

WESTERN PLAINS DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

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“It’s Overwhelming”

The challenges can be pretty overwhelming. And, what could we possibly do about any of them? We’re just a small church. And many of us are pretty old and several of us don’t feel very good, either. We really don’t have much to offer. Or, do we . . . ?

Do you remember that New Testament story about the little boy and his bag of five barley loaves and two fish? (John 6:1-15) Huge crowds kept following and listening to Jesus and the day grew late. I guess the disciples weren’t thinking about supper time. Jesus, maybe with a slight twinkle in his eye, said to his disciples, “Where can we buy food for these people?” Surely, his merry band never thought he was serious. “It would take half a year’s wages to buy even a snack for everyone in this crowd!” And, of course, no one there had a half year’s wages for that or for anything else, either. They hardly gave it a thought. There was no way!

Andrew kept the joke going, though. “Hey, I’ve got a kid here with a few barley loaves and some fish, but that would just get lost in this crowd.” Maybe Jesus looked into that child’s eyes and saw something there he wished he could see in everyone’s eyes. Child-like eyes see no impediment to filling the ocean with a glass of water. Adults lose that wonder-full optimism. So Jesus accepted the boy’s gift and sat everyone down on the grass, thanked God for the gift of bread and passed it out. It was not only enough to satisfy everyone’s hunger, they had enough left over to feed another crowd!

Think there might be a lesson here? The disciples may never even have thought about the hungry crowd. Being able to provide food for them was so far from the realm of possibility that they likely never gave it a thought. All too often we never allow ourselves to see beyond what we think our resources or talents or gifts will allow us to handle well.

Maybe the first question for Jesus’ people is never “Do we have resources enough?” The first question ought to be, “What is God calling us to be and do?” For that, our little bag full of resources is enough. Always!

*Like good stewards of the manifold
grace of God, serve one another
with whatever gift each of you has
received. 1 Peter 4:10*

Robert W. Dell

2010 NYC Theme

National Youth Conference (NYC) 2010 has a theme: “More Than Meets the Eye,” drawn from 2 Cor. 4:6-10 and 16-18 (The Message). The theme and some other aspects of the conference were decided as the National Youth Cabinet met Jan. 2-5 in Elgin, Ill. In a statement on the theme, NYC co-coordinators Audrey Hollenberg, Emily LaPrade, and Matt Witkovsky said the scripture passage “reminds us that God does great things through each person. . . . Even though we may seem like simple jars of clay, with God’s light we are more than meets the eye.”

The cabinet also discussed worship speakers and music leaders, which will be finalized in the coming months, along with broader goals, the schedule, and promotion ideas. Details will be posted as they become available at the new NYC website: www.2010nyc.org. NYC 2010, for senior high youth and advisors, will take place July 17-22, 2010, at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.

Members of the cabinet, which will next meet in mid-August in Colorado, are Sam Cupp, Jamie Frye, Tyler Goss, Kay Guyer, Kelsey Murray, and Ryan Roebuck, along with adult advisors Christy Waltersdorff and Walt Wilt-schek, Church of the Brethren Youth/Young Adult Ministry director Chris Douglas, and the NYC co-coordinators.

Transformed by Jesus to Make Disciples

Let God be God

I have just completed preaching a three-sermon series at the McPherson congregation in which I have attempted to share my faith about the Western Plains Transformation Movement. My intention was to share what is for me the central focus that is guiding and empowering the shared work of many to enable the movement to move forward. It appears to me to be a spiritual movement that is gaining momentum as we speak. I plan to use this space to share the focus of these three sermons.

The title for the first sermon was, “Let God be God.” The theme sentence is, “God is present in all our experiences loving us, creating new life among us and drawing us into relationship as our Lord.

The biblical understanding for this belief comes from a widely held theological view of the Bible as “salvation history.” It understands the whole story of the Bible as God being present bringing salvation/redemption/renewal/transformation/relationship with God as our God throughout all of history. I bought into the term “salvation history” when I was in seminary 40 plus years ago. It still shapes my life and ministry now and, therefore, helps shape the transformation movement in our district.

The belief of “God is present in all experiences of life, loving, renewing, transforming us, and drawing us into relationship as our God is simply micro-focusing the overarching theme of salvation history.

The transformation movement is proclaiming that God is present to all of us all the time. It is calling us to look for God, or signs of God.

At this stage in the game – 5 years down the transformation road – we are beginning to see many miraculous signs of God’s presence and activity. One recent sign is that in 2008 congregational and individual giving to the district’s budget and camps is up 12% over 2007. This happened during the economic downturn and no special effort asking for an increase.

These signs excite us, strengthen our faith and enable us to respond more deeply and completely to God. These signs help us understand what God is doing in Western Plains District. God is transforming us and life around us. We see signs of it all around us. We enjoy seeing what God is doing. Isn’t it exciting and fun to watch?

