



*“The Newsletter of”*  
Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren  
*District Executive: Kevin Kessler*  
July 2007 Vol 4 Issue 7

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

**DE Ponderings**

***Read Matthew 14:22-33***

In an effort to learn more about the church planting movement, I read a book written by Tom Nebel entitled Big Dreams in Small Places: Church Planting in Small Communities. I became especially interested in a small section of the book that spoke about constituent backlash. Constituent backlash, according to Nebel, “occurs when people of influence begin to make noise and raise suspicions about the newly developing church planting movement, often resulting in overt criticism of the leaders and polarization of the stakeholders.”

Nebel’s statement seems to resonate with what is occurring in our own IL/WI District. Initially, there seemed to be enthusiasm about developing new churches in the district especially when the New Church Development Board was formed. Unarguably there were dissenters, but all in all an overall acceptance of this new initiative existed. With the passing of time since the inception of this movement in our district and with little tangible evidence of success, what was once hailed as a boon for our district is now being second-guessed, at least by some. Nebel calls this the echo of a retreatist mentality which says “we have waded into the waters of church planting; now we must race back to the shore of business as usual.”

But what happens if we vamoose to the comfortable shores of the status quo? Maybe the same thing that happened to Peter when he attempted to walk on water? Oswald Chambers writes about Peter’s experience in the classic devotional My Utmost for His Highest. “The wind really was boisterous and the waves really were high, but Peter didn’t see them at first. He didn’t consider them at all; he simply recognized his Lord, stepped out in recognition of Him, and ‘walked on the water.’” This is what Chambers calls reckless abandon. Continuing, Chambers writes, “Then [Peter] began to take those things around him into account, and instantly, down he went.”

I wonder if our initial response to the church planting movement in our district was a “walking on the water” experience? With “reckless abandon” we jumped into the choppy sea of the church planting movement with eyes fixed on the One who called us away from the comfort of the status quo. Enthusiasm ran high as we kept our sight focused and did not take into account our surroundings of possible failures or minimal successes. As we continued our “water walk” the aforementioned negatives forced our focus in different directions, thus we were overcome by a sinking feeling about new church development.

Is there hope for this movement in our district? Yes, just as there was hope for Peter. When Peter began to sink he called out to Jesus who immediately reached for Peter and saved him. It’s time for us to call out and experience the “reach” of Jesus lifting us from the doubt that influences the retreatist mentality of constituency backlash.

Jesus didn’t send Peter back to the shore where he would be safe from experiencing choppy waters. Rather, Jesus kept Peter on the sea that Jesus calmed. Jesus can keep us in the midst of the choppy waters of church planting, not letting us go back to where we think we’ll be comfortable, but calming the storm where we are and allowing us to move forward to new and distant shores.

Are we ready to reach for Jesus?

Grace and peace to all,

Kevin Kessler

### **Hurricane Creek Church of the Brethren**

Several months ago two members of the Hurricane Creek Church of the Brethren, Dona Matthews and Connie Manus, had an idea of a work project for our church. Former pastor Bro. Merrill and Sis. Jean Branson's house in Kansas was in need of roof replacement. Dona and Connie and some of their families planned to make a weekend trip to Kansas. Other members of the congregation decided to go along and participate in this project.

Meanwhile, the Newton Church of the Brethren in the Western Plains District where Bro. Merrill and Sis. Jean attend church now learned of our plans and volunteered to help. Dale Minnich of the Newton Church made contact with some of the members of our church to coordinate efforts for a workday at the Branson's. June 23 was the day which seemed to fit schedules for all involved.

Friday was travel day for the Hurricane Creek people who arrived in Goessel, Kansas, with time Friday evening to eat and visit with the Branson's. Also they did some preliminary work such as carrying bundles of shingles up to the roof to be ready for Saturday and trimming tree branches that were overhanging the roof. The Newton Church people had already delivered air compressors and ladders. The Branson's purchased the shingles and had already had them delivered to the sight.

