



“Name the Newsletter”

Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren

District Executive: Kevin Kessler

March 2007 Vol 4 Issue 3

“The purpose of the Illinois/Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren is to support the growth and development of the member churches.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN PASTORAL PLACEMENT SYSTEM

Is it important for congregations who are searching for pastoral leadership to use the Church of the Brethren pastoral placement system? My answer to this question is a resounding, "Yes!" You might assume that my positive answer is due to my position as District Executive, that the position dictates I make this response. Contrary to that assumption, I affirm the importance of the pastoral placement system based not on my position but rather on my experience and personal experience.

My experience is limited since I've held the position of DE for only 2 months. True, but my experience with the district is extensive and I have witnessed issues that have arisen as a result of circumventing the placement system. A very small congregation in our district, which was closed a few years ago, needed pastoral leadership and spiritual shepherding. In their time of need the congregation accepted the goodwill of a young, energetic and well-intentioned potential pastor to provide the leadership for which they were searching. This potential pastor belonged to a quasi-denomination not even similar to the Church of the Brethren. He was being mentored by a strong leader from that group. The mentor ended up taking an active role in the congregation and initiated efforts to have the congregation withdraw from the Church of the Brethren. The congregation was unaware that church polity stated, "that the property of disassociated congregations reverts back to the district". Upon petitioning the district to leave the denomination, they learned the impact their decision would have upon the property. They learned what they would need to do to retain the property under the auspices of another denomination. Discussions around this issue were animated and conflict quickly developed.

I believe that had the congregation worked within the pastoral placement system of our denomination, conflict would have been diverted. Because of their size, this congregation may have had a difficult time securing pastoral leadership through the placement system. However, they would have avoided a very difficult and trying time in their life.

Is it important that the placement system be used? Yes. Does it always work in finding pastoral leadership? Not always. When it is used a good working relationship between the district executive and the congregation occurs. The possibilities that exist from this relationship include the DE helping search for and possibly locate, pastoral leadership willing to affirm and uphold Church of the Brethren values and beliefs. Working outside the system doesn't guarantee finding leadership outside the Church of the Brethren. It simply means there are other avenues for discovering pastoral leadership. If discovery leads to calling someone from outside the denomination, the involvement of the DE is beneficial. The DE can provide both the congregation and the prospective pastor with the appropriate information for ensuring a good relationship. There is also opportunity "up front" to discuss any concerns that might become issues of conflict later. The DE can offer the prospective candidate options for learning more about the Church of the Brethren.

As the new DE, I want to do all I can to avoid conflicts. Therefore, I commit to work closely with congregations looking for pastoral leadership. I cannot promise that our efforts for securing such leadership will always be successful. But I can promise that I will always work toward the most mutually agreeable solutions possible. It is my desire that this district be healthy so it can grow and be fruitful. I hope my efforts will allow this to happen.

Blessings and God's peace,
Kevin

LENTEN VESPER SERVICES:

The following churches in the Decatur Section annually combine Sunday evening services during Lent. There are five participating churches and the Pastors prepare services and rotate to the participating congregations. Church choirs participate in the services. The host church provides an evening meal and fellowship after each service. All services begin at 4:00PM. Those churches participating are:

February 25, 2007, Oakley Brick Church of the Brethren

Pastor Steve Needham (Decatur) Preaching

March 04, 2007, Cerro Gordo Church of the Brethren

Brother Gordon Austen Preaching

March 11, 2007, Decatur Church of the Brethren

Pastor Dennis McClure (Oakley Brick) Preaching

March 18, 2007, La Place Church of the Brethren

Pastor Rex Richardson (Champaign) Preaching

March 25, 2007, Champaign Church of the Brethren

Pastor Tom West (La Place) Preaching

Contributed by Carol Kusart.

DOUGLAS PARK - DISTRICT WORKDAY:

The 2007 Illinois/Wisconsin District Workday is at the Douglas Park Church of the Brethren on April 28th. The District Workday is for work and fellowship while providing much appreciated support.. The Douglas Park Church of the Brethren has a rich history serving inner city Brethren in Chicago. This church is located in a very diverse and vital neighborhood. The day starts with a light breakfast and welcome by Pastor Shirley Petracek who will share the hopes and aspirations of this congregation. A picnic lunch will be provided in the park and we will end our day with a brief service at 3:30.

Who: Volunteers are needed to help with plastering, carpentry, light plumbing and electrical work, painting, planting and generally cleaning up the Church property, including the office of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Volunteers with specific skills for carpentry, plastering, electrical and plumbing tasks are asked to contact the District Office at 630/261-0956 or simply return a form provided by the District Office for making meal plans. Children requiring supervision should not attend this event.

When: Saturday, April 28, 2007

7:30 – 8:00 am: Volunteer check-in and breakfast 7:30 a.m.

