

The Reflector

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



Reflections from the Journey

Over the last year or so I've done some reading and reflecting on recently published material on anti-racism topics. Some of the reading has been invitational and reflective. Some has revealed how little I've known about depth of the racial injustices perpetrated against persons of color in our nation's history. Some of it has shown me how the US churches themselves have put up barriers and acted in discriminatory ways. All of it has been challenging in one way or another. Part of the challenge is to do more than read - to move to take action, to live differently, to be transformed into an agent of change in the world.

My most recent book acquisition is "The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice: A Month of Meditations with Ignatius of Loyola" by Patrick Saint-Jean, S.J. As a native of Haiti, he speaks as a person of color and frames this book in material of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Believe me, it will take me more than a month to pray my way through these reflections, poetry, and journaling exercises. The material of the Ignatian Exercises is designed to help us ground ourselves more deeply in God so that we are transformed to follow Christ more closely in our everyday life. So here are some challenging words quoted from Deborah Cohan in the very first day of the materials:

"If I truly want to be part of the solution,
I need to explore those parts of me
That are most unwholesome, embarrassing, unflattering,
....My goal is to dismantle the insidious thoughts
That reinforce a hierarchy based on race,
Education, and other markers of privilege
That separate me from others.
These thoughts, fed by implicit bias,
Are more common than I find easy to admit.
Although I know not to believe everything I think,
I also know that thoughts guide attention,
And attention guides actions.
Until I bring to light and hold myself accountable
For my own racist tendencies, I am contributing to racism."

It's a tall order to go about this work. And we are called to undertake this challenge in the ways that we are able, in our own circumstances, with as much honesty as we can muster, and with compassion for ourselves and others on the journey. It is the work of a lifetime. And the work of each day as we live into our faith in Christ, the one who welcomed all.

Blessings for the journey,

Connie R. Burkholder
Interim District Executive

Interim District Executive's Schedule

June 27 – July 4 Connie Burkholder will be attending the Council of District Executive meetings and Annual Conference meetings, all online.

Connie will take a week of vacation July 5 – 11. During this time, please contact Andrea Garnett, our Administrative Assistant for the District Office, if you are in need of assistance.

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 'joys' of working for an institution or bureaucracy is that each has its own logic. Many times when discussing an issue and the possibility of a solution, I was reminded that I was thinking logically and that would not fit this particular system.

Sr. Joan Chittister in her book, '**The Time is Now: A Call to Uncommon Courage**', describes the role of the prophet. The prophet speaks for God. The prophet, when speaking on behalf of God, is telling the listeners God's expectations. Then, as now, the logic of the world responds negatively to the Word of God. Sister Chittister references Jewish philosopher Maimonides. The idea is that our human thought process can only take us so far. To become fully human, we need 'holy irrationality' to make up the difference between what we as people can comprehend and the world which God calls us to be part of.

I immediately thought of Isaiah 55 as the holy irrationality moving us beyond our human logic. Hear these words:

“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price...(Isaiah 55:1. NIV)”. Isaiah continues with the absurdity in the following verses.

Extending charity is challenging. When our society and culture define successes economically by having money which in turn can get food, water, and housing, what happens to those who cannot feed their families, provide shelter, and find a job?

We look at this passage of Isaiah and we see the opportunity for abuse. In our twenty-first century mindset, we see the impracticality of such a practice. Yet, God reminds us that relationships are important. Compassion is what ought to drive us.

As I read the chapter, “Insight”, I read the outcome of being a follower of Jesus. When we agreed to be baptized, when we said yes to the calling to belong to God, we thought we were doing the cultural norm of belonging to a church. Sister Chittister writes that belonging to Christ, claiming to be a follower of Christ, means we accept the Holy Madness, the Irrational Gospel implied by Isaiah 55.

It could be said that those who heard the stories of a decimated Europe from ‘Brethren Prophets’ (M.R. Ziegler and Dan West) sparked the call for the development of Brethren Volunteer Service. Those volunteers then and today continue to go to places to promote peace and to work for justice. They went to proclaim the good news. They brought light to a world where darkness was encouraged.

Extending charity is foolishness. It does not meet the logic of a world based on a profit/loss ratio. If we do these things taught by the prophets and by Jesus, what will our churches look like? How will we be changed if we allow ourselves to be changed and act according to the spirit and will of God?

Sr. Chittister reflects on the encounter between Jesus and the man at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus asks the man if he wanted to be well. The man responds that others get in before he can even move. Jesus commands the man to pick up his mat and walk and thus Jesus provides the cure.

Sr. Chittister asks questions of our giving. Do we think about those modern-day people unable to get to their healing pool of Bethesda? Who do we see who needs assistance? Does the local foodbank receive calls asking if they deliver? Do people need rides to a soup kitchen? What needs are being expressed, but not met because of an inability to get there?

Can we extend charity and be involved? It becomes more personal if we do so.

2021 District Conference Update

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Program and Arrangements committee has made the decision to hold the 2021 District Conference virtually on November 6, 2021. This decision was made with prayerful consideration, out of an abundance of caution, and for the safety of all concerned. This year's conference will follow a similar format to the 2020 Virtual District conference which was a shortened format. We will once again use Zoom to connect with one another. We look forward to being able to safely meet in person at the 2022 District Conference. Please watch for more information as it becomes available.