The next morning, workday, crews from both congregations gathered at the Branson's under cloud cover and rain. But the Lord provided indoor work that needed to be accomplished. The rain ceased, and the roof project got underway. Two crews worked on the roof, and ground crews did projects needing to be completed on the ground. One ground crew did outside work of shrubbery and tree trimming around the house as well as cleaning up from the roof crews.

At noon, work came to a halt and the Newton Church provided lunch under a tent the church people had erected that morning on the Branson's front yard. Much fun, laughter, and fellowship occurred over the lunch time and during afternoon rest breaks.

Experienced and inexperienced ranging in ages from 20's to beyond retirement worked well together on the roof as is Brethren tradition.

Before dark, the work was completed and new friendships had been made. Our church families have expanded and been drawn closer together in spite of the almost 500 miles separating us.

Submitted by: Claren Dunn

### **Bereavement Announcement**

Vernard Eller, 79, passed away last night, Monday, June 18, at his home in La Verne, Calif., from Alzheimer's. He was an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and retired from a career as professor of Bible and Religion at the University of La Verne.

He was a prominent author of books about theology and religion. Among the more than 20 titles he authored were "The MAD Morality; Or, the Ten Commandments Revisited," "King Jesus' Manual of Arms for the 'Armless,'" and "Sex Manual for Puritans." He began his writing career as editor of youth publications for the Church of the Brethren, and also wrote numerous articles for "Messenger" magazine over the years. He served as a member of the General Board, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Bethany Theological Seminary. He was a graduate of Bethany Seminary and La Verne College, and received a master's degree from Northwestern University, and a doctorate from Pacific School of Religion.

He is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Phyllis Eller; their children Sander Eller of La Verne, Enten Eller of La Verne and Richmond, Ind., and Rosanna McFadden and her husband, Tim, of Goshen, Ind.; and grandchildren Kathryn, Rebecca, and Joel McFadden.

A memorial service will take place at Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren in Pomona, Calif., on Tuesday, June 26, at 11 a.m., and all are welcome to attend. In lieu of flowers, the family is receiving memorial gifts for the Pomona Fellowship Church or Heifer International. Cards can be sent to Phyllis Eller and the family at her home: 2448 Third St., La Verne, CA 91750.

### **Ruthann Knechel Johansen Called as President of Bethany Theological Seminary**

Richmond, Indiana-The Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees has called Ruthann Knechel Johansen of Granger, Indiana, as president, beginning July 1, 2007. Dr. Johansen, who has served as adjunct faculty at Bethany Seminary and has been a visiting scholar at Harvard Divinity School (1992-93) and Princeton Theological Seminary (1983-84), said in accepting the appointment: "The Church of the Brethren, our society, and the world need the faith and Christ-centered vision Bethany Theological Seminary and our church have offered since their foundations. I am committed to the Believers Church tradition which emphasizes the priesthood of all believers. In such a faith tradition, Bethany Seminary is not simply an institution charged with educating professional clergy; it is also an inspirational resource for study and empowerment for all believers within and beyond the denomination who seek to embody the love, justice, mercy, and peace of Jesus Christ in an often fearful and violent world."

Dr. Johansen is currently a professor in the Program of Liberal Studies and a Faculty Fellow of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. For thirteen years she administered and taught in the College of Arts and Letters interdisciplinary seminar "Ideas, Values, Images" at Notre Dame. She has also taught courses such as "War, Peace, and the Literary Imagination" and "Understanding Story: Cultures, Conflict, and Identity." Dr. Johansen participated in Notre Dame's Ford Foundation Summer Seminar on Cultural Diversity, and has received a Kaneb Teaching Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Distinguished Notre Dame Woman Award.