The next article is: “Miraculous Expectation.” The third is: “Life is About Change.”

By the way, be sure to read Joyce Petry’s pastoral comments from her newsletter about her guidance to her congregation concerning responding to the call to serve in the ongoing work of a congregation seeking to be transformed.

Ken Holderread
District Co-Executive/Minister

News from Congregations

Osage (McCune, Kan.) has a new community outreach. For a free will offering you are invited to Come-No-Dine every Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. (or until the food is gone). A variety of home-made desserts are served at each meal.

Antelope Park has a busy year of outreach planned. They will serve lunches for Habitat for Humanity workers, pack food for Kids Against Hunger, participate in "Fill the Cup" hunger emphasis with donations for Matt Talbot Kitchen for the denomination's matching funds grant of up to \$500. The children collected \$540 to purchase animals for Heifer International. On Christmas Eve they collected \$450 to purchase buckets filled with clean-up materials to be used in disaster clean-up work and collected a variety of gift items for residents at Lancaster Manor. They continue work with their adopted Clinton Elementary School with blankets, fleece hats, and hold an "Undie Sunday" to collect socks and underwear and plan for an emphasis to collect mittens and other winter items for the Clinton School Family Closet.

Disaster Response

As Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) evaluated their ability to operate additional "national" projects, it became clear that they do not have sufficient "Project Leadership" available to efficiently and effectively manage additional sites. This combined with the current economic climate has led them to seek alternative solutions providing flexibility, opportunities and benefits for all.

BDM always works in partnership with local Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) who in many instances provide housing, volunteer management, and construction management for volunteers working within the community. In response to indications volunteers are interested in weeks that are already full, BDM began the process of identifying LTRGs and establishing partnerships that will allow Brethren volunteers to work within their systems.

They have identified three LTRGs that have continued needs and are willing to take BDM volunteers (see below). Because BDM will not be providing on-site Project Leadership, you are encouraged to identify one or two persons in each volunteer group with construction and organizational skills to be the volunteer group leader.

BDM will work with your volunteer group leaders to assist with logistics and specific needs of each volunteer group. If you can not identify a volunteer group leader, BDM can provide a list of volunteers within your district who might be willing to take on that role.

Please contact Jane Yount (1-800-451-4407, ext. 7) to schedule your volunteer groups.

Kansas Flood Recovery:

Southeast Kansas has struggled for a year and a half to recover from floods that had inundated several small towns and damaged hundreds of homes and businesses in June 2007. Local disaster recovery organizers in Montgomery County, Kan. have put out a plea for small groups of volunteers to help finish flood-related home repairs, mainly in Coffeyville. Groups should limit size to 5 or 6 persons maximum.

- Contact: Roger Dressler, 785-331-8272 for more information about specific project needs.
- Skills: A variety of skills are needed. Specifically seeking persons for roofing and mudding/taping drywall
- Tools: Volunteers may need to bring some of their own tools. (Contact Roger to see what is needed.)
- Housing: Groups will be housed together in a large house, sleeping on padded cots, which reportedly are rather comfortable.
- Meals: Volunteers are responsible for their own meals.

Northern Indiana Flood Recovery:

Northern Indiana continues to recover over a year after heavy flooding affected multiple counties in northwestern Indiana in the winter of 2008. Most of the flooding occurred along the Tippecanoe River and surrounding areas. The overall Federal Disaster Area stretches from Tippecanoe County on the southwest to Allen County on the northeast. Disaster Assistance of Northern Indiana (DANI) was established shortly after the floods and continues to work to restore the homes and lives of local

residents. DANI continues to seek volunteers needed to repair and rebuild homes for survivors. Find more information about DANI at www.daniflood.org

A variety of skills are needed. Groups are asked to bring at least one project leader skilled in construction. For information on tools, housing, and meals contact Allan Welch at welchah@gmail.com for more information about specific project needs

Hurricane Ike Recovery (Greater Houston area):

Hurricane Ike made landfall on Sept. 13, 2008 devastating parts of the Texas gulf coast. After the storm, more than half of the 724,000 FEMA registrations were filed by Houston/Harris County residents. By November 1st over 105,000 homes in these counties were classified as damaged by inspectors. Many of the hardest hit areas have higher percentages of low-income, senior citizen and residents with disabilities. As needs continue to be identified, volunteer groups will be needed to assist in the rebuild efforts. BDM is still in the process of developing a relationship with the Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston and will provide more information as it becomes available

From the Pastor

Used by permission

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

We have once again stepped into a new year, and here in our church that means that some new people have accepted the call to step into new leadership roles for our work together. Words cannot adequately express how deeply grateful I am for each person who says “**yes**” when the call to Christian service comes. We could not exist without you!

