

The Reflector

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



The Village ILWIDlot
November 2021

I've enjoyed the various "Peanuts" holiday specials by Charles Schulz for as long as I can remember, and one that I watch regularly is the Thanksgiving installment.

If you've seen it, you probably remember that poor Charlie Brown unwittingly ends up with a group of his friends coming over for Thanksgiving dinner. He doesn't know what to do with them all since he has no food except some random snacks and buttered toast, no table except an old ping-pong table from his garage and a random assortment of rickety folding chairs, and just Snoopy to serve it all.

Everyone starts complaining, even as Linus—of course—reminds them of the true story behind Thanksgiving. What's a hapless cartoon character to do?

Fortunately, his grandmother comes through in the end, inviting the whole crew to join the family dinner in her condominium. They take off in a station wagon, happily singing as they bound over the road towards a real Thanksgiving feast.

Now you might ask at this point, "What does this have to do at the church?" And my answer would be: the table. As a spread in the November issue of *Messenger* portrays, the simple act of gathering around the table is a central part of our life and our faith.

We have fellowship around the tables of carry-in meals and picnics. We have meaningful and important worship around the tables of love feast. We connect and build relationships around the tables of each other's homes. Something about that breaking of bread together—sharing food and conversation—is elemental to who we are as human beings.

When I was at Manchester, I often had the weekly meeting with our student workers over dinner in the dining hall, because it opened up the flow of our teamwork in a different way—and also took us outside the chapel walls and in the midst of the other students. It just felt different than sitting in an office or conference room.

We see Jesus doing similar things throughout his ministry: dining at the

house of tax collectors, visiting his friends Mary and Martha for a meal, multiplying loaves and fishes for a multitude, sharing a Passover supper with his disciples near the end of his earthly journey, cooking up fish to share on the beach, accepting an invitation to a table in Emmaus. If Jesus saw value in that sharing, shouldn't we, too?

And that's what I love about Charlie Brown. Even though he's in over his head and doesn't have the "right" ingredients to put together a traditional meal, he still provides a table. He uses what he has, puts out some seats, and provides a place for everyone. He serves up community.

I hope that as the church we can do the same: As imperfect or insufficient as we might feel, we can still put out a table and invite others to gather around it, sharing what we have—both literally and figuratively. And whether or not grandmother comes to the rescue with a gourmet feast, I suspect we'll feel rather full and satisfied in that sharing. —Walt Wiltschek

Schedule note: Walt will be on vacation Dec. 23-Jan. 3 and only checking email for any emergency communications during that time.

Upcoming Meetings

Church Development & Revitalization Team: Saturday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m.

Camp Emmaus Directors Meeting: Saturday, Nov. 20, 1 p.m.

Ministry Leadership & Discernment Team (MLDT): Saturday, Dec. 4, 9 a.m.

District Potluck Team: Tuesday, Jan. 11, 9 a.m.

2021 District Conference Update

The Illinois/Wisconsin district conference took place virtually Nov. 5-6, with worship starting things off Friday evening and a morning of business following on Saturday. A big THANK YOU goes out to our virtual "hosts" at Peoria Church of the Brethren, our

tech crew, moderator Blaine Miner, Program & Arrangements Committee, and all the others who helped make the event possible and relatively seamless.

Highlights included adopting a district budget for 2022, calling a new slate of district leaders, and consecrating Harold Rose (Canton) as moderator and Phyllis Batterton (Woodland) as moderator-elect for the coming year, along with a variety of reports and other sharing.

A total of 83 people participated in Saturday's business session, including 53 delegates. And on Friday evening, 44 people joined the online worship service.

The 2022 district conference is tentatively planned as an in-person event Nov. 4-5 at Peoria Church of the Brethren, with the theme "Beyond the Walls: Being Jesus in the Neighborhood."