Welcome to the new IL/WI District DE

The Leadership Team of the Illinois/Wisconsin District has called Walt Wiltschek to serve as district executive minister. He will begin serving in this half-time position in a virtual capacity on September 1, 2021 until he relocates to the district in November.

An ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, Walt currently is pastor of the Easton, MD Church of the Brethren in Mid-Atlantic District as well as an academic advisor at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, Maryland. Walt also serves as chair of the Camp Mardela board of directors and is a member of the district ministry interviewing task team.

Walt has extensive experience in various areas of denominational life having served for 10 years on the Church of the Brethren communications staff, including six-plus years as editor of Messenger magazine. He held the position of University Chaplain and Director of Church Relations for Manchester University from 2010-2016.

Prior to serving as associate pastor of Westminster Church of the Brethren in Westminster, MD, Walt was a sports copy editor and staff writer of the York Daily Record in York, PA.

Walt is a graduate of York College of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science in secondary education/mathematics as well as a Master of Arts in communications and journalism/media from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL. His theological training includes a Certificate of Biblical Studies from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a Master of Arts in Religion from Lancaster Theological Seminary with a concentration in education and youth ministry.

Walt brings a deep love of youth ministry and camping having given volunteer time serving in a majority of the Brethren church camps over the years.

The Office of Ministry is pleased to welcome Walt to his new role and wishes him well as he begins his service.

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.

Pastoral Transition

On June 6, the Polo Church of the Brethren voted to call **Jeffrey Davidson** to be their new pastor. Jeff and his wife, Julia Gilbert, have been living in the Washington, DC/Northern Virginia area. The Washington City COB has been their home base for a number of years, and Jeff has been part of the preaching and pastoral care ministry there. Jeff and Julia are both graduates of Bethany Theological Seminary. They will be moving to Polo for Jeff to begin his part-time ministry there on October 1st. We welcome them to Polo and to the Illinois/Wisconsin District! We also give thanks to the Polo Church search committee for their diligent work!

Joyce Person has been serving as Interim Pastor at the Polo Church during this transition time. She stepped in when **Leslie Lake** retired due to health issues. We are grateful for Joyce's ministry during these months. She is looking forward to returning to her musician role at the

Dixon Church of the Brethren.

Leslie Lake and her husband Bob have remained living in the Polo Church parsonage during Leslie's recovery time. They are making plans to move from the Polo area to make way for the new pastor. Let us hold Leslie and Bob in prayer as they seek a new home. God's blessings to everyone in this transition time at the Polo Church!

Invitation from On Earth Peace

Annabell Knapp, the Palestine Justice Organizer Intern with On Earth Peace, is seeking individuals or congregations that are interested in work on justice issues in Palestine/Israel. Here is the information she has shared:

The issues that we are currently working to address surround the human rights abuses that Palestinians face at the hands of the Israeli government and the apartheid state they have created. This includes forced evictions, child imprisonment, wrongful imprisonment, and extrajudicial killings. Currently, OEP is working to bring attention to bill HR 2590 known as Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act. If passed and signed into law this bill would ensure that U.S. funds that go to Israel do not contribute to the human rights abuses.

If you have any questions please feel free to email me palestine@onearthpeace.org

Annabell Knapp

(she/her/hers)

Palestine Justice Organizer Intern

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Phone: +1 540 467 2211

Facebook: [OEP-Palestine](#)

Juneteenth Celebration held at First Church, Chicago

Click on this [link](#) for a short video from the drumming class given by the Old Town School of Folk Music at the **Juneteenth Celebration** held in the garden. **Front Door**, a West Side organization, partnered with First Church.

Information about an Annual Conference Speaker

Tod Bolsinger, a professor at Fuller Theological School in California, will be presenting at this year's Church of the Brethren Annual Conference as a resource person on the topic of adaptive leadership. Since the publication of his 2015 book *Canoeing the Mountains*, which problematically takes as its central metaphor the Corps of Discovery led by Lewis and Clark - with its exploitation of Shoshone woman Sacagawea and enslaved Black man York - and its mission of scoping out the western half of the continent in order to prepare the way to violently displace the Native peoples living there, Dr. Bolsinger has been on a journey of adaptive leadership learning of his own, toward cultural humility and willingness to shift his agendas to hold space for uncomfortable, necessary, and painful conversations.

You are encouraged to give this short article a read; <https://depre.org/vulnerability-resilience-and-partnership-formation-for-confronting-injustice/> as we all continue to be challenged by the imperative of seeking God's racial justice.

Rev. Dr. Bobbi Dykema

Pastor

Springfield, First Church of the Brethren

NOAC Online Conference Happening Soon!

One of the benefits of holding NOAC online is that those who have been unable to travel to Lake Junaluska for NOAC due to finances, health, or schedule conflicts, may be able to participate online this year.

Online registration is now open at www.brethren.org/NOAC. Cost per person is \$100 and per couple is \$150. Paper registration forms are available upon request by calling: 1-800- 323-8039 ext. 303. The registration fee will provide access to all sessions, worship services, workshops, and recorded archives. We hope each person/couple who plans to attend will register and pay the fee so that we can continue to provide a meaningful experience for all.

NOAC 2021 will begin on Monday, September 6 at 7 p.m. with announcements, NOAC News and worship. It will end on Friday, September 10 at 9 a.m. with worship.