As I took a quick trip through our Church Directory, I identified 38 people who fill some designated position within our church family. But those 38 are just “the tip of the iceberg,” as they say. In addition to our “official” church servants, there are all those other people who wash dishes, and rake leaves, and tie blankets, and serve as ushers, and work in the church nursery, and show up for church work days, and sing in the choir, and so much more.

Because we are not a large congregation it is really pretty difficult for anyone to just sit idly by the way-side, observing all of the activity going on, without actually getting involved in it. That’s a good thing, I think. The church **belongs** to you in a special way when you become an active part of the day-to-day work that is required to keep it running smoothly and effectively.

My question for you is this: Do you have a **job** in this church and this community – or do you have a **ministry**? There is a difference! A recent article I came across on the internet (author unknown) gives some insights into what this difference is.

If you are doing it because no one else will, it’s a job. If you are doing it to serve the Lord, it’s a **ministry**.

- If you are doing it just well enough to get by, it’s a job. If you’re doing it to the best of your ability, it’s a **ministry**,
- If you will do it only as long as it doesn’t interfere with other activities, it’s a job. If you are committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it’s a **ministry**.
- If you quit when you are not praised or thanked enough, it’s a job. If you are doing it even though no one seems to notice, it’s a **ministry**,
- If you do it because someone else says it needs to be done, it’s a job. If you are doing it because you are convinced it needs to be done, it’s a **ministry**.

It’s hard to get excited about a job. But it’s almost impossible **not** to get excited about a **ministry**. You are at work in the Church of Jesus Christ, and it is for the **Lord** that you labor.

Some parting words from Paul in I Corinthians 12:

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

May God bless us all richly as we continue in ministry with Christ and his Church.

Pastor Joyce (Petry)
Antelope Park

Behind the scenes

For the last four or five years a faithful group of volunteers from the Monitor and McPherson congregations has worked every month without fanfare to bring "The Shepherd's Voice" to you. Once the newsletter was run, their task was to fold, tape, and label them. This was at least a three-hour process each month and was a big help to the district office. They have requested to be relieved of this task. Please join me in giving them a big thank you to Kay Billhimer, Vernice Brubaker, Vera Czaplinsky, Myrna Eis, Mary Holway, Thelma Lehman, and Mina Sifrit for their many years of quiet service and best wishes for a well-deserved break. On occasion others may have helped, but these persons were there monthly without fail.

Elsie Holderread

Annual Conference Office Relocation

The Annual Conference Office will be relocating to Elgin (Ill.) during the week of September 21-25, 2009. The new Conference Executive Director, who replaces Lerry Fogle, will begin work on August 31, and the Conference Assistant will operate from the Elgin location after the move. The 2009 Yearbook, when published later this spring, will list the New Windsor and Elgin locations with contact information for both.

Prayers for Lybrook Community Ministries

March: A prayer of support for the Tók'ahookadí Church (N.M.) and the persons whose faith and care are continuing its ministry among the Navajo.

Sonja Griffith for the Lybrook Vision Committee

In Memoriam

Linda Lundquist (Prince of Peace), daughter of Charles and Belle Whitacre (McPherson) and sister to Chris Whitacre (McPherson), died on Saturday, January 31, 2009. We wish to express our sympathy to her husband, Neil, and the extended family.

Robert W. Burr, brother of Mike Burr, pastor of Koinonia congregation in Grand Junction, died Tuesday, February 10, 2009, in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Our prayers are with their family.

Pastoral Ethics Training

So many instances of unethical pastoral behavior bombard us in today's news. When such instances happen, the damage is immense. The pastor's own self and identity are shattered. The congregation's ability to trust is nearly destroyed, and their faith is in question. And for the reading public, many may wonder why, if someone is pledged to shepherd a group of people in their faith, would that person abdicate that pledge. Such folks may say to themselves that faith in Jesus Christ must not have much meaning after all.

So the need for training and vigilance is without question. In the Church of the Brethren, such ethics training is mandated for licensed and ordained ministers every five years. This is the year!! Pastor Lisa Hazen and Pastor Sonja Griffith have been trained by Mary Jo Flory Steury of the Ministry office for the Church of the Brethren, and they will now be offering this ethics training for all Western Plains pastors. The dates have been chosen, and all licensed and ordained pastors are asked to select one. More information will be forthcoming about registration. For now, pastors are asked to put these dates on the calendar and to make plans to attend one.

Dates and locations: May 5, 2009 Rochester Community Church , Topeka, KS
June 17, 2009 Arriba Church of the Brethren, Arriba, CO
August 22, 2009 (to be announced, but in Central Kansas)

Time for all of these will be 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. with lunch provided

See you at one of these!