Extending Charity

to the least who are members of my family

Matthew 25:40

In Our Prayers

The Illinois/Wisconsin District is remembering with gratitude the life of **Kres Lipscomb**, who pastored the Springfield (Ill.) First Church of the Brethren for 32 years until retiring in 2018. Kres passed away Sept. 28 following an illness, with family at his side. In addition to serving as pastor, Kres was very active in ecumenical and interfaith work in Springfield and other volunteer efforts, and in denominational activities. Earlier in his career, he pastored several United Methodist congregations, as well as the Lower Miami Church of the Brethren in Dayton, Ohio.

He was a graduate of North Central College and Bethany Theological Seminary. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth (Liz), and daughters Corinne, Laura, and Rebecca, and their families. A memorial service is scheduled for October 30 in Springfield. Our prayers are with Kres' families, friends, and the Springfield congregation.

A Memorial Service for **Pauline Dulabaum** was held on Saturday, September 18, at Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin. Pauline passed February 22, 2020. Her husband, Willard "Duly" is one of our district's ordained ministers who has served in interim ministry in the district. Nevin Dulabaum, president of Brethren Benefit Trust, is Pauline and Duly's son. Mary Dulabaum, Nevin's wife, is a member of the District Leadership Team. We extend our sympathy and care as they continue to remember Pauline's life and ongoing legacy.

Calling the Called

Have you ever felt God might be tapping you on the shoulder to consider a professional ministry role in the church? Are there others you want to encourage to explore such a path? Are you a pastor or other church leader who seeks to help others discover their gifts? Do you just want to learn more about calling and being called?

If so, Illinois/Wisconsin District invites you to a special event the morning of Saturday, Feb. 26. (This event had originally been scheduled in late October but was postponed.) Hear personal stories from some of those who have been called, learn about spiritual discernment and opportunities in the denomination, explore your questions about ministry, and connect with others who are trying to hear God's call for them.

This event will be free and held virtually on Zoom. Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters, email announcements, and on the district website!

Ministry Milestones

The following individuals were recognized for ordination milestones at the recent district conference. Congratulations again to each of you! We thank you for your service to the church and community.

Purvi Satvedi	5 years
Ginny Haney	15 years

Dennis Webb	15 years
Lynda Willmann	15 years
Blaine Miner	25 years
Jeff Davidson	30 years
Marty Creager	35 years
Kathy Gingrich	40 years
Richard Bright	45 years
Cynthia Weber Han	45 years
Williard (Duly) Dulabaum	60 years (as of 1/1/2022)
Dale Roher	60 years (as of 1/1/2022)



Updates From Our District Family

A memorial service for Kres Lipscomb, long-time pastor of the Springfield First congregation, was held Oct. 30 at the church. Christy Waltersdorff, pastor at York Center and a good friend of Kres, delivered the eulogy message. A recording of the service is available at <https://livestream.com/livestreamcob/kreslipscombmemoial>. Our prayers continue for the Lipscomb family and all those who were touched by his life.

Rick Koch, who has been pastor of the Milledgeville (Dutchtown) congregation for more than three decades, told the church in mid-October of his plans to retire next year. Rick will complete his pastoral service to the congregation on April 24, 2022. Milledgeville is beginning the search process. We are grateful for Rick's long ministry, and wish him well as he makes plans for retirement!

An ordination service and reception will take place the evening of Nov. 28 for Vivek Solanky, licensed minister in the Naperville congregation. Vivek has received a call to become pastor of the Yellow Creek congregation in Northern Indiana District. We rejoice with Vivek in his call and in this significant step in his ministry journey.

A memorial service for Dale Brown, a noted peacemaker and theologian who served

as a professor at Bethany Theological Seminary for many years and was formerly a member of the York Center congregation, will take place at 3 p.m. this Sunday, Nov. 7, at Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind. (with music/slideshow beginning at 2:40 p.m.). Dale passed away Aug. 30 in Lombard. The service will be live-streamed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEixMZVX_Ko. A recording will also be available at that site for later viewing.



