

Illinois & Wisconsin District  
of the  
Church of the Brethren

*District Minister: Jim Yaussy Albright*



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### From the Moderator...

Once again we are approaching the time for District Conference for Illinois and Wisconsin. Please accept this as your personal invitation to attend this year's conference at the Dixon Church of the Brethren, November 5-7. Besides conducting the necessary business of the corporations of the District, there will be time for fellowship, worship, and renewal. A variety of interesting displays will be available for viewing. Following business on Saturday, please participate in the auction sponsored to benefit our District. After our meal together on Saturday evening, plan to attend the wonderful concert which will be presented by *Spirits Harmony*, a Christian a cappella quartet from Oregon, IL. They will perform a variety of original material as well as some old favorites. You're certain to be entertained by their talents! Join us for an ice cream social following the concert. On Sunday morning you can choose from three insight sessions from which to learn more about prayer, congregational life, and church planting. Our preacher that morning will be Del Keeney, Executive Director of Congregational Life Ministries for the General Board. Del has an articulate, thought provoking way of helping us to shape our Christian perspectives. These are some of the highlights, but there will also be worship on Friday night, children, jr. high, and youth activities, and of course the opportunity to see old friends and make new ones. Please join us to continue the work of Jesus... peacefully, simply, together.

Ed Garrison  
District Moderator

### New Pastor and Family at Peoria.

Pick-up trucks started to gather at 7:30 AM, July 10th at Di's Restaurant across the river from Peoria. The Peoria "Brethren Movers" were answering the call from another who had answered the call. This group was on its way, almost 3 hours north, to Streamwood, Illinois, the home of Pastor Dana McNeil. Pastor McNeil had answered the call of the Peoria Church for a full time Minister and was just waiting to move his family to Peoria.

Pastor Dana, wife Cathy and daughters Shannon and Megan arrived after Annual Conference at their new church home, Peoria First. Pastor Dana was a member of the Highland Ave. Church and had been interim Pastor at Rockford. He completed the Training in Ministry program from the Brethren Academy at Bethany Seminary in Richmond, IN, before coming to Peoria. Cathy McNeil is a design engineer, Megan is a Freshman at Dunlap High School and Shannon begins her first year at Bridgewater College.

Pastor Dana was installed by the District Minister, Jim Yaussy Albright, on Sunday July 25<sup>th</sup>. The Peoria Church enthusiastically welcomes Pastor Dana and family to Peoria.

### Planting Churches in the Old Brethren Tradition

The New Church Development Board focuses on **church planters** as the model for our work. A **church planter** begins churches as a tent making founder. **Training In Ministry (TRIM)** can supply many of the ordained **church planters**. **Church planters** will support themselves through non-church employment or other local sources of income. The New Church Development Board will provide training, coaching, and regular visitation. The Board can provide assistance in choosing and understanding the community in which the church is to be planted.

Some believe that only highly trained and experienced persons are needed to establish new churches. Training and experience always help but oversight by the New Church Development Board and commitment to our Statement of Core Values play just as important a role. The crucial characteristic is a transformed life. The person transformed by God can go out into the highways and byways and gather in the people for a new church.

Work progresses. We signed with an organization called Percept, which provides demographic information on line. Access to Percept will be available to churches and District leadership as well as **church planters**. We joined Coachnet, a training and support organization for coaches of church planters. Coachnet can be used to train and support deacons, moderators, and other church leadership people. Training opportunities for potential church planters has been available in denominational conferences and additional training opportunities are planned in our District. We plan to introduce some of our planters to you at **District Conference**.

Churches of the District can be involved in new church development in many ways. District Churches can partner with new church starts by providing prayer support, personnel, and financial grants. District Churches can organize prayer cells to pray for evangelism and the start of new churches. They can also begin to call **church planters** who will start the new churches. Become active with Coachnet, and use the resources available through Percept. Come to the training events which The Development Board will be holding in the District. All of these strengthen your own church and reveal new horizons for church planting. Consider the New Church Development

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Board in your self allocation and budgeting process this fall.

We look forward to seeing you at District Conference.

Dennis Metzger, Chair, New Church Development Board

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## **District Transition Team Report:**

By Kevin Kessler, Pastor, Canton Church of the Brethren - Team Chairman

### **Communication**

Communication needed a boost in the district. **The Transition Team** made it a priority to increase communication. One way that we are communicating district activity is through a website. The site address is [www.iwdcob.org](http://www.iwdcob.org). There you will find Transition Team updates, names of the team's members, the restructure paper, various announcements, links to other sites, and much more. We invite you to visit and browse the site. A district newsletter will be coming in the next few weeks. The Peoria congregation has graciously offered to create and send this valuable piece of district communication. Thank you, Peoria, for sharing your gifts in this way!

### **Community**

The seven called members of **The Transition Team** continue their diligent efforts to strengthen and build relationships among district congregations. This has been challenging and exciting work (getting to see the various ministries congregations are involved in). Liaisons bridge the gap between congregations and **The Transition Team** who are working to develop a more cohesive district. The results are positive. We feel more connected. If you have joys or concerns to share with the district, please contact your liaison. She/he will be happy to visit with you.

### **Constitution**

District restructuring caused the suspension of various portions of the Constitution and Bylaws. We formed a team to revise and update the present constitution and bylaws in accordance with the new structure. The complete and updated document will be decided on at District Conference. This updated document will be mailed to congregations at least 30 days prior to conference giving delegates the opportunity to review it and to be able to make an informed decision at conference...

### **Funding**

Funding our district continues to be a challenge. Budget income projections were ambitious and we anticipated that projections will be nearly \$7,000 short. This shortfall challenges our meeting necessary expenses and building new and important district ministries. A Funding Team is working on these challenges. You may receive a call asking if a member of this team can visit and make a presentation regarding this matter. Please know that your

contributions to the district are deeply appreciated. Your prayer support and gifts of service are also deeply appreciated.

## **New Church Development Board and Transition Team**

The New Church Development Board and **The Transition Team** are two separate bodies, but they are both still the district. Each body has distinct responsibilities that aim at the same goal of increasing the vital ministries of future and existing congregations within our district. These two bodies are focused to work together more closely and with a singular purpose in mind. Details of this plan will be presented in future communications as efforts begin to gel.

### **District Minister**

Our District Minister, Jim Yaussy Albright provides leadership for both **The Transition Team** (TT) and the New Church Development Board (NCDB). This new paradigm for our district and requires a new understanding of the District Minister's role. The paradigm shifts the focus of the way Brother Jim relates to the district. We have expected the District Minister to always be available and to always be the one to turn to with questions and concerns. This is an overwhelming expectation with which to live in our new structure. A more workable solution is for the District Minister to be a trainer, a coach, and a mentor to a cadre of persons who will do some of the tasks once expected of only the District Minister. This is a more efficient system of accomplishing more work. As the old saying goes, "Many hands make light work." Presently, congregational liaisons assist with this work. We plan for a specific body of persons to assist with this work... As the plan becomes more defined, more information will be made available. Stay tuned.

Hopefully, this brief summary of **The Transition Team** activity indicates a group of people committed to serve and enhance the IL/WI District of the Church of the Brethren. There are many things to be thankful for and much to celebrate; yet there is also much to be done. But even that is a positive, since we are called to work rather than to be idle. **The Transition Team** covets your prayers, for the teams work and for the ministries that are occurring in our district because of you--member congregations, fellowships, and projects. Blessings in your ministries as you serve our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Peace,  
Kevin Kessler

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