

Illinois & Wisconsin District
of the
Church of the Brethren
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June 2006 Vol 3 Issue 4



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PANTHER CREEK DISTRICT WORKDAY



"For where
two or three
come together
in my name,
there am I
with them"
Matthew
18:20. God's
spirit was
indeed among

us as some 56 people gathered to help Panther Creek with the work that needed to be done. It was a long day for the six of us from the Freeport congregation as we started early in the morning for our drive. Once gathered, the work was divided out. Some built walls while others cleaned out rooms. We had scrapers and painters and caulkers hard at work all day long. I understand that Panther Creek was only expecting about 20 people, but in the old Brethren tradition, come lunch time there was plenty of food and plenty of fellowship. It is always nice to visit with old friends and meet new ones. I can't say I was particularly excited about working on my day off, and by the end of the day I was tired, dirty and wet (not to mention the paint scrapings in my hair and paint on my clothes). Yet when we headed back north, I felt fulfillment, satisfaction and a sense that this is what Jesus taught us to do. God willing, I be on the next venture the District puts together! By Jane Bicksler

The day began with introducing us, a brief history of the church and plans for the day. A delicious breakfast was provided by the Peoria Church. Despite the chilly drizzle, several workers began scraping old, peeling paint from the church's exterior. A primer coat was then applied. New steps were built and installed replacing rotted ones for the exterior door of the fellowship hall. Interior work encompassed many areas including: insulation under the furnace room / nursery, plumbing - installing a water heater and new sink in the kitchen, electric work - installing outlets, light switches and increased electric service to the church, cleaning and sorting in the office / library area and sanctuary, and moving a wall between the office / library area and cloak room and reinstalling the mirror / shelf unit there. A wonderful lunch of soup, sandwiches, relishes, chips, desserts and drinks was enjoyed by the hungry, damp workers. Much was accomplished both inside and outside the church that day. The fellowship was delightful, old memories were shared

and new memories were formed, cementing friendships between church members from approximately 13 congregations throughout the District of IL and WI. On the trip back to Hurricane Creek, it was suggested to make this an annual event, helping different churches throughout the district, both with work projects and cementing the bonds of friendship and fellowship between churches. By Linda Dooly

"Groundhogs and Panthers?"

Saturday April

29th was a cool and misty day for the IL/WI District work day at Panther Creek Church of the Brethren. Although we did not see any

panthers, nor a creek, we did hear about the groundhog that had lived in the crawlspace. Fortunately, it was long gone, because one of our party was already down the



Saturday, April 29, 2006, approximately 57 people gathered at the Panther Creek Church of the Brethren two miles East of Roanoke, IL.



hatch and under the floor, stuffing insulation when Pastor Peter told the story!

Much work was accomplished this day both inside and out by the almost 50 people from 13 congregations that attended. After a warm welcome and a short history of the congregation we dug in-singing, praying and then began our work. Wiring, plumbing, drywall, insulating, organizing the office/library, cloak room wall repair and exterior priming of the meetinghouse, tending the burn pile and weed trimming in the cemetery; it all started almost effortlessly as the workers were moved by the Spirit to their tasks.



After insulating, we went outside to help scrape and paint. We picked a wall, there was plenty for all, and in the company of Brothers and

Sisters at work we hardly noticed the misting rain.

When it was time to move my ladder, I took a break to get a cup of coffee and check around. Work was in full swing inside and out, so back up the ladder I went. Later a wonderful luncheon and time of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

After lunch, wandering around a little more with another cup of coffee, I began noticing some things. Like history coming to life. There is a large metal halo-type frame hanging from the ceiling near the kitchen door. Could this be a lantern holder? The oil lamp for it must have been huge! Imagining the room lit up for Love Feast, I could almost see the Brothers and Sisters gathered in their circles on either side of the room. Surely, this space we just gathered at for lunch, was the same space in which others from long ago had also shared many a common meal.

Upstairs was abuzz with workers readying a classroom space. Walking through and into the attic behind, where the electricians had been working, I noticed a headboard and what appeared to be other bed parts. Could these have been used for travelers staying over, sleeping in the attic, during the week of Love Feast? Also nearby were some old pew parts. When was the last time you ever saw a worn out pew? Praise God - Amen and Amen.