National Youth Conference 2022

The Church of the Brethren National Youth Conference (NYC) is coming up July 23-28, 2022, at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. This powerful event, held every four years, will have the theme "Foundational," drawn from Colossians 2:5-7, for the 2022 edition.

Youth in grades 9-12 and one year out of high school this school year (2021-2022) are eligible to attend, along with advisors. More details on the conference can be found at <https://www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/>. Please spread the word to any youth and advisors in your congregation and other ministries who might want to attend. Illinois/Wisconsin District will work at organizing a bus trip to the event for our attendees. Gio Romero, from the York Center congregation, is part of the planning team, district executive Walt Wiltschek is one of the worship coordinators, and many other members of our district will be involved in various roles. The other worship coordinators include Bekah Houff, Cindy Laprade Lattimer, and Shawn Flory Replogle. Jacob Crouse is coordinating music.

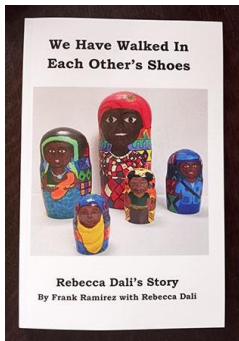
Registration opens in January at www.brethren.org. Please be in prayer for this significant conference in our denomination.

Clergy Tax Seminar

This year's Clergy Tax Seminar has a revised schedule, new material, and offers 0.4 CEUs (for the first three sessions). It will take place Jan. 29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Central Time, Students, clergy, and anyone who deals with clergy finances are invited to participate in this online Zoom seminar. Participants will learn how to prepare clergy taxes correctly and legally, and how to comply with regulations while maximizing tax deductions. It is sponsored by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry, and Bethany Theological Seminary. Registration is \$40 per person (generally nonrefundable to keep fees and overhead low). Current Brethren Academy, Bethany Theological Seminary, and Earlham School of Religion students may attend the seminar at no cost, although registration is still required to allow web access to the seminar. Instructions and handouts will be sent a few days prior to the event. Registrations are not complete until payment is received. For quality reasons, registrations may be capped at 85 participants. Registration deadline is Jan. 19. A Zoom link will be sent prior to the seminar.

New Book by Rebecca Dali

What fuels Rebecca Dali's passion when "responding with compassion to the most vulnerable persons in northeastern Nigeria"? According to Dali it is her personal story and history—one of "poverty, frustration, rape, a son abducted (by Boko Haram) 11 years ago"—that inspire her life's work. Dali, a member of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), is founder and executive director of CCEPI (Center for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiative), an organization that serves the most vulnerable populations who have been traumatized by Boko Haram attacks.



On Oct. 9, she spoke to 26 CCEPI-USA board members and guests in Manheim, Pa., attending the launch of a book about her childhood and life's work. *We Have Walked in Each Other's Shoes: Rebecca Dali's Story* is written by Frank Ramirez with Rebecca Dali and is illustrated by the author's daughter, Jessica Ramirez, who painted and photographed a series of nesting dolls in the Russian style, reflecting different stages of Dali's life.

Both Frank and Jessica Ramirez donated their services so that the entirety of the profits from the book benefit Dali and her ministries. In addition, photographer Glenn Riegel donated the photograph of Dali that graces the back cover. *We Have Walked in Each Other's Shoes* can be purchased from Brethren Press for \$15 at www.brethrenpress.com or by calling 800-441-3712.

In related news, Samuel Dali (former president of EYN from 2011-2016) had his prostate surgically removed on Oct. 12. Thankfully, the cancer had not spread and no chemotherapy or radiation will be needed. His recovery is going well, and he hopes to return to his speaking engagements soon.

However, Samuel and Rebecca—who live in Mason City, Iowa with their son and his family—do not have health insurance. Congregations and members are invited to assist with medical bills by mailing donations to Northern Plains District Financial Secretary, Rhonda Bingman, at 820 Raven Lane, Madrid, IA 50156. Please write “Samuel Dali Medical Expenses” on the memo line of your check. Any excess funds will be given to CCEPI. Cards may be mailed to Samuel at: 6 Cairnbrae Hls, Mason City, IA 50401.

