



*“The Newsletter of”*  
Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren  
*District Executive: Kevin Kessler*  
September 2007 Vol 4 Issue 9

*“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

"...one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray...'" (Luke 11:1)

I confess. I read the classic devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest*, with a certain degree of skepticism. But I'll have to admit that many times my skepticism is turned into awe and wonder. The reading for August 28 is a case in point.

Oswald Chambers, the author, speaks about prayer in this particular daily reading. He says, "We hear it said that a person's life will suffer if he doesn't pray, but I question that. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food, but by prayer." I don't know that I've ever thought about prayer in these terms, but it makes perfect sense.

Think about Chambers' words in relation to John 15 where Jesus speaks about the vine and the branches. We are the branches that are attached to the vine which is Jesus. Because we are attached, the very life of Jesus courses through our veins. Prayer ensures that the flow continues which in turn ensures that we remain alive, vibrant, and connected instead of withered, dead, and disconnected.

Chambers adds, "To say that 'prayer changes things' is not as close to the truth as saying, 'Prayer changes me and then I change things.' God has established things so that prayer, on the basis of redemption, changes the way a person looks at things. Prayer is not a matter of changing things externally, but one of working miracles in a person's inner nature."

As I make my way around the district, I try to keep my ears open and listen to how we interact with each other. I even evaluate myself as to how well I'm interacting. What I hear, and what I see in myself, is sometimes rather disheartening. We (including me) are quick to speak and to judge and to find fault. I wonder what differences we might see and hear if we were more attentive to prayer? If we were more attentive to the life of Jesus that flows through our veins?

I share these thoughts not to cast stones but to raise awareness because I truly care about each and every person who makes up this body we call the IL/ WI District of the Church of the Brethren. My hope and my prayer is that we can all remain connected to the True Vine to receive the life-changing flow of grace that will sustain us spiritually and help us all to be healthy branches. Healthy branches aren't so concerned about the differences of other healthy branches. They are more concerned with helping reconnect those that have become disconnected. Another way to say it? We become more missional, outward focused, rather than being focused inwardly, trying to maintain the present branches.

There's plenty of room for many more branches to be grafted into the True Vine. Prayer helps us to be branch grafters. Prayer really can change us. And when we're changed, well, we really can be change agents for God.

## UPCOMING COURSES OFFERED THROUGH BRETHERN ACADEMY

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership provides courses for TRIM/EFSM students who are seeking credits toward ordination, for pastors who are acquiring CEUs and for lay people who have a desire to learn. Courses are offered on the Bethany Theological Seminary campus, at other specified sites, and on line. Course information can be obtained through the Brethren Academy, by going on line to <http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/academy>, or by calling 1-800-287-8822, ext. 1824. Following are the next three courses being offered:

- "First and Second Thessalonians" September 24 - November 3, 2007. An on line course taught by Susan Jeffers. Register through the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center; Biblical Studies credit.
- "January Intensive" (January 2008) at Bethany Theological Seminary, Steve Reid, Instructor; Biblical Studies credit.
- "Jeremiah" February 4 - March 15, 2008. An on line course taught by Susan Jeffers. Register through the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center; Biblical Studies credit.

## CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH

October is Clergy Appreciation Month. Clergy work vigorously providing leadership and care often at the expense of their own personal needs. Clergy Appreciation Month is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts these sisters and brothers share so freely and selflessly with us. Following are a few ideas that will help in planning to appreciate our talented and dedicated clergy.

- Organize a card shower.
- Have a clergy appreciation party.
- Set up a "leafless" tree that can be decorated with a variety of small gifts such as Ziploc bag holding a favorite treat (cookies or candy), hobby items, or small envelopes with notes of encouragement or gift certificates.
- Deliver a bag of groceries to their home.
- Schedule a special prayer time to pray especially for clergy. Invite them to be there and lay hands on them as you pray. Give gifts certificates to their favorite restaurant and to their favorite movie theater.
- Give a love offering.
- If a pastor, give them a Sunday off in October, just because.
- Etc, etc.

May God bless our clergy as they continue to nurture us with Christ-like love and humble leadership.

*Congregations to Remember in prayer this Month:*

Decatur	217-422-4882
Franklin Grove	815-456-2422
Freeport	815-232-1938
Girard	217-627-2166

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

## A PRAYER OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*God of wonder and joy,  
you are always with us  
and we are amazed by you.  
Give us the courage to admit when  
we fail you and the humility to  
accept your forgiveness.  
Thank you for calling us to be your*

*sons and daughters.  
And now, open our hearts to you.  
Amen.*

*--from Roundabout, Fall 2007*

## "ENCOUNTERING GOD ON THE WAY"

- Do you long for a closer connection to your faith?
- Do you feel uncertain about the 'right' way to talk to God?
- Do you want some new tools to help you on your journey?