8:00 – 8:30 am: Welcome from Pastor Shirley Petracek and Douglas Park congregation

8:30 am. - 3:30 pm: Work

12:00 pm: Lunch in the Park

3:30 pm Walkthrough and Sending Prayer

Note: Workers will be needed to do drywall patching in advance so it can be dry for sanding and painting on Saturday. We would like to be able to do this work on Friday, April 27th. Please call the District Office at (630) 261—0956 if you would be willing to help with this work.

Where: Douglas Park Church of the Brethren

1605 S California Avenue

Chicago, IL 60608-1709

(630) 207-9379

The church is located off I-290 E/Eisenhower Expressway. Take the Sacramento Boulevard/ 3000 West Exit 27a. Turn Right onto South Sacramento Boulevard. Turn Left onto West Roosevelt Road. Turn Right onto South California Avenue. The church is located across from the park on the East side of California Avenue. Limited parking is available on the street in front of the church and in the Mount Sinai Hospital lot north of the church building.

The church is able to accommodate some overnight guests. Please contact Pastor Shirley Petracek directly at 630/207-9379 if you would like to spend either Friday or Saturday night at the church.

What: A list of tasks (with pictures of the current condition) is accessible on the Internet page at <http://www.yccob.org/YCCClips/>. Materials will be provided, volunteers should bring tools needed including paint brushes, paint pans, sanders, hammers, saws, etc. Please review the task list to determine the tools you may have to bring that will help up get this work done.

YOUTH CAMP DIRECTOR NEEDED!

Recently, Camp Emmanuel was notified that the Youth Camp director for this year would be unable to do the job. Ron Burtz and his family will be moving to South Dakota as of June 2. Youth Camp is the week of June 3 - 9, 2007. If you are interested in helping serve the Lord in this capacity or know of anyone that might be willing to do so, please contact me at Linda Dooly, 833 Mulberry Grove, RD, Mulberry Grove, IL 62262, 618 - 425 - 3723 or lindadooly@yahoo.com. Thank you for your prayerful consideration and help with this matter!



REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE; April 28-29, 2007

“Now Follow Me”- Jesus (Luke 9:23)

Worship is always the highlight of RYC. Three worship celebrations will center on the Church of the Brethren National Youth theme of “Now, Follow Me,” based on Luke 9:23. Worship will lead the youth to a new understanding of what “follow me” could mean for them. This theme responds to last year’s invitation to come and see.

RYC begins at 11 a.m. Saturday morning with time for getting acquainted followed by worship before lunch. Workshops will be on Servant Evangelism, Prayer and Doubt, What are My Next Steps, BVS and Work camps. More come after lunch, followed by opportunities for small service projects.

Seth Hendricks will lead music throughout the weekend. Seth composed the NYC theme song and led music last year. Youth may also choose late evening and early morning prayer times in the chapel. **Keynote speaker** for RYC is Walt Wiltschek. Walt edits *The Messenger*, the Church of the Brethren’s monthly magazine. Walt is the local and district youth advisor for the Illinois/Wisconsin district. Walt emceed the recent RYC Coffeehouses and was a workshop leader. His humor should keep us all laughing while he helps explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

We invite District Youth Cabinet Leaders from Northern and Southern Ohio, North and South/Central Indiana, Michigan and Illinois/Wisconsin to arrive between 7 and 8 p.m. on Friday evening, April 27 for a *leadership development workshop*. This is a great team building event for district youth leaders! The leaders will put their leadership skills into practice by helping with RYC registration, get acquainted games and worship leading.

The body of Christ is alive and vibrant! Support your youth to experience the vibrancy of faith amongst their peers! Send a carload to RYC at Manchester College from your church!

Registration is on-line at ryc.manchester.edu. or phone: 260-982-5237 and ask for Bev Eikenberry

BRETHREN MEDICAL PLAN

Brethren Benefit Trust recently released a report from the Annual Conference Brethren Medical Plan Study Committee. The six-page report provides a comprehensive overview of the committee's work and includes a recommendation that the present medical plan for ministers and retirees be phased out. The entire document may be accessed at <http://www.brethren.org/ac/medicalplan.html> and then follow the link to **Brethren Medical Plan Report to the 2007 Annual Conference (pdf file)**.

The recommendation is as follows:

Based on the two years of study, the Brethren Medical Plan Study Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. *That the medical insurance component of the Brethren Medical Plan for the ministers and retirees be phased out while allowing BBT to continue to explore the viability of the Plan for the church-related agencies;*
2. *That the long-term disability, life, vision and dental insurance elements of the Brethren Medical Plan continue;*
3. *That BBT be directed to attempt to find alternative medical coverage for those current participants who would not otherwise be able to obtain or afford medical insurance.*

Randall Yoder, Interim Director for Insurance Plans states in a letter addressed to denominational and agency staffs: "Brethren Benefit Trust is asking that [present participants] continue to remain in the Brethren Medical Plan until the paper is discussed and deliberated at Annual Conference. Please be aware that BBT will provide adequate time to consider your future health insurance plans if there are changes to the Brethren Medical Plan."

