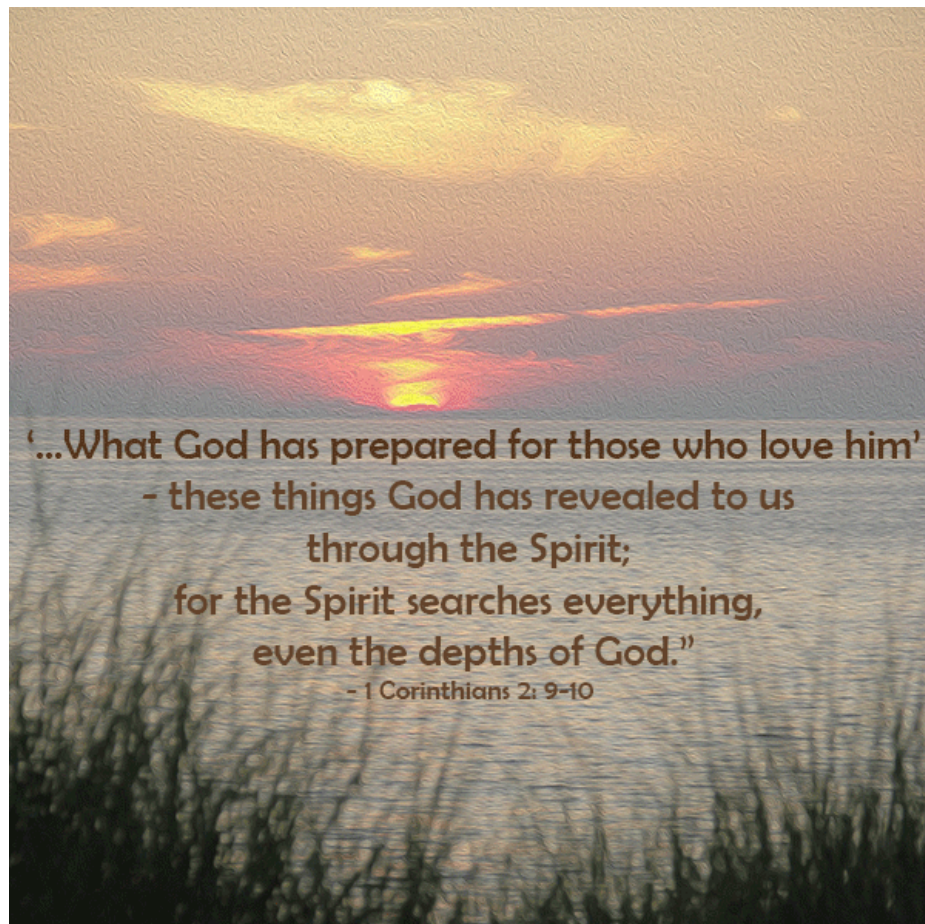
Death Row Support Project
PO Box 600
Liberty Mills, IN 46946
drsp@brethren.org
<https://www.brethren.org/drsp/>

Growing Hope Globally - Polo Church of the Brethren is continuing its involvement in the Polo Growing Project that raises crops and donates the proceeds to be distributed through Growing Hope Globally to help smallholder farmers expand production in food-insecure communities abroad. A report in the newsletter of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, which is one of the project partners, reports that a final tally of proceeds from 2020 shows income of \$35,500. This brings to \$530,500 the aggregate amount the project has raised over the past 16 years. (Newsline 3-5-21)

The White Fragility book study group is continuing to meet via Zoom. The group is led by Dennis Webb and Christy Waltersdorff. Contact them if interested. Future dates are March 25, April 8, April 22, May 6. We give thanks for these important conversations and opportunities for learning.

Denomination-wide online worship gathering titled ‘Venturing Forth Boldly as a Faith Family’

Church of the Brethren Newslines



January 29, 2021

The denomination-wide online worship service took place on February 27, 2021. If you are interested in watching it, please follow this link: <https://www.brethren.org/ac/online-worship-2021/>

Youth and young adult calendar lists upcoming events to be offered online

Church of the Brethren Newslines

February 26, 2021

An updated calendar of online events for youth and young adults has been announced by the Church of the Brethren's Youth and Young Adult ministry. Most of the following events were shared in a letter from director Becky Ullom Naugle to youth advisors and pastors (<https://mailchi.mp/brethren.org/youth-young-adult-ministry-2021>). Information also is being shared via Facebook at www.facebook.com/BrethrenYYA.