Then come to the year's fall Illinois/Wisconsin District Youth Retreat, November 2-4 in Freeport, IL

It will feature special leadership by Set Hendricks, music leader for the 2006 National Youth Conference, along with great worship, incredible people, and good food.



Here's what you need to know:

**Where:** Freeport Church of the Brethren and the nearby masonic Auditorium, Walnut & West Stephenson St., Freeport, IL.

**When:** November 2-4, 2007 (the 1st weekend in November). Registration will begin at 7pm Friday at Freeport. We'll stay for opening worship, then head to our retreat. We finish by noon on Sunday.

**Who:** Everyone currently in 9th through 12th grades, and advisors.

**What:** Worship, music, learning about God and yourself, food, fun, games and recreation, a possible service project, time with friends, and much more.

**Cost:** \$30 (advisors can come for free!) Register using forms in the district conference packet or check [www.cobyouth.org](http://www.cobyouth.org) for more information.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND PLAN TO ATTEND THE 11th ANNUAL FALL DINNER AND AUCTION TO SUPPORT PLEASANT HILL VILLAGE ON OCTOBER 20, 2007.** It will be held in Virden at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The doors open at 5:00 p.m. with dinner served at 6:00 p.m. The cost is \$25 per person. A highlight of the evening will be the live auction with many items to choose from. Also there will be an ongoing silent auction during the early part of the evening. Come and challenge your friends to outbid you. Your purchases are for a good cause - the residents at Pleasant Hill Village. Pleasant Hill Village began in 1905 as a home for orphans and elderly. The large brick building served as home for many people prior to the construction of the current healthcare facility and independent living apartments. Pleasant Hill Village continues to serve Girard and the surrounding community with caring staff and administration. To purchase tickets for the Fall Dinner or if you have items to donate for either the silent or live auction, contact Paulette Miller at Pleasant Hill Village by phone at 217-627-2181 or by email at [phvil@royell.net](mailto:phvil@royell.net). If you have an item to donate for either the silent or live auction, please let Paulette know by September 15.

### MISSION STATEMENT OF PLEASANT HILL VILLAGE

Pleasant Hill Village is founded to provide quality care to elderly persons on a not-for-profit basis, with housing facilities, and services, especially designed to meet the aged, and contribute to their health, security, happiness, and usefulness in living.

**BE SURE TO LOOK FOR MORE DETAILS IN NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER!!!!**

## **2008 WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has announced its internship program for 2008. They will welcome five young people aged 18-30 to serve as interns in its offices in Geneva, Switzerland, from Feb. 2008-Jan. 2009. Interns will be assigned to one of the WCC working areas. Each intern will be expected to plan an ecumenical project to implement in his or her home context when they return home in Feb. 2009. Areas of work will be

- the Decade to Overcome Violence ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3107](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3107));
- youth ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3069](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3069)) and ecumenical relationships ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=2950](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=2950));
- visitors program ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3185](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3185)) and media relations ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3432](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3432));
- faith, science, technology, and ethics ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3125](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3125)); and
- just and inclusive communities ([www.oikoumene.org/?id=3105](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3105)).

Successful candidates will be committed to the ideals of the ecumenical movement and will bring energy, commitment, and a fresh vision to the work. Along with an application, applicants must send background information about their church or Christian youth network that will help them in implementing their proposed ecumenical project. Closing date for receiving applications is Sept. 20. More information and an application form and a background information form are at [www.oikoumene.org/?id=3187](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3187).

From: Jim Miner <[jim\\_e\\_miner@yahoo.com](mailto:jim_e_miner@yahoo.com)>

## **COMMISSIONING MISSIONARIES FOR SUDAN**

The District of Idaho and W. Montana celebrates faithful servants who responded to a call to serve as the Church of the Brethren Sudan Initiative Lead Team Members, Jim & Pam Hardenbrook and Matt and Christy Messick. Commissioning missionaries to a new mission field for the first time in several decades is a momentous occasion.

The theme for the 2007 Idaho District Conference on September 14-15 is "Mission Possible! Extending the Kingdom in South Sudan and South Idaho." The final worship service will be devoted to a special send-off and Commissioning Service for the Hardenbrooks and Messicks. The service is scheduled for Saturday, September 15, 6:15 p.m. at the Bowmont Church of the Brethren. Sandy Bosserman, Missouri/Arkansas District Executive, will be the featured speaker, and the Idaho congregations will share their commitment to the mission.