The daily schedule Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday will include: (all times are eastern)

- 8:30-9:30 a.m. Morning Bible Study led by Joel Kline
- 9:45- 11:30 a.m. Keynote Speakers will include Karen Gonzalez, Lisa Sharon Harper, and Ted Swartz & Ken Medema

- 1:30- 2:45 p.m.- Workshops and Virtual Field Trips
- 3:15- 4:30 p.m.- Workshops and Virtual Field Trips
- 7:00 p.m.- Announcements, NOAC News
- 7:30 p.m.- Worship with preachers Christy Dowdy, Paula Bowser, Andrew Wright, Don Fitzkee, and Eric Landram
- 8:30 p.m.- Virtual Ice Cream socials with Outdoor Ministries Association, Bethany Theological Seminary and our Brethren colleges/universities

We are hoping that districts and congregations will organize viewing parties (keeping in mind COVID safety protocols). Perhaps a Sunday School class or Bible Study group could plan to meet at the church or in someone's home. We are working with our retirement communities to provide opportunities for viewing, especially for those in assisted living and nursing care units.

There are opportunities for giving- we will have a Virtual "Fundraising Walk around the Lake" which will raise funds for the Emergency Disaster Fund and assist congregations which have been impacted by the COVID pandemic. We are also raising funds to provide books for the Lake Junaluska Elementary School. Donations may be made through Brethren Press. Watch for more information about these giving opportunities.

We are on Facebook at "Church of the Brethren NOAC." We also have a webpage at www.brethren.org/NOAC. Both are updated on a regular basis.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership announces latest listing of courses

Church of the Brethren Newslines

May 27, 2021

Following is the latest listing of upcoming courses offered by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a collaboration between the Church of the Brethren's Office of Ministry and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Unless otherwise noted below, find more information about these upcoming courses and register at www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy.



June 29-30: **“Interpreting 1 Corinthians for the Twenty-First Century Church”** is offered as a directed independent study taught by Carrie Eikler in conjunction with the online Brethren Ministers' Association pre-Annual Conference event. Said a description: “In response to news about divisions within the house-churches in Corinth, Paul’s efforts to heal the beloved body of Christ included an instructive letter written in the early 50s CE. The thesis of that letter is an appeal for unity and reconciliation (1 Corinthians 1:10). Its agenda is a laundry list of issues that troubled both the Corinthians and Paul. This directed independent study...is an opportunity to interpret Paul’s letter as scripture for the twenty-first century church. As we do so, we will experience the power of Paul’s gospel to inspire, guide and unite believers today.” Registration deadline: May 28.

Aug. 16-Sept. 10: **“Sustain, Heal, and Move Towards Transformation: Understanding the Trauma of a Pandemic”** is an online course in Spanish, offered through the Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary/Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH). To express interest in this course, contact Aida Sanchez at sanchai@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1821.

Aug. 25-Oct. 19: **“Christianity in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds”** is offered as an online course taught by Ken Rogers, professor at Bethany Theological Seminary. The course “provides a brief overview of the history of Christianity from the close of the New Testament era to the eve of the Reformation (approximately 150 to 1450 CE),” said a description. It will explore “issues in the study of history, early Christianity, and the beginning of Christian theology. Throughout, the course focuses on the development of Christian thought. Students will attempt to understand key Christian thinkers and their ideas in relationship to Christian ritual and practice; to familiarize ourselves with some of the major issues, events, and personalities in Christian history; and to become aware of the problems and methods of the disciplines of church history and theology.” Registration deadline: July 21.

Sept. 15-Nov. 9: **“Interim/Transitional Ministry: More than Mere Maintenance”** is offered as an online course taught by Tara Hornbacker, emerita faculty at Bethany Seminary. The course “is a practical exploration of the gifts and challenges specific to interim/transitional ministry,” said a description. It will explore “the necessary tasks for successful interim/transitional ministry and the personality characteristics most helpful to develop for the practice of this specialized area of congregational leadership. Students will examine the unique calling of persons to walk with congregations in both short-term and long-term intentional ministry situations.” Registration deadline: Aug. 11.

Oct. 13-Dec. 7: **“Introduction to the New Testament”** is offered as an online course taught by Matt Boersma. Registration deadline: Sept. 8.

Oct. 22-24 plus Oct 14 and Nov 4, from 6-8 p.m. (Eastern time): **“Technology and the Church”** is offered as a Zoom intensive taught by Dan Poole, faculty at Bethany Seminary. Registration deadline: Sept. 17.

Oct. 31: **“Kingdom Building in Worship”** is offered by the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC). Currently planned to be in-person at Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa., it will be taught by Cindy Laprade Lattimer, Marty Keeney, and Loren Rhodes. Said a description: “Sundays are relentless. Worship happens every...single...week. It is a spiritual, cognitive, emotional, and sensory experience. But without careful planning, worship can easily become stale, unimaginative, and bland. This seminar is designed for anyone who has a role in planning worship: pastors, music leaders, lay ministers. We will use both presentations and workshop components to support attendees in developing a process for planning worship that is meaningful, Christ-centered, cohesive, thoughtful, and sensitive.” To register, go to <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ehj4eg4pe32f3e5a&llr=adn4trzab>.

Winter/Spring 2022:

First two weeks of January 2022: **“A Place of Refuge: Urban Ministry”** is offered in Atlanta, Ga., as an intensive taught by Josh Brockway of the staff of the Church of the Brethren Discipleship Ministries. Registration deadline will be announced.