Yoder also reports that three events are scheduled at Annual Conference this summer for receiving more information about the report and recommendation. "An Annual Conference Hearing is scheduled on Saturday, June 30, from 9 to 10 p.m., to provide a clearer understanding about the report. The Annual Conference business item reported by the Annual Conference Brethren Medical Plan Study Committee is tentatively scheduled on Monday, July 2, at 10:50 a.m. A BBT insight session is also scheduled on Monday, July 2, from 9 to 10 p.m., following the Conference action, to discuss future directions."

NATIONAL JR. HIGH CONFERENCE

The Illinois Wisconsin District Leadership Team asked if Lisa Fike would coordinate transportation for the District Jr. High youth to attend the first ever National Jr.

High Conference being held this June 15-17, 2007 at Elizabethtown, College, Elizabethtown, PA. Jr. High youth groups should NOW be making arrangements to attend. Some of you may not have heard much about the conference. You should check it out at www.brethren.org keyword youth /young adult; look for the Jr. High Ministries heading and then look for National Jr. High Conference. Pastors have received a brochure to share with youth and their leaders. The leadership looks wonderful, (i.e. Tony Campolo, Ted and Lee, Ken Medema).

If your youth group would like to be a part of a district bus traveling to N.J.H.C. Registrations for the conference are already underway. We are in a time crunch.

Please let me know if your church would like to participate in district wide travel. It would be very helpful if you can give me an educated guess as to the number of participants from your congregation. Also if you are not sending anyone this time forward that information, too.

Contact: Lisa Fike, Pastor, Freeport Church of the Brethren, 777 W. Pleasant St., Freeport, IL 61032
revsfike@hotmail.com

EXECUTIVE STAFF



The Palms Estates, located in central Florida, is a 55 and over Independent Living Retirement Community with 71 homes and 40 RV sites, founded by the Church of the Brethren. This is an excellent employment opportunity for an experienced husband and wife team.

Responsibilities include leadership and management of the total operation of the Palms Estates. Candidates should possess strong organizational, administrative, accounting, verbal/written communication, and interpersonal skills acquired through training and experience. Knowledge of budgets, financial statements and computer technology related to all office functions also required.

Qualified applicants need the ability to manage multiple tasks involving residents needs and concerns, maintain harmonious relations with related organizations, insure compliance with governmental regulations, and manage a small citrus grove and maintenance staff.

On site residence and office provided in addition to salary and other benefits.

Send résumé and 3 references by June 15, 2007 to The Palms Estates at PO Box 364, Lorida FL, 33857

WE HAVE A DISASTER RESPONSE TOOL TRAILER!!!

By Carolyn and Tim Trier 3/7/07

Last month we were blessed with the opportunity to buy the tool trailer for \$2000 under our projected estimate! Guy Ball from Dixon Church of the Brethren (and our Leadership Team) knew a man in Ashton selling a white trailer that met our requirements. Tim, Paul Skoog and Guy all went to inspect the trailer, and though used, found it in good condition and paid \$3000 from our disaster tool trailer fund to purchase the trailer. The trailer is now plated and insured and being warehoused in Milledgeville by Paul. Paul is planning to build out shelving in the trailer.



The trailer is 7 feet by 16 feet with plywood interior walls (one of our requirements was to be able to attach shelves). It is tandem axle with utility doors on the back. It also has a hitch lock.

We are planning to have it available for use at the Douglas Park Work Day April 28! Come out and join the fun! Thanks and blessings to this district for the enthusiastic support of the tool trailer.

District of IL & WS Calendar *PLUS*

March

11	Pastor installation at Polo CoB
16 - 18	District Youth Retreat at Peoria CoB
18	Pastor installation at Decatur CoB
23 - 25	Bethany Seminary Board meeting
24 - 29	Christian Citizenship Seminar, N.Y. and Wash., DC

April

1	Palm Sunday
1 - 4	Midwest DE's Retreat at Camp Mack, IN
8	Easter Sunday - The Lord is Risen!!
13 - 15	Mission Alive Conference
	District Program & Arrangements Committee meeting at
14	Freeport CoB
	District Gifts Discernment & Call Committee meeting at
14	Freeport CoB
17 - 18	Vital Pastor Orientation Retreat (Brethren Academy)
20 - 22	On Earth Peace Board, New Windsor
21 - 22	Brethren Benefit Trust Board, Elgin
22	District Deacon meeting at Naperville CoB
27 - 29	Regional Youth Conference Manchester College
28	District Workday at Douglas Park CoB
23 - 4	BVS Older Adult Unit 274, New Windsor

May

5	Joint meeting of the LT & NCDB at Lanark CoB
7 - 10	Consiltation on Ministerial Leadership at Elgin
13	Mother's Day
19	NCDB meeting - location TBA
25 - 27	Young Adult Conference
27	Pentecost Sunday

June

1 - 6	Ministry Summer Service Orientation
15 - 17	Junior High Conference, Elizabethtown College
24	Song & Story Fest, Inspiration Hills Camp, Burbank, Ohio
30	Credit Union Board, Cleveland
30 - July 4	Annual Conference, Cleveland
	General Board