We invite and encourage you to join us in this commitment to the support of the Hardenbrooks, Messicks and the Sudan mission. Please feel free to also share this information with staff members and others in your district.

Yours in Christ, Sue Daniel, Administrative Executive, District of Idaho Church of the Brethren  
[IdahoAE@msn.com](mailto:IdahoAE@msn.com) Phone: 208-442-7260

## **WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A SILENT AUCTION, BUT BE LOUD ABOUT TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT IT!!!**

When: At District Conference the first weekend in November

Where: Freeport, Il. at the Masonic Temple

What can we give?: Craft Items, Baked Goods, Quilts, Blankets, Weekend Get-always, you name it! Please though no old garage sale items.

Simply bring your items along with you to District Conference or give them to someone you know who is going. The items will be on display on Friday night and all day Saturday. At the end of business on Saturday that will be given out to the highest bidder. So come, bring your wallet or purse, and be ready to buy a lot!

For more information contact Rick Koch at 815-225-7812 or 815-225-7338, or e-mail at [ricbeckoch@mchsi.com](mailto:ricbeckoch@mchsi.com).



## PEACE TEAM



Front row l to r: Jewel McNary, Janis Butterbaugh, Jerry Sales

Back row l to r: Martha Harr, Bill Hare

Not pictured: Carol Kussart

The Peace Team has met 3 times this year. They continue to send birthday letters to youth 14-18 years of age. Job descriptions for the team and team representatives have been completed. They are seeking to add two youth representatives to the team. Their next meeting is scheduled for September 29.

## A NORTHWEST DISTRICT GATHERING

On August 28, forty two people representing ten congregations, gathered at the home of Wilbur and Evelyn Bowman. This was the fifth meeting of Wilbur's Liaison churches since the initial gathering in 2006. This group meets quarterly for a planned "carry in" meal and discussion time concerning District updates and any concerns they wish to bring to the Leadership Team.

This meeting had the following presenters:

Carol Novak told of the Franklin Grove Peace effort they are co-ordinating for area churches to participate in on International Day of Peace, September 21, in Dixon.

Lisa Fike, of the Freeport COB, the host pastor for District Conference, spoke about the plans for an exciting Conference. This year there will be Junior High activities again. She told about the outstanding Junior High Conference held at Elizabethtown, Pa. This Conference will continue on a 2 year interval as does the National Youth Conference.

Bill Hare, of the Polo COB, the Honduras co-ordinator, explained his many plans for the annual trip to Honduras. He is planning to stay a month in 2008, coordinating groups coming from the "States" that will be involved in a large program of building of 14 houses. Three members of the Yellow Creek church will be involved in one of these groups. They are taking on the project of "Backpacks for the School Children". Each child in Honduras must have a backpack to attend school. The work crew is collecting the backpacks to take with them.

Carolyn Trier, of the Dixon COB, representing the Disaster Response Team, told of the plan to continue the purchase of tools for the tool trailer. Wilbur Bowman, of the Polo congregation and Leadership Team Chair, told of the action of the Leadership Team at their August 18 meeting concerning this Ministry Team. There will be an limit of \$100.00 per person, per day for Disaster Response volunteers for food and lodging to get to, and from, their place of work. (food and lodging is provided at the volunteer work sites)

Wilbur handed out the "Mission and Mortar" paper. This is a program that has been developed by the Leadership Team. It was published in the current District Newsletter and each congregation needs to be aware of its content. This was the "homework" for this group. They were asked to read it and come prepared to talk about it at the next meeting on November 26.

The churches represented were: Yellow Creek, Cherry Grove, Lanark, Milledgeville, Polo, Mt. Morris, Dixon, Freeport, Franklin Grove, and Rockford.

Submitted by,  
Evelyn Bowman

**SUBJECT: SUDAN MISSIONARY COMMISSIONING**

Date: Wed, 15 Aug 2007 11:58:52 -0600

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The District of Idaho and W. Montana celebrates the faithful servants who have responded to the call to serve as the Church of the Brethren Sudan Initiative Lead Team Members, Jim & Pam Hardenbrook and Matt and Christy Messick. Commissioning missionaries to a new mission field for the first time in several decades is a momentous occasion.