Feb. 2-March 29, 2022: **“Church of the Brethren History”** is offered as an online course taught by Denise Kettering-Lane of the Bethany Seminary faculty. Registration deadline: Dec. 20.

March 25-26 and April 29-30, 2022, Fridays 4-9 p.m. and Saturdays 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (Eastern time): **“Pathways for Effective Leadership, Part 1”** is offered as a Zoom intensive through the SVMC, taught by Randy Yoder. Registration deadline: Feb. 25, 2022. To register, contact Karen Hodges at hodgesk@etown.edu.

April 27-June 21, 2022: **“Heaven, Hell, and the Afterlife”** is offered as an online course taught by Craig Gandy. Registration deadline: March 23, 2022.

Online event for clergywomen on July 22 takes place of usual breakfast at Annual Conference

Church of the Brethren Newslines

June 18, 2021

By Nancy Sollenberger Heishman

The Office of Ministry is sponsoring a virtual version of the traditional in-person Clergywomen's Annual Conference event in the form of a July 22 online "brunch" at 12 noon (Eastern time). Joelle Hathaway, assistant professor of theological studies at Bethany Theological Seminary, will speak on the theme "Poetry and the Spiritual Imagination."

The event will offer an opportunity for clergywomen (and friends) to gather virtually for fellowship and to also earn 0.1 continuing education units at the same time. Register in advance at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMtc-orzwsHtV5Dupz5XKLTGdaFKt43Zml>. Se ofrecerá interpretación en español.

Hathaway received both her master's degree and doctorate from Duke Divinity School and is currently developing new courses for Bethany in theology and the arts and ecotheology. Her research is interdisciplinary; of particular interest is what insights the arts and artistic practice can offer to practices of theological, liturgical, and ecological formation. Her current book project puts the Sabbath poetry of Wendell Berry in conversation with the Christian doctrine of creation. She will present an insight session about this research during the 2021 Annual Conference on July 3 at 12:30-1:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
OFFICE OF MINISTRY
PRESENTS:



Poetry &
the Spiritual
Imagination

The Clergywomen's
Brunch

JULY 22

NOON (EDT)/9AM (PDT)



For more information and a link to the Clergywomen's Brunch go to the Office of Ministry page at www.brethren.org/ministryoffice.

— *Nancy Sollenberger Heishman is director of the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry.*

Registration open at Camp Emmanuel!

Hello Friends of Camp Emmanuel,

Registration is open for the 2021 camping season! We're thrilled to be having camps this year since we've missed you all very much! Like other camps, we will be following the state and local rules for COVID prevention and response in order to stay open and hold camps this year. These rules are similar to those in place at most schools across the country, so many of you will already be familiar with them. We'll be wearing masks and maintaining social distance when appropriate and washing hands frequently.

One other change this year is our limited capacity. Currently, there can only be 30 people at each camp. We hope this regulation changes before the camping season begins, but right now, registration is first come, first served.

See our website --www.campem.com-- for a camp schedule, to get registered, and for more

information. Please address any specific questions to your camp director.
We're looking forward to a great camp season! Can't wait to see you all!

The Camp Board

National Youth Conference 2022 theme, dates, and cost are announced

Church of the Brethren Newsline

May 1, 2021

By Erika Clary

National Youth Conference (NYC) 2022 will focus on Colossians 2:5-7 and the theme “Foundational.” The event will be held July 23-28, 2022. The registration fee, which includes food, lodging, and programming, will be \$550. Youth who have completed ninth grade through one year of college at the time of NYC (or are age equivalent) and their adult advisors will gather at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. Online registration will open in early 2022 on www.brethren.org.

The National Youth Cabinet did not let coronavirus restrictions stop them from beginning their hard work of planning for NYC. They met virtually this winter and hope to meet in person for future meetings. Members are Benjamin Tatum, Oak Grove Church of the Brethren in Virginia District; Elise Gage, Manassas Church of the Brethren, Mid-Atlantic District; Giovanni Romero, York Center Church of the Brethren, Illinois and Wisconsin District; Haley Daubert, Montezuma Church of the Brethren, Shenandoah District; Isabella Torres, Nuevo Renacer Church of the Brethren, Atlantic Northeast District; and Luke Schweitzer, Cedar Grove Church of the Brethren, Southern Ohio and Kentucky District. Adult advisors are Kayla Alphonse, Miami First Church of the Brethren in Atlantic Southeast District, and Jason Haldeman, Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren in Atlantic Northeast District. The cabinet will be led by NYC 2022 coordinator Erika Clary of Brownsville Church of the Brethren in Mid-Atlantic District, accompanied by Becky Ullom Naugle, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Church of the Brethren.

The cabinet discussed theme ideas relevant to senior high youth. Ultimately, the theme that emerged was “Foundational,” based on scripture from *Colossians 2:5-7*, *“For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”*



We talked about all of the ways that God is revealed as the foundation for our lives throughout the Bible. Some examples of this are the cornerstone, the way that God can be seen as an anchor for our lives, and how we remain rooted in God in all circumstances.

Isabella Torres noted, “Picking the theme was difficult at first because we had so many different ideas, but all of our ideas always intertwined with having a foundation in God. To me, it is a great theme, and it is also something I find to be very important as a youth today.”

Luke Schweitzer shared, “I am really excited about this theme and I cannot wait to see what the speakers and youth do with it next summer.”