Now back to my ladder and brush I go with the continuing mist. A few hours later, a cry went out that we were out of paint. Ten gallons of primer had been applied. Other tasks were finishing up. It was almost three o'clock. The time had come to clean our brushes, pack up, say goodbye and to give a hug.

Surely my visioning does not accurately reflect the whole story from this workday experience. I do thank God for the opportunity to have been able to attend, to lend a hand, and am hoping for another. For another work day that we might return to Panther Creek for more of what God has in store.

Thank You District Deacons and Leadership Team for coordinating this event. Bless you Brothers and Sisters at Panther Creek for your loving hospitality.

May the Lord fill you and multiply you as only He can.

Terry Link

First Church of the Brethren, Springfield and Secretary, New Church Development Board



All pictures provided Tom Dooly of Hurricane Creek

SPRING YOUTH RETREAT HEARS TOM BENEVENTO.

Tom Benevento works with poor and marginalized people in the US and Central America. He led several sessions on "Living Simply" for the spring youth retreat on March 17-19 at Freeport COB. Tom lives in Goshen, Ind., and works with the Global Mission Partnerships office of the General Board. He encouraged the youth to think about the choices they make and offered ideas for living in a sustainable and earth-friendly way.

Two dozen youth participated in the weekend, which included a service project, games, and worship times. Youth capped off the weekend by leading worship for Freeport's Sunday morning

service.

The fall retreat will be held during district conference, Nov. 3-5 at York Center COB in Lombard, Ill. A possible post-National Youth Conference retreat/celebration is also being discussed. Watch for more information.

Walt Wiltschek

NYC BUS TRIP IS A GO!

Two full buses will head west from the district at the end of July. By May 1, 105 youth and advisors registered for travel to National Youth Conference. Sixteen congregations represent IL/WI. Visiting youth from India who are guests of Naperville COB will ride with us.

One bus leaves Peoria COB at 8:30 a.m. on July 21. Another bus departs Naperville COB at 9:00 a.m. The two buses meet at Dixon COB leaving at 11:00 am. A prayer circle is planned at each location. Others are welcome to help send off our youth to NYC..

After an overnight stop in Omaha, Neb., our group arrives at National Youth Conference in Fort Collins, Colo., the afternoon of July 22. The Illinois/Wisconsin delegation joins about 3,500 other Brethren youth and advisors for five days of worship, fellowship, learning, service, and fun. We will leave Colorado late morning on July 27, stopping overnight at McPherson College. The buses return to the three Illinois churches late evening on July 28.

Itinerary details have been sent to registered bus riders. Please be in prayer for all those participating, and join the enthusiasm as the buildup to National Youth Conference continues.

Walt Wiltschek

Dear District Executives,

Recently a postcard was mailed to pastors to remind them to register for the Ministers' Association Pre-Conference Event. The web address printed on the card for registration is incorrect and so Mary Jo is requesting that you include the information in your next newsletter and help get the word out in any way you are able. The form is also on the CD that was included in a recent Source packet.

June 30 - July 1

"Third Way Faith Reimagined" - Exploring the Kinship between Anabaptism and Postmodernity
Speaker: Pastor Shane Hipps, Trinity Mennonite

Church in Glendale, Arizona

Full information and registration form:

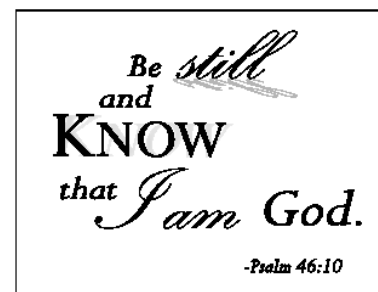
www.brethren.org/ac/desmoines/infopacket.pdf,
pages 40 and 41

Pre-registration is available until June 1 and those who preregister will receive a complimentary copy of Shane's book: *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church.*

Thanks for your help,
Margie

Sunday, June 4 the Chicago area Churches of the Brethren will have a Joint Pentecost Worship service at 6:30 p.m. at the York Center Church in Lombard.

The offering will support the ministries of our district. The service is planned by the Chicago area COB Pastors group.



**DISTRICT
CONFERENCE
2006**

Where: York Center Church of the Brethren
Lombard Illinois

When: November 3rd - 5th

Mark your calendars now!! Make plans to attend.
Come and "Be still", come and see who is alive,
come and be a part of something different and new!
Come and experience 'Knowing God is God'!!

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