



"Name the Newsletter"

Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren

District Executive: Kevin Kessler

April 2007 Vol 4 Issue 4

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

PRAYING

In Philip Yancey's latest book, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* writes:

"Those of us who struggle with unanswered prayer dare not overlook an important theological truth about how God acts in this world today. The church is the body of Christ, and as such it does God's work. As Ronald Rolheiser expresses it, "A theist believes in a God in heaven whereas a Christian believes in a God in heaven who is also physically present on this earth inside of human beings.... God is still present, as physical and as real today as God was in the historical Jesus. God still has skin, human skin, and physically walks on this earth just as Jesus did."

To pray "God, please help my neighbor cope with her financial problems," or "God, do something about the homeless downtown" is the approach of a theist, not a Christian. God has chosen to express love and grace in the world through those of us who embody Christ."

Yancey contends that an expectation of answered prayer includes our participation. Sitting idly by and expecting God to do all the work also diminishes who we are. Our inaction in prayer reveals an absence of God in our lives whereas our active involvement indicates we are the flesh of God in the world today, the body of Christ.

As I read newsletters from other districts, I noticed in one of them that their district actively prays for member congregations. Congregations pray for congregations within the district. This is not a novel idea but it is a good one. I'd like to incorporate it into the life of our district.

Here is the plan. Each month we will list 3 to 4 congregations from our district in the newsletter for prayer during the month. Prayers can be offered private or public for these congregations. In keeping with Yancey's thoughts, I plan to do more than just pray. During the month I will also contact the listed congregation via a phone call to the pastor or a member of the congregation, or by visiting that congregation if my schedule allows. Others should make contacts with the congregations listed as well.

Within a year, every congregation will have received prayer and a personal contact. Through this active prayer effort we will begin to see that we are the embodiment of God as we pray for and relate to one another.

Could this be a beginning to a prayer ministry in our district? Possibly. This ministry could grow to include other districts, denominational ministries and offices, and even other denominations. The investment is minimal-just a little time and maybe a few cents for a phone call. But the benefits of love and grace will abound exponentially. That, I believe, is the ultimate answer to prayer!

Peace and blessings, brothers
and sisters,

Remember in prayer:

Astoria Church of the Brethren
(309)329-2253

Polo Church of the Brethren
(815)946-2614

Virden Church of the Brethren
(217)965-3422

If you have prayer requests for the district, please
email your requests to kevink.iwdenh@scholahal.net

MOTHER'S DAY GRATITUDE PROJECT

"In honor of a woman you know and love, and in solidarity with mothers around the world."

Global Women's Project announces the Mother's Day Gratitude Project. Instead of buying material gifts for your loved one (she probably has plenty) this year express your gratitude with a gift that helps other women around the world. Your donation funds projects that focus on issues related to women's health, education, and employment. Your chosen recipient will receive a card of gratitude indicating that a gift has been made in her honor.

Send your donation to Global Women's Project along with sender's name and contact information, recipient's name and address, and a message for the card to steering committee member Jacki Hartley at 213 Perry St., Elgin, IL 60123.

Gratitude cards will be mailed in time for Mother's Day.

Global Women's Project raises awareness of the global poverty, oppression and injustice suffered by women around the world. It shows how our over consumption and misuse of resources directly contributes to their suffering. We need to examine and change our way of living to support self-help community projects led by, empower, and benefit women in the US and developing areas.

A bulletin insert and additional information is on our website under the Brethren Witness/Washington Office at <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/gwp.htm>

IT'S SPRING - BE A PLANTER!

Great Harvest Church Planting of the Illinois/Wisconsin district of the Church of the Brethren wants individuals to fulfill the biblical mandate of the Great Commission by starting new, multiplying congregations of believers in the Illinois/Wisconsin District.

You Might Be a Church Planter If.....

- "The Great Commission matters to You" - "You are a leader"
- "You like starting new things" - "You enjoy meeting people"
- "You're a rebel at heart" - "You want to start over."
- "The hair stands up on the back of you neck when people say "We have never done it that way before"
- "Your dream for ministry is to lead the church to what you know God meant for it to be"
- "You want to lead and pastor in a church with a minimum amount of baggage"
- "You are tired of struggling with tradition in the church"
- "You are looking for a new horizon in ministry"
- "Church with a purpose makes sense to you"
- "You believe that Jesus died on the cross for lost people"

Then you might be a Church Planter

If you identify with a number of these statements, you just might be a church planter

Church planting is the most effective means of evangelism under heaven. Great Harvest Church Planting is developing systems and strategies to equip church planters to launch healthy, missional churches in the IL/WI district.

What does Great Harvest Church Planting have to offer? We will help you assess whether you are ready to plant and with the training plus the coaching necessary for planting a church. Grant funds are available to help you get started. Assistance for you and your family as you explore and respond to the call to plant a successful, multiplying church is available. . We can help you discover if church planting is right for you. Contact Lynda DeVore at 630-675-9740 for more information.