"It goes without saying that virtual events are not the same as in-person events, and I lament with you the loss this represents," she wrote. "Yet, as we model for others how to find and follow the movement of the Holy Spirit in challenging times, I hope these new online opportunities enrich our faith and the faith of those we walk beside."

She noted that the National Junior High Conference and Ministry Summer Service will not be offered this year because of complications related to COVID. Ministry Summer Service will resume in 2022, and the next National Junior High Conference will take place in 2023.



Feb. 28 – Deadline for junior and senior high youth groups to express interest in participating in the **Youth Fellowship Exchange**, an opportunity to connect youth from different congregations for online fellowship. Youth advisors are invited to fill out an interest form at <https://forms.gle/pc2yt26usAUBDZht7>. Find out more at www.brethren.org/news/2021/new-youth-fellowship-exchange.

March 7 – The second in a series of **Compelling Vision Bible Studies** for young adults, junior high and senior high youth, and accompanying adults. These studies will be held in the evenings on select dates through June. Groups as well as individuals are encouraged to attend. "Together" is the theme for the event on March 7, at 8-9 p.m. (Eastern), led by Audrey and Tim Hollenberg-Duffey. Register at <http://ow.ly/ZgLP50DGRJN>.

March 14 – Bethany Theological Seminary professor Denise Kettering Lane will lead the **third session in the Compelling Vision Bible Studies series**, focusing on "as the Church of the Brethren," on March 14 from 8-9 p.m. (Eastern). Register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJltcO-rqDopHNTMU-BdDaJ-bJ6JL5YRGHGt>.

March 24 – "Living Letters" art workshop for young adults led by Jessie Houff, Community Arts minister at Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren.

April 11 – "Living Letters" art workshop for junior high youth, led by Houff.

April 24-28 – **Christian Citizenship Seminar** for senior high youth and adult advisors. This year the theme is "Economic Justice" (Luke 1:51-53). Online sessions will be held in the evenings. Registration costs \$75 per person. For more information and to register, go to www.brethren.org/ccs.

May 2 – **National Youth Sunday**, an annual event calling congregations to celebrate their senior high youth by inviting them into worship leadership. Theme and worship materials will be posted by March 15 at www.brethren.org/yya/national-youth-sunday.

May 11 – "Play, on Purpose," a webinar for youth advisors, led by Dr. Lakisha Lockhart. Continuing education credit will be available.

May 28-31 – **National Young Adult Conference** for young adults age 18-35. This year's theme is "Unfolding Grace" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Registration opens Feb. 26. Cost is \$75 per person. For more information and to register go to www.brethren.org/yac.

Unfolding GRACE

2 COR. 4:16 – 18

National Young Adult Conference 2021

Aug. 1 – “Living Letters” art workshop for youth advisors, led by Houff.

Nov. 7 – **National Junior High Sunday**, an annual event celebrating junior high youth, encouraging congregations to welcome them into worship leadership. Worship resources will be posted later this summer at www.brethren.org/yya/jr-high-resources.

2022 – **National Youth Conference**. Planning is beginning now for next year’s NYC, a conference held every four years for senior high youth and first-year college students (or those of equivalent age), and their adult advisors.



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:

Randi Rowan, churchplanting@brethren.org

Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 303 or 847-429-4303

Ventures course to focus on 'Reformations Past and Present'

Church of the Brethren Newslite

February 26, 2021

By Kendra Flory

The March offering from the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program at McPherson (Kan.) College will be "Reformations Past and Present," to be held online March 13 at 9 a.m. to 12 noon (Central time), presented by Bobbi Dykema.

As an opportunity for deepening engagement with this topic, there will be a talk-back session offered on the following Monday evening, March 15. Information for joining that call will be emailed to course registrants.

In church historian Phyllis Tickle's book *The Great Emergence*, Tickle quotes Anglican bishop Mark Dyer as saying that "about every 500 years, the church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale." Past such "rummage sales"—the shift into monastic Christian spirituality with the fall of the Roman Empire around the year 500, the Great Schism between the Eastern Orthodox churches and Western Christianity around the year 1000, and the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s—have all contributed mightily to our current understanding and practice of the Christian faith, which itself is undergoing upheaval in the present time.

What can we learn from these past reformations, and what can we observe already about the current time of change, that will help us to navigate? This course will examine the history of the three earlier times of reformation and lift up what scholars are observing about the present shifts, with an eye toward equipping church folks to listen faithfully to and live out the Spirit's calling of the church of the future.