Dr. Johansen holds a Ph.D. in English with emphasis on religious, psychological, and philosophical thought in literature from Drew University, an M.A. in English from Columbia University Teachers College, and a B.S. in English and music from Manchester College. She is the author of several books and publications, including *Listening in the Silence, Seeing in the Dark: Reconstructing Life After Brain Injury*; *The Narrative Secret of Flannery O'Connor: The Trickster as Interpreter*; *Coming Together: Male and Female in a Renamed Garden*; "Peacemaking and Global Justice," "Our Babel: What Shall We Do with the Language"; and "Turning from Underneath: On Oppression and Power." She has been a writer for many Church of the Brethren publications, including *Brethren Life and Thought*, *Guide to Biblical Studies*, and *Messenger* magazine.

Dr. Johansen has been a guest lecturer in numerous venues, including professional associations, Earlham College, Juniata College, Manchester College, Bethany Seminary, and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Dr. Johansen is a member of the Crest Manor Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind., where she has served on various committees, including the Congregational Relations Committee, Envisioning Committee, and the Leadership Team. She currently is Moderator-elect of the Northern Indiana District of the Church of the Brethren. She has been a workshop and retreat leader at many local and denominational events, and has served on denominational study committees. Dr. Johansen was a member of the Bethany Board of Trustees from 1985-1995.

"The Board of Trustees of Bethany Seminary is very pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ruthann Knechel Johansen as the next president of Bethany Theological Seminary," says chair Anne M. Reid. "She brings a deep love of the Gospel and the Kingdom and a great appreciation for the denomination to the office. Her skills in listening and in reconciliation will be invaluable in helping the Seminary relate to the larger church."

Bethany Theological Seminary was founded in 1905 and is the graduate school and academy for theological education for the Church of the Brethren. It is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The Church of the Brethren is an Anabaptist/Pietist denomination of 130,000 members in congregations throughout most of the continental United States. It is an historic peace church, conscientiously opposed to all war, and is intentional about working with peacemaking and reconciliation concerns.

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Marcia Shetler  
Director of Public Relations  
Bethany Theological Seminary  
615 National Road West  
Richmond, IN 47374  
Phone: 765-983-1823  
[www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu)

**Position Opening**  
Church of the Brethren General Board  
June 18, 2007

**MANAGING EDITOR, BRETHREN PRESS**

Full-time position reportable to the Executive Director and Publisher of Brethren Press.

Location: Elgin, Illinois. Position description and application form available on request.

Application deadline: August 15, 2007

**Responsibilities:**

- Manage the publishing schedule for a wide range of curriculum, books, bulletins, pamphlets, and other publications
- Manage the editorial office, including contracts, copyright permissions, and payments
- Copy-edit and proofread most publications
- Provide content editing on selected publications
- Supervise projects through typesetting and design
- Work collaboratively with contract writers, editors, designers, typesetters, and photographers
- Assist with acquisitions of new titles

**Qualifications:**

- Excellent editing and proofreading skills and experience with broader areas of production and publishing
- Ability to supervise and organize many details and to meet deadlines
- Excellent computer skills
- Understanding of Church of the Brethren heritage, theology, and polity or willingness to learn
- Strong oral and written communication and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrated skill in establishing and operating in a collegial framework

**Education/Experience:**

- Bachelor's degree in related field; master's degree preferred
- Prior successful experience with editing and production
- Preference given to individuals active in the Church of the Brethren

*Qualified candidates are invited to complete the General Board application form, submit a résumé and letter of application, and to request three references to send letters of recommendation to:*

Office of Human Resources

Church of the Brethren General Board

1451 Dundee Avenue

Elgin, IL 60120-1694

Phone: 1-800-323-8039, Ext. 258; E-mail: [kkrog\\_gb@brethren.org](mailto:kkrog_gb@brethren.org)

**Camp Emmaus: Women's Camp**

Women's camp is August 3,4,5 this year. Registration is \$12.00. Meals and lodging for the weekend is \$56.00. This is a total of \$68.00 for the weekend. Where else can you stay for this amount and have fellowship with other Christian Women? If you are interested in attending and would like a registration form, please contact Kelly Whitehead by phone 630-530-9262 or e-mail [kwhitehead@dkwhitehead.com](mailto:kwhitehead@dkwhitehead.com).