Watch for NYC 2022 updates at www.brethren.org and social media of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

— *Erika Clary will serve as coordinator of National Youth Conference 2022, working in the Church of the Brethren’s Youth and Young Adult Ministries through Brethren Volunteer Service.*

NOAC service project will fund books for Junaluska Elementary School

Church of the Brethren Newslines

May 1, 2021

By Libby Polzin Kinsey

Participants at National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) love to serve. Past NOAC efforts have helped build the libraries of Junaluska (N.C.) Elementary School classrooms, providing hundreds of books to children living in the host town for the conference.

This year, when NOAC will be held virtually, participants are invited to help Ira Hyde, Junaluska Elementary School librarian, create a more culturally diverse library for the low-income community where he serves children in grades K-5.

Libby Kinsey and Ira Hyde have created a list of rich, diverse books for the Junaluska Elementary School library. The books are of all genres, focusing on characters of color, stories that show how much we all have in common, as well as the interesting ways we are unique.

NOAC participants and churches are invited to donate funds toward the purchase of books on the list. Hope Church of the Brethren in Freeport, Mich., already has donated \$500 to get the ball rolling.

Donations of any size will go far in furthering this effort, revealing the beauty to be found in God's rich, diverse global community.

Make checks payable to the Church of the Brethren with the notation "NOAC Book Drive 2021" on the memo line. Mail checks to Church of the Brethren General Offices, Attn: NOAC Book Drive, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Or donate online at www.brethren.org/NOAC-book-drive.

— *Libby Polzin Kinsey is the book drive coordinator for NOAC 2021. Find out more about the conference at www.brethren.org/noac.*

District Leadership Team Meeting Places 2021

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

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

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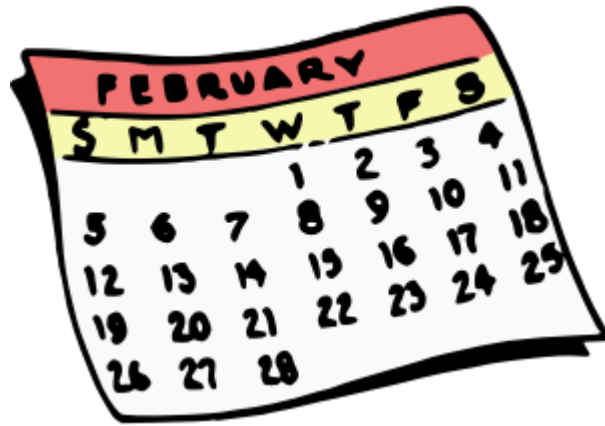
847-644-1174

District Website

When is the last time you visited the [IL/WI District Website](#)? There you'll find helpful information about your district including but not limited to:

- [District Calendar](#)
- [Eco-Stewardship](#)
- [District Newsletter](#)
- [Ministries](#)

Don't delay! Check it out! See what you can learn about your district!



Upcoming Events

July 31, 9 am: CRDT Meeting
August 10, 9 am: Potluck Team Meeting
August 14, 9 am: MLDT Meeting

Newsline

— **The Shine Vacation Bible School has been named fifth** in the “Vacation Bible School Top Picks 2021” by the Building Faith ministry and Lifelong Learning department at Virginia Theological Seminary. Shine is a Christian education curriculum jointly published by Brethren Press and MennoMedia. “Lifelong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary has offered Vacation Bible School reviews for more than 15 years,” said the announcement. “Our department has spent countless hours assessing intensive, formative curricula so that hundreds of folks can rely on an authoritative assessment. This year our “top picks” are based on our intimate knowledge of the publishing companies and information from their websites.” Find the announcement at <https://buildfaith.org/vbs-top-picks-2021>. Find out more about Shine at www.shinecurriculum.com.

— **Bobbi Dykema**, pastor of Springfield (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, has written an article on “Visual Arts: Protestant” for the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. A summary is online at <https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-804>. Access to the full article is available for a fee.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks to fill a fulltime hourly position of Buildings and Grounds assistant**. This position provides support for the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and other properties in Elgin that are owned by the denomination.

Responsibilities include building and equipment maintenance, warehouse operations, shipping, mail, and supplies, among others. Skills and knowledge required include ability to relate with integrity and respect within and beyond the organization, knowledge and experience of building operation and facilities management, knowledge of electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and mechanical work is helpful but not required. Also required: ability to bend, stoop, climb, lift and carry 50 pounds, work in an extreme environment in or out of doors, handle hazardous materials and exposure to hazardous situations, skills in oral and written communication, and ability to access, input, and retrieve information from a computer. At least five years of Buildings and Grounds operations experience is helpful but not required. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. Applications are received beginning immediately and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Apply by sending a resume by email to the Office of Human Resources, Church of the Brethren, at COBApply@brethren.org. The Church of the Brethren is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

— **Church World Service (CWS) is hiring for three positions to work with asylum seeker “Welcome Programs,”** including asylum seeker case management, Call Center management, and border shelter support. The organization seeks qualified and diverse candidates to fill these remote positions, with a “plus” for candidates living in a border state. CWS Asylum Services, part of the Immigration and Refugee Program, provides comprehensive support to asylum seekers in the United States. This includes supporting reception at US southern border shelters, providing case management services across the US, offering remote support through the CWS Call Center, and providing legal services to asylum seekers.