Dykema is serving pastorates at First Church of the Brethren in Springfield, Ill., and the online congregation Living Stream Church of the Brethren. She also serves on the steering committee of the Women's Caucus. She completed her master's degree at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities and a doctorate in Art and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, with a dissertation on early Lutheran woodcuts. She has written a number of scholarly articles on the visual culture of the Protestant Reformation, including most recently one on "Protestant Visual Art" for the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Religion and the Arts*, as well as a recent Bible study on compassion in *Messenger*. She has taught graduate and undergraduate courses at Strayer University, Hamline University, Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, and Pacific School of Religion.

Continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course. During the registration process, there is an opportunity to pay for CEUs and give an optional donation to the Ventures program. Go to www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

— Kendra Flory is advancement assistant at McPherson (Kan.) College.

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

Leadership Summit on Wellbeing takes place April 19-22 as a virtual event

Church of the Brethren Newsline



February 6, 2021

By Philip Collins

The Church of the Brethren is hosting a Leadership Summit on Wellbeing, a virtual event for clergy and other church leaders. This multi-day event covers a wide array of topics that are intended to provide a holistic approach to sustaining leaders.

Dr. Jessica Young Brown, a counseling psychologist and assistant professor of Counseling and Practical Theology at Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, is the keynote speaker. She specializes in bringing together mental health work and the church, particularly for church leaders.

Other speakers include Ron Vogt, Bruce Barkhauer, Melissa Hofstetter, Tim Harvey, and Erin Matteson.

The summit will take place on the evenings of April 19-22. Attendees will have access to five pre-recorded sessions to view before attending the event online, which will consist of follow-up Q&A sessions on the material viewed. Each presenter covers a different aspect of wellbeing, including physical, emotional, financial, relational, and spiritual wellbeing.

Registration opens Feb. 8. To register and to find more information, visit www.brethren.org/leadership-wellbeing. Early-bird registration is available for \$50 before April 1, when registration will increase to \$75.

— *Philip Collins, a student at Bethany Theological Seminary, is serving as logistics coordinator for the Leadership Summit on Wellbeing.*

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>

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."

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://d31hzlhk6di2h5.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!



Moderator's Town Hall

Thursday, March 18th

Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday is excited to announce the next Moderator's Town Hall on March 18, 2021, at 7:00 PM EDT. The featured resource person will be Dr. William H. Willimon, a highly respected church leader who has served as a pastor, seminary professor, university chaplain, and bishop.

The focus of the Town Hall will be "Peacebuilding When We're So Divided." As both church and culture continue to fracture, many are discouraged, groping for ways to address the divide. We will explore practical peacebuilding skills, drawing on current best practices, along with insights from scripture, theology, and church history. The emphasis will be on hope while acknowledging the necessity of realism and lament.

Will Willimon is currently Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School. He served eight years as Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of The United Methodist Church, where he led the 157,000 constituents and 792 pastors of that judicatory. For twenty years prior to the episcopacy, he was Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.



A graduate of Wofford College (B.A. 1968), Yale Divinity School (M.Div. 1971), and Emory University (S.T.D. 1973), he has served as pastor of churches in Georgia and South Carolina. Since 1976, he has served in various roles at Duke Divinity school, including Assistant Professor of Liturgy and Worship, Director of the Ministerial Course of Study School, and Presiding Minister in the Divinity School Chapel. He has been awarded honorary degrees from thirteen colleges and universities including Wofford College, Lehigh University, Colgate University, Birmingham-Southern College, and Moravian Theological Seminary.

Bishop Willimon has given lectures and taught courses at many pastors' schools and at colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. These include the Belden Lectures at Harvard as well as lectureships at Princeton, Vanderbilt, Pepperdine, and Oxford. In 1998, he served on the theological faculty of the University of Bonn, Germany and in 1991, he was Distinguished Guest Professor at the University of Muenster, Germany.