SERVING ONE ANOTHER

Senior high youth learned about serving God, each other, and the world God has given us at this year's district spring retreat, held March 16-18 at Peoria Church of the Brethren. Twenty-one youth, four advisors, and three guest leaders from Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) attended, representing five congregations in the northern, central, and southeastern parts of the district. Peoria was a good host site for the group, with a gym and showers on-site and several service projects within walking distance.

In addition to learning about service and BVS, youth had devotions through the weekend, enjoyed an assortment of games and recreation, ate some good food, watched a movie, and led the Sunday morning worship service at the church.

The fall retreat will be held concurrently with district conference, Nov. 2-4 in Freeport. Submitted by Walt Wiltshak



REMINDER! NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE REGISTRATION COST GOES UP AFTER APRIL 15!

Registration for the National Junior High Conference, June 15-17, 2007 at Elizabethtown College, is currently \$99/person (for youth or adult). However, after April 15, the registration cost changes to \$125/person. For more information, or to register, go to: www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/NatJrHighConf.htm

HAPPENINGS AT MARTIN CREEK CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

It only takes a little spark to get a project going. Martin Creek wanted folding doors to separate Children's Church from the rest of the building. Sister Esther Frey was attending a meeting at Martin Creek and heard the cry for help. Sister Carolyn Hinkle reports, "The accordion doors look fantastic. I don't know if you remember the tile floor we had down, but we had to replace all that. It started coming up and it was a mess. Finally it was taken up and replaced with carpeting. That helps muffle the sound on Sunday mornings when Children's Church meets during worship. We're getting ready to put in another bathroom. We only had one before and everyone had to use it. We're going to install a hot water heater, so we can wash off stuff when we have dinners.

Carolyn continues, "Right now, we're running 60-65 each Sunday and believe me that's a church full. Shannon, the pastor and my son, would love to build on. He has great faith in knowing that's what God wants, but I don't know if that's going to happen or not. On Sunday nights we have more than 40 children attending Children's Church and on Wednesday nights (youth night) there are around 30 teenagers. God is truly blessing our church and I praise Him for it.

"I don't want to bore you, but I just had to share what's happening at Martin Creek Church. God is Good!! Have a blessed day!!"

Submitted by Esther Frey and Carolyn Hinkle. (Martin Creek Church is East of Mt. Vernon near Fairfield)

SPIRIT OF GOD MOVING AT KASKASKIA

Harris J. Loewen's hymn, "New Earth, Heavens New" (#299 in Hymnal: A Worship Book) speaks about new things happening when the Spirit of God moves. Undoubtedly, the Spirit is always moving, but it is our activity that sometimes stifles that movement. When we get out of the way, it is then that the activity of the Spirit becomes evident and the new is seen.

Kaskaskia is an example. For nearly two years the Kaskaskia church was essentially closed. A concerned community group decided to begin a new ministry in this location, a decision that has proven to be fruitful. In a recent communication from Keith Denton of the new Kaskaskia congregation, great things are happening. He writes: "Our first Sunday service at Kaskaskia Church was on March 5, 2006 with 45 in attendance. Our average attendance is about 60 at present and we had 112 on Veteran's Day weekend. Our records indicate 30 members and we continue to grow. We will celebrate our first year on March 4, 2007 and Sunday school will begin at 9:00am that day with a potluck dinner following. We have separate men's and women's Bible studies on Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm. We have had 10 baptisms in the Kaskaskia River and 1 in January of this year in the baptistry of Liberty Christian Church. We have completed all the major work on the old church building, which includes a new roof, new windows, a 12' by 22' addition on the front for restrooms, new doors, ceiling panels, septic system, air conditioning, new carpet and rock for the parking lot which is too small. Our expectations have been greatly exceeded. Praise the Lord! We are still trying to figure out what God is doing here but who can know this. We are so thankful for this opportunity and stand in awe of what God has done this first year. We will always remember how gracious you folks (IL/WI District) were toward us. Peace and blessings to you."

Indeed, PRAISE THE LORD! Together we can proclaim the chorus of Loewen's hymn, "Sing a new song to the One who has said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

NEW BEGINNINGS FELLOWSHIP (BATAVIA CHURCH) IS BEGINNING TO THRIVE!

After closing for 3 months and re-opening we went from having 8 people to having 38 in attendance for worship. We're all excited. There's little grumblings here and there because of ALL the changes, but God bless them, they're hanging in there and are becoming more and more missionally minded instead of being in maintenance mode.

We're having an event at our church that I would like to invite the district to as follows: Sudan--trail of tears

The people of Sudan have finally seen decades of civil war ended by a peace treaty, only to still be trapped in poverty and subject to fighting in Darfur and attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army in the south of the country. New Community Project director has just returned from his fifth trip to Sudan and brings slides and stories of a people struggling to keep hope alive. Join a presentation that will feature the people and landscape (including wildlife) of Sudan, along with an analysis of the things that may yet lead to peace--or to further conflict.

The New Community Project is a Christian nonprofit organization based in Elgin, IL working at environmental sustain ability and global justice. NCP sponsors Learning Tours to Sudan, Central America, the Arctic, the Amazon, and Nepal. Director David Radcliff has traveled to 30 countries and is a regular speaker in local, regional, and national gatherings.