CWS seeks a motivated, flexible, service- and advocacy-driven individual to serve as a **Call Center program manager** who will develop, manage, and expand the CWS Call Center. The Call Center is a national program that provides information and referrals to migrants across the United States. Technical, coordination, and interpersonal skill sets are required. This individual must have the ability to work independently in a fast-paced environment and navigate challenging systems. Multi-tasking, customer service, and ability to navigate online research in a fast-paced environment are required. Fluency in English and Spanish required.

CWS seeks a motivated, flexible, service- and advocacy-driven individual to serve as a **Call Center specialist**. Technical, coordination, and interpersonal skill sets are required. Fluency in English and Spanish required. This individual must have the ability to work independently in a fast-paced environment and navigate challenging systems. Multi-tasking, customer service, and ability to navigate online research in a fast-paced environment are required.

CWS seeks applicants for the **Monitoring and Evaluation coordinator** position, with the primary role to manage the implementation of monitoring, evaluation, and research for these services. Strong technical skills are required. This individual must have the ability to work

independently while coordinating regularly with a broader team remotely. Experience designing and implementing M&E systems is required.

Find out more and apply at cwsglobal.org.

— **A recording of the Moderator’s Town Hall held in March** with William Willimon on the topic “Peacebuilding When We’re So Divided” is now available at www.brethren.org/webcasts/archive, where a link to a study guide also is provided. “We are excited to share this resource with you, praying it will continue to bear much fruit for Christ and the Church,” said an announcement from Annual Conference moderator Paul Munday.

— **“When did you first know you were a leader in the church?”** asks the Dunker Punks Podcast. In a sequel to Episode #107, “Linking Arms in Leadership,” Anna Lisa Gross shares interviews with other church leaders about this question. “Explore the kinds of leadership that our church needs and calls for as you listen!” said an announcement. Find the new episode at bit.ly/DPP_Episode113 or by subscribing to the Dunker Punks Podcast on iTunes or your favorite podcast app.

— **Fabiola Fernandez has resigned as manager of Information Technology for the Church of the Brethren**, effective May 21, to accept a new position with the city of Elgin, Ill. She has served in the denomination’s IT department for five years, since she was hired May 23, 2016, as systems specialist at the denomination’s General Offices in Elgin. In May 2019, she was promoted to the position of manager of IT. She holds an associate’s degree from Elgin Community College and a bachelor of science degree in operations management and information systems from Northern Illinois University.

— **“What does it mean to live the peace of Jesus publicly?”** asks Dunker Punks in an announcement of their next podcast. “We welcome back Naomi Yilma and introduce Angelo Olayvar from the Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy as they discuss acting, organizing, and advocating for peace.” Listen to this episode by going to bit.ly/DPP_Episode114 or by subscribing on iTunes at bit.ly/DPP_iTunes.

— **The Festival of Homiletics**, an annual festival on preaching and a respected source for continuing education for pastors, is online this year. Registration is free to view four to five prerecorded video sessions each day May 17-21. A “recording package” may be purchased to watch sessions at a later time and gain full access to bonus material including additional speaker presentations, live workshops, and more learning opportunities. The line-up of nationally known speakers includes Craig Barnes, president and professor of Pastoral Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary; Traci Blackmon, executive minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ; Otis Moss III, pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ; Walter Brueggeman, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary; Anthea Butler, associate professor of Religious Studies and Africana Studies at the University of

Pennsylvania; writers and speakers Diana Butler Bass and Brian McLaren; among many others. Find out more and register at www.festivalofhomiletics.com.

— Zechariah Houser has been hired by the Church of the Brethren as the coordinator of short-term service for Brethren Volunteer Service, working from the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. He is a graduate of Messiah College with a Bachelor of Arts in Youth Ministry and a minor in Peace and Conflict Studies; and of Duke Divinity School with a Master of Divinity degree. Zech is currently working as a part-time pastor at Crest Manor Church of the Brethren. Zech will begin his work on August 9, 2021.

Lee Marsh has been hired by the Church of the Brethren as the Buildings and Grounds Assistant for Buildings and Grounds, working from the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. He is currently working as a truck driver at Nu-Way Transportation and previously worked as a warehouse manager/driver at Goodman Distribution Inc. Lee will begin his work on May 17, 2021.

Kim Gingerich has been hired as the interim program assistant for the rebuilding program of Brethren Disaster Ministries, working out of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. She has been serving and living full-time on the BDM Rebuilding Sites as a long-term disaster project leader covering office and household management since January 2014. Kim is from York, PA where she previously served as the district disaster coordinator for the Southern PA District and is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. Kim will begin this interim work from the BDM office on May 17, 2021.

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich has been hired by the Church of the Brethren as the director of Annual Conference. She is a graduate of Bridgewater College with a Bachelor of Arts in English Education and Music; Bethany Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree; and of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities with a Doctor of Ministry degree.

Rhonda has provided significant leadership for the Church of the Brethren Compelling Vision Process, which will conclude with delegate action at this year's Annual Conference. Previous denominational leadership included coordinating National Youth Conference (1990); Church of the Brethren 300th Anniversary Committee (2000-2008); Annual Conference Revitalization Task Force (2010-2012); and Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee (2014-2017).