*Congregations to Remember in prayer this Month:*

Oakley Brick	217-763-6070
Oak Grove	309-443-5420
Walnut Grove	618-839-9673
Chicago, First	773-533-4273

If you have prayer requests for the district, please e-mail your request to [kevink.iwdcob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kevink.iwdcob@sbcglobal.net)

## Ministry Teams 2007

### STANDING TEAMS

(Appointed by LT )

Ethics Team – 3-year term, 2 term tenure

MLDT – 5-year term, 1 term tenure

Ethics Team (Liaison 2007 Joyce)

Ellis Boughton [namvet9@hotmail.com](mailto:namvet9@hotmail.com)

Bob Weller [krweller@frontiernet.net](mailto:krweller@frontiernet.net)

Christy Waltersdorff [cwaltersdorff@juno.com](mailto:cwaltersdorff@juno.com)

Joel Kline [jdkline783@ameritech.net](mailto:jdkline783@ameritech.net)

Jo Ann Kreider [kreider47@yahoo.com](mailto:kreider47@yahoo.com)

Ministerial Leadership Development Team (Liaison 2007 Wilbur)

Chr. Rex Richardson [rrichardson217@aol.com](mailto:rrichardson217@aol.com)

Kathleen Brinkmeier [kwideawake@hotmail.com](mailto:kwideawake@hotmail.com)

Jean McBride [demcbride@prodigy.net](mailto:demcbride@prodigy.net)

Mary Beth Petcher [mbpetch@yahoo.com](mailto:mbpetch@yahoo.com)

Shannon

Virden

Lombard

Elgin

Peoria

Champaign

Rockford

Decatur

York Center Neil Brinkmeier

[neilbrink@msn.com](mailto:neilbrink@msn.com)

Franklin Grove

### MINISTRY TEAMS

(Appointed by LT) No term limit, no tenure.

The Youth Cabinet has their own By-Laws

Disaster Response Team (Liaison 2007 Guy)

Co-Chrs. Tim & Carolyn Trier [tatrier@yahoo.com](mailto:tatrier@yahoo.com)

Marian Patterson [mpatterson@essex1.com](mailto:mpatterson@essex1.com)

Dixon

Milledgeville

District Deacons (Liaison 2007 Joyce) (3 year term - 2 term tenure)

Kathy Gingrich [Tendrkath@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Tendrkath@sbcglobal.net)

Chr. Allegra Hess [ahess10645@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ahess10645@sbcglobal.net)

Dennis Webb [djkrwebb@hotmail.com](mailto:djkrwebb@hotmail.com)

Anna Lee Hisey-Pierson [alwthp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alwthp@sbcglobal.net)

Jim Dunn [cjkiln@frontiernet.net](mailto:cjkiln@frontiernet.net)

Clareen Dunn [cjkiln@frontiernet.net](mailto:cjkiln@frontiernet.net)

Leon J. Swigart 527 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Girard, IL 62640-1219

Naperville

York Center

Naperville

Plainfield

Mulberry Grove

Mulberry Grove

Virden

Peace Team (new for 2007) (Liaison 2007 Phyllis)

Chr. Jewel McNary [JAMcNary@aol.com](mailto:JAMcNary@aol.com)

Bill Hare Box 128, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0128

Martha Harr [mharr@cantonusd.org](mailto:mharr@cantonusd.org)

Jerry Sales [salesjer@gmail.com](mailto:salesjer@gmail.com)

Janis Butterbaugh [beehappyacres@grics.net](mailto:beehappyacres@grics.net)

Aurora

Polo

Canton

Eureka

Dixon

Youth Cabinet (Liaison 2007 Fletcher)

Pres. Cassidy McFadden [cassadiya@gmail.com](mailto:cassadiya@gmail.com)