Personnel Notes

Jennifer K. Jensen has been hired by the Church of the Brethren as the Thriving in Ministry Program Manager for the Office of Ministry. Jennifer currently works as Manager of Volunteer Services for Kindred Hospice of McPherson, Kansas, and part-time as Co-District Youth Coordinator for the Western Plains District of the

Church of the Brethren. She starts this half-time position on Dec. 13.

Kim Gingerich has been hired as program assistant for the rebuilding program of Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM), based out of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. She began in this position on Oct. 25. Gingerich has served as interim program assistant since May 17, 2021. Previously, since January 2014, she had been working and living full-time on BDM rebuilding sites as a long-term disaster project leader covering office and household management. She is from York, Pa., where she has served as district disaster coordinator for Southern Pennsylvania District. She is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren.

BDM also welcomed Lynn Evans into a new long-term volunteer role as office manager on rebuilding sites. She started her service with BDM's return to the coastal North Carolina site, where she is scheduled to serve at least through the length of the project in April 2022. She will lead the office management side of the project tracking finances, communicating with incoming groups, and supporting connections and logistics with local partners. She is from Pottstown, Pa., and has spent most of her career serving in various Christian ministries in multiple states. Her experience includes several rebuilding trips as a weekly volunteer in South Carolina and, most recently, in Dayton, Ohio.

On Earth Peace is launching a series titled "**Children as Peacebuilders: Equipping Resilient Leaders**" at 12:00pm Eastern Time on Saturday, **October 23**. The seminars will invite parents and educators from all around the US to address common, and sensitive topics that their kids are exposed to now more than ever surrounding justice and inclusion. This month will address Bullying Prevention as part of On Earth Peace's Bullying Prevention Month activities, equipping caregivers and educators with tools, such as storytelling using OEP's Read Aloud Program, to talk to children and the community about bullying prevention. To RSVP for the event [click here!](#)

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!

Newsline

— A grant of \$210,000 from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) will continue the **Nigeria Crisis Response** through 2022. Prior EDF grants for the Nigeria Crisis Response total \$5,100,000, given from September 2014 through March 2020. The Nigeria Crisis Response has provided funding to five response partners in Nigeria, with the majority of support going to EYN. Focus areas for 2022 include repairing homes; peacebuilding and trauma recovery; agriculture; livelihood; education; food, medical, and home supplies; staff engagement; and covering the cost of special projects that may arise. Find out more about the Nigeria Crisis Response and give to support this work at www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisis.

—At its fall meeting Oct. 15-17, the **Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board** approved a 2022 budget of \$7.8 million for denominational ministries. Among other actions, the board also moved the Brethren Press budget into the denomination's Core Ministries, ending the publishing house's status as a self-funding ministry. The board received a year-to-date financial update for 2021 and numerous reports from ministry areas, board committees, and church agencies. The meeting was a hybrid event with in-person events held at the denomination's General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Chair Carl Fike, who has served previously as chair-elect, was assisted by new chair-elect Colin Scott and general secretary David Steele. **Chris Douglas** (a member at Highland Avenue), who retired as director of Annual Conference this fall, was recognized for her excellent service to the denomination.

—**Manchester University** in North Manchester, Ind., seeks candidates for the Multicultural Excellence in Leadership Scholarship, designed to uplift exceptional and talented students who identify as a racial or ethnic minority. The full-ride scholarship is renewable each year for a total of four years. It covers tuition, fees, and on-campus room and meal plan expenses. Manchester will award one such scholarship each year. Multicultural Student Leadership Awards of \$2,000 a year will

go to the next five top finalists. The awards are renewable each year for up to four years. To be eligible for a multicultural award, applicants must:

- Be an incoming first-year, undergraduate student
- Identify as a racial or ethnic minority on the scholarship application
- Have been admitted to Manchester University
- Have a 3.5 or higher unweighted high school GPA
- Be a US citizen or permanent resident