Rhonda is currently working as an adjunct faculty at the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and as a program director at Camp Pine Lake (Northern Plains District). She will begin her work on August 23, 2021, working from her home in Minneapolis and from the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Erika Clary will begin her work as National Youth Conference 2022 coordinator, as part of the Discipleship Ministries team, on May 23. Erika will serve through Brethren Volunteer

Service, temporarily working remotely from her home in Maryland and relocating to Elgin in late June. Erika will work with the National Youth Cabinet and a host of volunteers to shape and give life to NYC 2022, scheduled for July 23 -28 on the campus of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. She recently graduated from Bridgewater College with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks an Information Technology (IT) specialist** to fill a fulltime, salaried position at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Responsibilities include supporting, maintaining, and upgrading the organization's networks and in-house servers; installing, administering, and troubleshooting security solutions to ensure network security, protect against unauthorized access, modification, or destruction, and troubleshoot any access problems at the direction of the director of IT. Required skills and knowledge include a positive customer service attitude; ability to work collaboratively; excellent communication skills; strong analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; strong understanding and knowledge of computers, networks, and security systems; ability to work well under pressure; working knowledge of Microsoft Azure Active Directory, current Windows operating system, Microsoft 365 Office Suite, Microsoft SharePoint, e-mail software, peripherals such as printers and scanners, network infrastructure, security infrastructure, virus protection software, desktops, laptops, tablet computers; technical troubleshooting skills; ability to provide telephone support; ability to articulate and operate out of the vision of the Church of the Brethren's Mission and Ministry Board. A minimum of five years of significant information technology experience, including networks and security, are required. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in information technology, computer science, cyber security, or a related field is required. Advanced training certifications may be advantageous. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. To apply, send a resume via email to COBApply@brethren.org. Contact the Human Resources Manager, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694; 800-323-8039 ext. 367. The Church of the Brethren is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

— **The Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., will host a free concert** by the Chicago Brass Band on Saturday, June 19, at 3 p.m. The audience will sit on the lawn in front of the offices and are invited to bring their own lawn chairs. The concert is a "thank you" to the General Offices staff and neighbors, after the offices provided rehearsal space to the band this spring.

The Anabaptist Disabilities Network is seeking a resource director to be responsible for print and online communications including social media, triannual Connections newsletter, and monthly Opening Doors blog. Excellent writing, networking, and project management skills are required. Familiarity with disability issues and Anabaptism is desired. This is a quarter-time position at a competitive salary. Visit <http://bit.ly/ADNstaffopenings> for the position description and information about applying.

— **The WCC also is offering a webinar on “Remembering Past Massacres: Honoring the Legacy and Resilience of Victims”** to take place June 1 with a focus on North America and the Caribbean. The webinar will remember and learn from tragic events such as the Tulsa race massacre that took place in Tulsa, Okla., a century ago in 1921, and injustices meted out to Asian-American communities including the 1871 Chinese massacre in Los Angeles and the Rock Springs Riot in Wyoming in 1885. The online discussion also will address the plight of indigenous communities in the Americas that were largely devastated through successive wars, massacres, and killings, and atrocities associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the notorious “Middle Passage” in which untold people were killed. Panelists will explore questions such as “How do we recognize these tragedies, and celebrate the survival, resistance, resilience, and heroes of these communities?” Panelists include Robert Turner, pastor of the historic Vernon Chapel A.M.E. Church in Tulsa and academic dean at Jackson Theological Seminary; Michael McEachrane, co-founder and consultative member of the European Network of People of African Descent; Jennifer P. Martin, Education in Mission secretary for the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission; Daniel D. Lee, academic dean of the Centre for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary; and Russel Burns, member of the National Indigenous Ministries and Justice Council of the Indigenous caucus of Western Mining Action Network, and of the Comprehensive Review Task Group of the United Church of Canada. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__qsguoT97Th2e76YIYcmNvw.

— **The Church of the Brethren seeks applicants for the position of assistant coordinator of the FaithX ministry** in the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) office at the denomination’s General Offices in Elgin, Ill. FaithX (formerly the Workcamp Ministry) offers summertime short-term service events for junior and senior high youth and young adults. The assistant coordinator serves as a BVS volunteer with both administrative and practical ministry responsibilities. The first three-quarters of the year is spent preparing for FaithX events including choosing an annual theme, preparing promotional materials, writing and designing a devotional book and leaders’ resources, setting up financial spreadsheets, setting up and maintaining a registration database, sending letters to participants and leaders, making site visits, collecting forms and paperwork, and other administrative work. During the summer, the assistant coordinator travels from location to location, serving as onsite coordinator of FaithX events with responsibility for overall administration including housing, transportation, food, work assignments, and recreation, and also often responsibility for planning and leading devotional, educational, and group activities. As a BVSer, the assistant coordinator lives at the Elgin BVS Community House. Required skills, gifts, and experience include experience in youth ministry, passion for Christian service, an understanding of mutual ministry—both giving and receiving, spiritual and emotional maturity, organizational and office skills, physical stamina and the ability to travel well. Preferred skills and experience include previous FaithX or workcamp experience as a leader or participant, and

computer skills including experience with Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, Access, and Publisher. For more information or to request an application, contact BVS director Emily Tyler at etyler@brethren.org or 847-429-4396.