Many others

Elgin

### 2007 IL/WI DIRECTORY UPDATES

Pg. 17 Dixon Church of the Brethren 815-284-2711 (Correction)

## **Mission and Mortar**

Sustaining and developing ministry (mission) within congregations, as well as maintaining property (mortar), is sometimes hindered because of inadequate financial resources. The Illinois/Wisconsin District, whose mission is to support the growth and development of member congregations, realizes that this dilemma exists and desires to financially support congregations that are in good standing with the district and have specific needs. Congregations in good standing are those that for the past two years have sent delegates to district conference and have supported the district financially with undesignated gifts of at least \$100.00 per year for the past two years.

Application for assistance may be made for up to a three-year period with reductions in the amount of support for each subsequent year. In the event that multi-year assistance is needed, a graduated agreement for funding will be arranged, but a request for the funds must be made annually.

Example: \$4,000.00 needed over three years.

Year one: \$2,000.00

Year two: \$1,200.00

Year three: \$800.00

Assistance will be in the form of grants and loans. The total amount of grants per congregation will not exceed \$2,500.00 per application. Any amounts above \$2,500.00 will be provided in the form of a loan to be repaid without interest. Payment of the loan would begin in the year following the last year of assistance with a payment schedule not to exceed 5 years. The maximum amount that can be borrowed per congregation is \$5,000.00 per application. New applications for assistance will not be accepted from congregations using the program until the original contract has been completed and loans have been repaid.

From example above:

Year one: Grant

Year two: \$500.00 grant; \$700.00 loan

Year three: \$800.00 loan

Year four: Begin paying on loan of \$1,500.00

Applications for Mission and Mortar grants/loans may be made by sending a letter of request to Mission and Mortar, c/o District of Illinois and Wisconsin, 1 S 071 Luther Avenue, Lombard, IL 60148. The letter should include the following:

1. The specific purpose for which the funds will be used.
2. The number of years funding will be needed, not to exceed three years.
3. The amount of money needed. If for multiple years, designate the needed amount each year. A reduction in amount is required for subsequent years. Requests for the funds are required annually.
4. The schedule of repayment for amounts exceeding \$2,500.00.

The Leadership Team has the authority to accept or reject any request.

This program will be administered by the District Leadership Team and its treasurer and financial secretary.

Funding for this program will come from the Mission and Mortar Fund and/or reserves. The revolving fund will accept designated giving and is the fund to which loan payments will be made.

The cumulative amount available for combined loans and grants will be established annually by the Leadership Team.

***Established by the Leadership Team of the Illinois/Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren at a regularly scheduled meeting on Saturday, June 9, 2007, at LaPlace, IL.***



## District of IL & WS Calendar *PLUS*

### July

3	BBT Board, Cleveland
16 - 19	TRIM/EFSM New Student Orientation, Brethren Academy
20-26	District Executive on vacation
21	York Center Green Fair
21	New Church Development Board meeting
22	BVS Summer Unit, New Windsor
28	Ethics Committee meeting

### August

4	Program and Arrangements Committee meeting
18	Leadership Team meeting – Highland Avenue COB
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
25	Camp Emmanuel Board meeting
25	New Church Development Board meeting
26	District Deacons meeting – Peoria
23 - Sept 12	BVS Fall Unit
27 - 31	BVS Retreat, Newark, Ill

### September

15	New Church Development Board meeting
29	Peace Team meeting – Eureka

### October

	PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH
6	New Church Development Board meeting
13	Leadership Team meeting – Franklin Grove COB
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
28 - 30	Midwest DEs retreat – Camp Mack, Milford, IN

### November

2 - 4	District Conference – Freeport
4	National Junior High Sunday
	Sustaining Pastoral Excellence National Vital Pastor Retreat
5 - 9	(Brethren Academy)
11	Stewardship Sunday
	District Leadership Team retreat and joint meeting with
16 - 17	NCDB at Camp Emmaus
18	Bible Sunday
16 - 17	BBT Board