He is the author of roughly one hundred books. His book *Worship as Pastoral Care* was selected as one of the ten most useful books for pastors in 1979 by the Academy of Parish Clergy. Over a million copies of his books have been sold. In 1996, an international survey conducted by Baylor University named him one of the Twelve Most Effective Preachers in the English-speaking world. A 2005 study by the Pulpit and Pew Research Center found that Bishop Willimon is the second most widely read author by mainline Protestant pastors. His *Pulpit Resource* is used each week by thousands of pastors in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

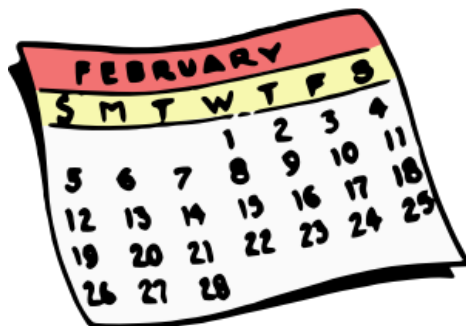
To register for the Town Hall, please access the blue button below or use the following link: tinyurl.com/ModTownHallMar2021

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

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

Questions or issues related to registering for the Town Hall can be emailed to cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com.

[Register for Town Hall](#)



Upcoming Events

March 16-March 20: Virtual District Potluck
Tuesday thru Friday: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Saturday: 10 am - noon

Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm: P&A Meeting, Zoom
Saturday, March 27, 9 am: CRDT Meeting, Zoom
Saturday, April 10, 9 am: Leadership Team Meeting, Zoom

Newsline

-- **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..

-- **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 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>.

— **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.

— **Applications are being received for the James E. Renz Pinecrest Memorial Scholarship**, a \$1,000 scholarship given by the Pinecrest retirement community in Mount Morris, Ill. The scholarship recognizes a graduating high school senior who intends to pursue an education in healthcare, social services, or ministry studies. To be eligible, students are either a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation in the northern region of the Illinois and Wisconsin District, an Oregon (Ill.) High School senior, a Pinecrest employee or dependent, or a home-schooled or private school student from within the Oregon school district. The scholarship is in honor of the lifetime contributions of Jim Renz including 40 years on the board, with 24 years as secretary. For more information and the application form go to www.pinecrestcommunity.org/images/pdfs/2021_Renz_Scholarship_Application.pdf.

— **Annual Conference registration opens March 2** at 1 p.m. (Eastern time) at www.brethren.org/ac. The Church of the Brethren annual meeting is online-only this year. Worship services are free and open to the public, but registration and a fee are required to attend the business sessions, Bible studies, workshops, insight sessions, concerts, and more. The Annual Conference office has begun publishing a newsletter with details about the 2021 annual meeting, find the first issue at www.brethren.org/ac2021.

— **Pacific Southwest District is offering an all-district love feast service** online on Maundy Thursday, April 1, beginning at 6:30 p.m. (Pacific time). "The same service will be offered on the PSWD YouTube channel and in Zoom at the same time," said the announcement. The service will be in both English and Spanish, with captions in the alternate language so that all may participate. Register for the Zoom service at <https://bit.ly/3pnl5UJ>. The district YouTube Channel is at www.youtube.com/channel/UC_9v4N-GBE6UCUENoAyIf_g.

— **The Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board** will meet March 12-14 via Zoom for its regular spring meeting. Business will be led by chair Patrick Starkey, assisted by chair-elect Carl Fike and general secretary David Steele. In addition to the meeting of the full board, the weekend will include the board committee meetings and executive sessions. Open session meetings of the full board will be broadcast via Zoom webinar. Preregistration is required to view the meeting. Find a schedule, background documents, and more information at www.brethren.org/mmb/meeting-info.

— **“Peacebuilding When We’re So Divided”** is the topic of the next Moderator’s Town Hall hosted by Paul Munday, moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. The online event on March 18 at 7 p.m. (Eastern time) will feature William H. Willimon, professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School, and the author of some 100 books, which have sold more than a million copies. In 1996, an international survey conducted by Baylor University named him one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world. A 2005 study by the Pulpit and Pew Research Center found him to be the second most widely read author by mainline Protestant pastors, and his Pulpit Resource is used each week by thousands of pastors. The event will explore practical peacebuilding skills for this time, which an announcement described as one marked by continuing fracture in both church and culture. “The emphasis will be on hope, while acknowledging the necessity of realism and lament.” Register at tinyurl.com/ModTownHallMar2021. For questions, contact cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com.

— **Polo (III.) Church of the Brethren** is continuing its involvement in the Polo Growing Project that raises crops and donates the proceeds to be distributed through Growing Hope Globally to help smallholder farmers expand production in food-insecure communities abroad. A report in the newsletter of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill., which is one of the project partners, reports that a final tally of proceeds from 2020 shows income of \$35,500. This brings to \$530,500 the aggregate amount the project has raised over the past 16 years.

Extra Tidbits

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.

*Logo designed by Debbie Noffsinger

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