The event is at New Beginnings Fellowship 613 N. Van Buren St., Batavia, IL 60510

The night starts at 7:00 PM with a short bit of contemporary worship followed by David Radcliff's story. NO CHARGE. Light refreshments will be served.

Directions to the church: Route 25 to Lathem St, go two blocks, turn left on Van Buren

Blessings and Peace, Pastor Tom

Workcamp Registration

“We are the people we’ve been waiting for!”

- Jim Wallis/Ken Medema

NYC 2006

Workcamp

Available Spaces

YOUTH

#4 New Windsor

#6 Indianapolis

#7 Elgin

#8 Kansas City

#11 Disaster Response

#15 Kyle 2

#16 Idaho

#19 North Ft. Myers

#22 Camp Myrtlewood

#27 St. Croix 2

#29 Orlando

#30 Reynosa (males only)

#31 Dundalk

#32 Disaster Response YA

#33 Guatemala

2007 workcamp registration is now open! Registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants must register on this webpage! The registration process is not complete until we receive your deposit, and space is not guaranteed in your first or second choice until that time.

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of registration and the full balance of the registration fee is due by April 1, 2007. Make checks payable to “Church of the Brethren General Board.” Please send checks to Church of the Brethren General Board, c/o 2007 Workcamp Coordinators, 1451 Dundee Ave. Elgin, IL 60120.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE!

June 15-17, 2007

Where Junior High youth can begin to get a taste of a mini NYC-kind of experience!

Gather at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania for a weekend packed with high energy worship, active-learning workshops, music, games, food, fun and fellowship.

This unique opportunity will help junior high youth grow closer to God, understand more of their Brethren heritage, and form life-long friendships with other Brethren young people. For adult advisors, outstanding workshops for learning new skills in junior high ministry to inspire and empower their leadership back home will be offered.



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

for

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 30 – July 4, 2007

Cleveland, Ohio

Coordinators of the 2007 Annual Conference program activities are appealing for volunteer assistants. From the list below, you can find many opportunities to *lend a hand* for an extensive amount of time or for shorter periods of time. Please indicate on the form below where you can serve. Send the form to:

Attn: Dana Weaver
Annual Conference Office
500 Main Street
New Windsor, MD 21776

I will send the completed form to the proper program coordinator and that coordinator will be in touch with you as the work schedule is developed.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Information Serving Friday noon through Wednesday noon on a scheduled basis

Early Childhood Services Serving Saturday evening through Wednesday noon

Children's Activities Serving Sunday through Wednesday morning

Junior High Activities Serving Saturday evening through Wednesday noon

Senior High Activities Serving Saturday evening through Wednesday noon (adult volunteers only)

Registration Friday afternoon through Tuesday noon (computer experience necessary)

Ushers Serving during worship and business sessions (Saturday through Wednesday)

Tellers For business sessions

Ticket Sales – Serving Friday noon through Tuesday on a scheduled basis

First Aid Nurses (to be scheduled for Friday through Wednesday)

Loading/Unloading Crew-(Friday 7:30 am and Wednesday 12:00-5:00pm)

----- (detach and mail)

I am volunteering my help with Conference tasks in the area(s) indicated below.

I plan to arrive at Conference on _____.
(date)

Program area(s)

Would prefer to work these dates: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

email: _____
h:/cleveland/coord/volunteer form



CAMP EMMANUEL NEEDS YOU!

Bring your tools and talents and help us prepare the Camp for the 2007 Season.

SPRING WORKDAY / WEEK

Workday Saturday April 21 Continuing thru Saturday April 28 9:00 AM - ???

Projects to do:

Roof 2 bunkhouses

Replace several screen doors

Cleanup tree limbs

Install air vents in bunkhouses

Clean all building

Electrical work in kitchen

Work a day or two or all week . . . Meals provided*

Please call or e-mail if you plan to help or have any questions.

Jerry & Connie Reynolds, camp mgrs. Ph. 309-329-2291 campemmanuel@astoriail.net

District of IL & WS Calendar *PLUS*

April

1	Palm Sunday
1 - 4	Midwest DE's Retreat at Camp Mack, IN
5	Maundy Thursday
6	Good Friday
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	Work Day at Camp Emmanuel
21 - 22	Brethren Benefit Trust Board, Elgin
22	District Deacon meeting at Naperville CoB
22-28	Work Day at Camp Emmanuel
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

July

3	BBT Board, Cleveland
16 - 19	TRIM/EFSM New Student Orientation, Brethren Academy
22	BVS Summer Unit, New Windsor

August

19	BRF – BVS Unit, New Windsor
20 - 22	On Earth Peace Board, New Windsor
22 - 22	TRIM Coordinators Gathering, Brethren Academy
20 - 23	ABC Board, Elgin
23 - Sept 12	BVS Fall Unit
27 - 31	BVS Retreat, Newark, Ill

October

	PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH
14	World Mission Offering Emphasis
16	World Food Day
16 - 24	Peace with Justice Week
20 - 22	General Board, Elgin
26 - 28	Bethany Seminary Board, Richmond