

Illinois & Wisconsin District  
of the  
Church of the Brethren  
*District Minister: Jim Yaussy Albright*  
August 2005 Vol 2 Issue 8



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### **Leadership and the District**

There are exciting things happening in the District leadership and it is time for the District Body to recognize the renewal that is taking place. The Transition/Leadership Teams for the past two years committed to an open process with a focus on doing less, but doing it better. They have met this commitment, with real benefits for the larger District Body. The teams developed a strategic map for the District and are working hard to implement the tactics that support the strategic map. The District's "business" is to "support the growth and development of member churches in their mission to bring the message of Christ to the world". Many tactics can fall under that umbrella, but all must relate back to our strategic mission. As the District Body moves forward, we need to embrace this approach to managing the "business" of the District and understand how the current Leadership Team can best serve the District.

There are many good things that the District could do, but there is a much shorter list of things that the District should do. The Leadership Team is responsible for insuring that programs are in place to support member congregations. Some of those areas of support are lay leadership development, fund raising, healthy work environments, etc. The Leadership Team is responsible for fostering dialog between member churches. They should encourage the development of "communities of congregations" in the District around missions and causes that are meaningful to the membership. The Leadership Team is responsible for providing a forum for churches to discuss and debate difficult and controversial topics. The Leadership Team is responsible for helping the District Churches navigate the processes of the larger Church of the Brethren organization such as developing queries, calling pastors, licensing and ordination. These things can be better done through the District rather than as individual churches...

The Leadership Team should not be responsible for

things that member churches are better able to do themselves. District Churches should take stands on important issues; Should serve their local communities in the ways that are meaningful to those communities; Should make decisions on spending their resources on missions; Should connect with other District Churches (and beyond) to form "communities" to accomplish more than individual churches; Should send delegates to District Conference and Annual Conference to be represented to the larger church; And should make decisions about how they can bring the message of Christ to the world. The District Leadership Team should support these activities, not direct or control them. In times of controversy, the Leadership Team should facilitate an open, honest and respectful debate among District Churches.

I believe God intends us to live in community. As member churches within the District, we are a community. The Leadership Team is responsible for supporting this community. The District Churches, as community members, are responsible for making decisions and bringing the message of Christ to the world. In the business world our closest analogy to "community" is cross-functional teams. Extensive research shows that the most productive, successful teams are those with a diverse membership. Too much dissention and the team does not function. Too little dissention and group think reduces the effectiveness and innovation suffers. A healthy dose of dissention, tempered by mutual respect and openness, drives high performance teams. High performance teams also have capable leadership that understands they are facilitators and supporters, not bosses. Our Leadership Team (and the Transition Team before them) worked hard to make our District a community of diverse member churches working together to bring the message of Christ to the world. I, for one, thank them for their good works.

Peace,  
Mark Karasek  
York Center Church of the Brethren

## Brethren,

It is not too early to begin thinking about District Conference.

We are organizing a silent auction and would like EVERY church to contribute something to the auction. Items can be collectibles, crafts, quilts, antiques in very good shape or dinners, golf outings, etc.. whatever would be of interest for someone at District Conference to Bid on..

When you have something to contribute please e-mail [crosbygm@juno.com](mailto:crosbygm@juno.com) with a description of the item. This will give us an idea of how many items we will have to prepare for.

Bring your Items to District Conference at Springfield, IL in November and make a small sign identifying the donor Church & description of item to bring with you.

The Silent Auction last year was very successful and this year's can be even more successful if we all participate...

Thank You so much...

Gil Crosby  
1st Church of the Brethren of Peoria  
Peoria, IL

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Greetings! Attached is the latest disaster response update.

Please note that there is a need for volunteers for the Pensacola, Florida project during the month of October. Please advertise this need and offer the opportunity to all your churches and any individuals you know who might be interested in going for a week or two. The weather will be getting more comfortable by then, and you'll beat the "holiday rush"! Thank you! God bless!

Jane Yount



## Annual Conference 2005 Peoria Illinois Illinois and Wisconsin District Host

First, a huge thank you to all those who served our denomination and district at this year's annual meeting of the Church of the Brethren in Peoria. The list of people is just too large to name (plus I wouldn't want to miss a single person and I would because I don't know all the names). It is easy to say there were hundreds from our district serving the larger church. I know God was smiling on us! Needs were met; wants were taken care of; and even a few wishes were granted. Brethren played well in Peoria. There were multiple articles in the local paper. Neighboring businesses were pleased to be open over the weekend to serve us and let us spend our money with them. Peoria now knows more about "these Brethren". By Leonard Matheny

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**Set your calendars for District  
Conference in  
Springfield, Illinois  
November 4<sup>th</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>**

**"One Body with Christ"**  
1 Cor 12:12

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### Articles and Sharing Needed

Please submit articles and sharings you would like to share with our sisters and brothers in Illinois and Wisconsin. We know there are many good things going on in the congregations around our district. Please share them. Our plan is to issue a newsletter every two months, however, if we have enough to fill the two pages we will issue one monthly. We will issue newsletters again October and December for 2005. Send to either of the e-mail addresses at the bottom of this column or to the District office or mail to 715 W. Hanssler Pl, Peoria, IL 61604 in care of the District Newsletter.

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