To apply, students must apply for admission to Manchester, submit the scholarship application with the required essay and video, and provide a letter of recommendation from a teacher or community leader who can speak to their qualifications for the scholarship. The deadline to apply is Jan. 14. The committee will review applications and contact semifinalists about next steps. Letters will be mailed to all applicants with decisions by Feb. 28. Learn more at

<https://www.manchester.edu/about-manchester/news/news-articles/2021-news-articles/manchester-offers-full-ride-multicultural-excellence-in-leadership-scholarship>

—**Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS)** will be hosting its winter orientation Jan 18-Feb. 4, 2022. The volunteers in Unit 330 will gather at Camp Bethel in Fincastle, Va. This winter orientation takes the place of the fall orientation that did not occur in October. So far, six volunteers are expected to take part. BVS is still accepting applications until Dec. 8. Apply at www.brethren.org/bvs/volunteer/apply.

—The Advent devotional book **25 Days to Jesus**, written by York Center pastor Christy Waltersdorff and illustrated by her nephew Mitch Miller, is available from Brethren Press. Order by visiting www.brethrenpress.com. A fun YouTube video about the book is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kjH_eJo6cA.

—**No Feeling Is Final, a new film starring Ted Swartz**, is based on his book written with Valerie Serrels titled Portraits from the Human Faces Tour. Swartz is a Mennonite actor and dramatist and a popular performer at Church of the Brethren events including Annual Conference, National Youth Conference, and National Older Adult Conference. “No Feeling Is Final is a celebration of resilience and how telling our stories about mental health—both painful and hopeful—can connect and carry us through hard times together,” said a description of the film, which was made on location at The Goshen Theater in Goshen, Ind. It premiered there on Nov. 13. The evening included a live panel discussion with the creators of both the film and the book.

—**Religion News Service has published results of a study** by the Hartford

Institute for Religion Research of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected churches in the US. The study surveyed 2,074 churches from 38 denominations, showing that “the pandemic has had a profound impact across the religious spectrum, and that some churches are faring better than others,” according to scholar Scott Thumma. A few of the findings: 8 in 10 churches now provide hybrid services both in person and online; almost a quarter have “moderate to severe conflicts about pandemic restrictions”; and “67 percent of clergy said 2020 was the hardest year of their ministry.” Perhaps most crucial: “The mode of delivery of worship services was a major factor in whether median attendance increased or fell. For example, the 15 percent of churches that met solely in person saw the steepest decline in attendance—15.7 percent. The 5 percent of congregations that offered only online worship had a decline of 7.3 percent. But the 80 percent of congregations offering hybrid worship experienced an overall growth of 4.5 percent.” Find the article at <https://religionnews.com/2021/11/10/amid-covid-19-most-churches-provide-hybrid-worship-half-stopped-picnics>.

—**Christian Churches Together** (CCT) has announced the selection of Monica Schaap Pierce as its interim executive director. The Church of the Brethren is a member denomination of the CCT. Pierce’s appointment follows the resignation of executive director Carlos Malave earlier this year. She holds a doctorate in systemic theology from Fordham University and master’s degrees from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and brings experience in managing the ecumenical portfolio of the Reformed Church in America and teaching and speaking in churches and universities. The permanent executive director is expected to be selected by mid-2022.

Supporting Your District

The Illinois/Wisconsin District is active in a variety of ministry and mission efforts, both directly and indirectly. For these efforts to continue, resources are needed. We invite you to consider ways that you might share your time and abilities, your physical resources, your knowledge and wisdom, and your financial gifts to be a part of the district’s work.

Options for contributing including the following:

- Disaster Relief Fund
- Emerging Ministries

- Endowment Fund
- General Fund
- Ministry Training
- Mission and Mortar Fund

Every gift, regardless of size, is a significant boost to the abundance of assets in our midst. All contributions ensure that our district can thrive and follow its call to serve faithfully. If you have further questions, please contact the district office.

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.