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Yours in Christ,

Sue Daniel  
Sue Daniel, Administrative Executive  
District of Idaho  
Church of the Brethren  
IdahoAE@msn.com  
Phone: 208-442-7260

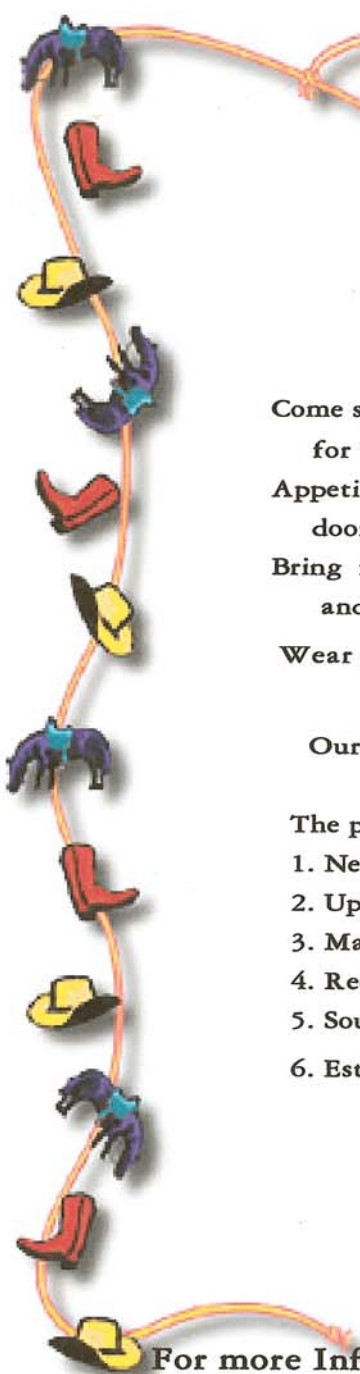
**2007 DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

Registration Packets have been sent to all congregations for the District Conference being hosted by the Freeport Church of the Brethren at the Freeport Masonic Temple. Dates are November 2-4. Registration materials will also be available for downloading on the District Website, [www.iwdcob.org](http://www.iwdcob.org) around September 1. Registrations and meal request forms should be submitted to the district office no later than September 20.

Duane Steiner, IL/WI Administrative Assistant

**NEW FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOR THE NCDB**

The New Church Development Board has a new Financial Secretary. Jack Flores has replaced Jim Mack who has served as financial secretary since 2004. The NCDB expresses a big Thank-You to Jim for his years of service. Donations for the work of the NCDB should now be sent to the attention of --- Jack Flores, 337 Chaparral Cir., Elgin, IL 60120.



**11th Annual Dinner & Auction  
To Benefit Pleasant Hill Village  
Saturday, October 20th, 2007  
Kings of Columbus Hall in Virden**

Come spend an enjoyable evening and help raise funds to make life for the Residents at Pleasant Hill Village more like home. Appetizers, silent auction, dinner, live auction, and door prizes will all make for a fun and entertaining evening. Bring friends, and make new friends as you fellowship around the tables and bid against each other at the auction!

Wear your favorite western duds..as our theme is -

**"A Western Hoedown"**

Our goal this year is to raise \$20,000 for Healthcare projects.

The projects are:

1. New furniture for the livingroom
2. Updating the fence around theA-B Courtyard
3. Maintaining the Bird Aviaries
4. Redecorating the resident's bath and shower room
5. Sound system for the dining room.
6. Establishing a residents assistance fund!

**Doors open @ 5pm and  
Dinner @ 6pm  
Tickets are \$25 each**



**For more Information contact Paulette or Glenn @ 217- 627-2181**

**Pleasant Hill Village  
Dinner and Auction**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Dinner Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or item/s for the Auction \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any other information we can assist you with? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Paulette Miller at 1016 W. North St. Girard, Illinois 62640. Thank-you for your support.

**Pleasant Hill Village  
Dinner and Auction**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Dinner Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>District of IL &amp; WS Calendar <i>PLUS</i></b>		
<b>September</b>		
	15	New Church Development Board meeting
	29	Peace Team meeting – Eureka
<b>October</b>		<b>PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH</b>
	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
	18 - 20	TRIM Coordinator's meeting - Highland Avenue COB
	20 - 22	General Board, Elgin
	26 - 28	Bethany Seminary Board, Richmond
	28 - 30	Midwest DEs retreat – Camp Mack, Milford, IN
<b>November</b>		
	2 - 4	District Conference – Freeport
	4	National Junior High Sunday
	5 - 9	Sustaining Pastoral Excellence National Vital Pastor Retreat (Brethren Academy)
	11	Stewardship Sunday
	16 - 17	District Leadership Team retreat and joint meeting with NCDB at Camp Emmaus
	18	Bible Sunday
	16 - 17	BBT Board
<b>December</b>		
	1	World AIDS Day, ABC
	2	First Sunday of Advent
	8	Leadership Team meeting – Hurricane Creek COB
	10	World Rights Day
	15	New Church Development Board meeting
	25	Christ's Birthday - Praise the Lord!
<b>January</b>	27 - Feb 1	CODE Winter Meetings - Florida