— **Bethany Theological Seminary seek applicants for the fulltime position of coordinator of Seminary Computer Services.** Responsibilities include planning, leadership, and management of the use of IT services at Bethany Seminary in Richmond, Ind., including the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and Earlham School of Religion in support of the schools' missions; support for technology in classrooms, network infrastructure, hard-ware, software, and related services. A complete position description is available, contact deansoffice@bethanyseminary.edu. Applications are received until the position is filled, with a desired start date in June or early July. To apply, send a letter of interest, resume, and contact information for three references to Academic Dean's Office, SCS Coordinator Search, Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374; 765-983-1815; deansoffice@bethanyseminary.edu.

— **The deadline is extended to June 30 for young adults to apply to volunteer as stewards for next year's Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).** The assembly is a gathering of representatives of church bodies from around the world, which happens only every seven or eight years. The 2022 assembly, which will be the WCC's 11th, will be held in Karlsruhe, Germany. Said an announcement: "Stewards are young people between the ages 18 and 30 years old. As a diverse community, stewards bring their faith, experiences and visions to an ecumenical experience of togetherness and friendship, with English as the working language of the program. The Stewards Program includes: an on-site ecumenical formation, participation in the Ecumenical Global Gathering of Young People, and work at the 11th Assembly. Stewards will arrive in Karlsruhe a week prior to the assembly to learn about the ecumenical movement and to participate in the pre-assembly gathering. WCC looks for young people capable of integrating their experience back in their local contexts, motivated to multiply the ecumenical enthusiasm, ready to 'do ecumenism' locally." Dates for the Stewards Program are Aug. 21 to Sept. 10, 2022. Find out more and download an application form at www.oikoumene.org/events/steward-programme-2022-apply-now.

— **"Experience Shalom," invites the Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center, which is offering a series of webinars on the theme of right relationship around issues of peace and justice.** Each webinar will run from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon (Central time). J. Denny Weaver, Mennonite scholar and author of *Nonviolent Atonement*, will present the first in the series on June 3 on the topic, "Being in Right Relationship with God: Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" Devon Miller, assistant director at the center, will present two webinars: "Does Our Past Really Matter?" on June 29 and "What Are the Terms of Justice?" on Aug. 10. Naomi Wenger will present on July 13 on the topic, "Are Humans Responsible for the Wellbeing of Earth?" The center's executive director, Jay Wittmeyer—who formerly served as executive director of Global Mission and Service

for the Church of the Brethren—will present “How Can We Become a Trauma-Informed Church Community?” on July 28 and “Is the Fabric of Our Society Beginning to Fray?” on Aug. 24. Register for all six sessions in the SHALOM series and pay for just five (save \$30). Register via TicketSpice on the center’s website <https://lmpeacecenter.org/all-events>.

— **Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.**, is hosting a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for the homeless community this Saturday, June 12, from 1-5 p.m. The effort was the focus of an article in the *Daily Herald*, a newspaper covering the cities and suburbs west of Chicago. The clinic will give the Johnson and Johnson one-shot vaccine, in conjunction with the weekly Soup Kettle that offers a free, hot meal every Saturday. Though intended for the homeless, the clinic is free to anyone who wants to be vaccinated. Soup Kettle organizers will send cars to parks and other areas where the homeless typically gather, to offer free rides to the clinic. “Those who agree to be vaccinated will be treated to snacks and beverages, be given \$5, and be entered in a raffle to win a bag of groceries,” said the article. Read more at www.dailyherald.com/news/20210609/elgin-church-to-host-vax-clinic-for-homeless.

— **Ruth Karasek of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill.**, has been named a JustPeace Leader by On Earth Peace. She “developed a passion for peace and activism and an understanding of community development and world issues through her lifelong involvement with On Earth Peace and the Church of the Brethren,” said an announcement. In addition to participating with On Earth Peace, her peacemaking and community involvements have included work with Children’s Disaster Services and Christian Peacemaker Teams, helping to organize a cooperative grocery store, and volunteering with Good Samaritan Hospital in crisis counseling as a trained Stephen Minister. Find Karasek’s JustPeace Leader profile at www.onearthpeace.org/impact_leader_ruth_stowe_karasek.

— **Updated submission information for *Messenger***, the Church of the Brethren magazine, has been posted at www.brethren.org/messenger/submissions. The information may help those who would like to submit articles for consideration by the magazine’s editorial team. Subscribe to the magazine by contacting your congregation’s *Messenger* representative or go to www.brethren.org/messenger/subscribe.

— **“We are so excited to be returning to an in-person format for our Mediation Skills Training Institute on Aug. 2-6**, here in the western suburbs of Chicago!” said an announcement from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. The event will be hybrid, partly in-person and partly online providing the opportunity to attend via Zoom. It is designed for clergy and other church leaders who want to learn how to deal more effectively with interpersonal, congregational, or other forms of group conflict. For more information call 630-627-0507 or visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

In other news from Women’s Caucus, a panel presentation on “Speaking Truth to Power: Barriers to Leadership” will feature Tabitha Rudy, Rebekah Flores, Susan Boyer, and Kathryn

LaPointe on July 15 at 8 p.m. (Eastern time), online at www.livingstreamcob.org. Find out more about the full summer and fall line-up of empowering events at www.womaenscaucus.org/home/whats-new.

In the District Family

Cathy and Dana McNeil, of the Peoria Church of the Brethren, welcomed a granddaughter into their family recently. **Georgiana** was born to their daughter Megan on February 4. They live in Manassas, Virginia. We rejoice with Cathy and Dana who are eager to see their granddaughter in person! God's blessings to all of them!

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.