Congratulations

George Hinton, pastor of Salem Community Church of the Brethren in Nickerson (KS), is the proud grandfather of a new granddaughter. Ava Kelly Black was born February 10 to proud parents Jessica and Josh, who are members at Salem. She was 20 inches long and weighed 6 pounds 12 ounces.

Pray for the District Executive Search

A Search Committee named by the Executive Committee is at work seeking a half-time District Executive to begin an assignment January 1, 2010. After this person is called, discernment will be conducted to determine the nature and range of responsibilities of a second staff position. Interviews on March 20-21 have been scheduled with four persons. Please continue to pray for God's leading in this process.

Search Committee: Leon Neher, Joanna Smith, Lauren Worley, Judy Wrightsman, Cheryl Mishler, Deb van Asselt, Nancy Knepper (from the denominational staff) and Dale Minnich, chair.

NOAC 2009

NOAC (National Older Adult Conference) will be held Sept. 7-11, 2009 in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. The conference is being held this year to put it on an alternating schedule with National Youth Conference.

The theme for this year is "Legacies of Wisdom - Weaving Old and New" and will feature inspiring speakers, Bible study, music, singing, fellowship and interest groups. Look for registration materials sometime after March 2009.

Plans are to take a bus from Western Plains leaving Sept. 6 and returning Sept. 12. Information about costs will be forthcoming.

If you have interest in riding a bus to NOAC contact David Fruth, 1116 Darlow Ct., McPherson, KS 67460 phone - 620-245-0674 email - davebonnie@cox.net or Ed and June Switzer, 1115 Darlow Ct., McPherson, KS 67460 phone - 620-504-6141 email - ejswitzer@cox.net

Pastoral Updates

Kyle Douglas ended his service as pastor at Maple Grove, Kan., in January. He has returned to school and is now living in Salina, Kan. We are grateful for his ministry to Maple Grove and our prayers go with him as he continues discerning God's call.

Cheryl Mishler was installed February 15 as Associate Pastor at Rochester Community Church of the Brethren in Topeka.

Welcome and thanks

Cindy Kinnamon has graciously agreed to be the editor of The Shepherd's Voice. Welcome, Cindy, and thanks for sharing your gifts. A big thank you also to Darren Hendricks who edited the February issue for us.

District History Timelines

Many of our District Churches took their History Banners home following the beautiful display at The Gathering last October. The banners that were left are being safely stored at the Quinter Church. If you would like to use them in your church or if you want your own to keep, contact Betty Ann Porter, phone 785-754-3505 or e-mail bapgove32@hotmail.com.

Our thanks to Noel Ditmars for his efforts and organization of this most interesting historical project which was on display at both District Conference and The Gathering.

Betty Ann Porter

Resources available

The district office has received three copies of the *Minister's Guide for 2008 Income Tax* from the denominational Office of Ministry. These copies are available for you to borrow. It is the 53rd Annual Edition of this tax guide written by Conrad Teitell.

Also available is a sample copy of two books: *Preparing Tax Returns for Clergy* by Dan Busby, CPA and *Reporting Procedures for Congregations* by Dan Busby, CPA to make Federal, state and other reporting made easy. Contact the district office if you would like to borrow these or obtain information for ordering.

District Calendar

2009

March 20-21	Men's Retreat, Heartland Center, Great Bend
March 26-29	TRIM & EFSM orientation, Richmond, Ind.
March 27-29	Women's Retreat, Highlands Presbyterian Camp, Allenspark, Colo.
April 12	Easter
April 17-19	Regional Youth Conference, McPherson College
April 23-26	Cross Cultural Consultation & Celebration
April 25-30	Christian Citizenship Seminar
April 26-29	District Executive Professional Growth
May 3	National Youth Sunday
May 5	Ethics Training for pastors; Rochester church, Topeka, Kan. 10 am-3:30 pm
May 9	Executive Committee Conference Call
May 11-14	District Executives West meet in Kansas City Office Closed
May 23-25	Young Adult Conference, Camp Swatara (Penn.)
May 31-June 6	Senior High Camp (CC) Junior High Camp (MH)
June 7-13	Junior Camp (CC) Senior High Camp (MH)
June 11-14	Brethren Academy course "Distinctive Marks of the Brethren," McPherson, KS
June 14-20	Junior High Camp (CC) Junior Camp (MH)
June 17	Ethics Training for Pastors, Bethel church, Arriba, Colo., 10 am-3:30 pm
June 19-21	National Junior High Conference, Harrisonburg, Va.
June 21-25	Pre-Junior Camp (MH & CC)
June 26-28	"Come Along with Me" Camp (MH)
June 26-30	Annual Conference, San Diego, Calif. Office closed
July 13-16	TRIM & EFSM Orientation, Richmond, Ind.
July 30-31	Executive Committee (30) & District Board (31), McPherson, Kan.
July 31-Aug. 2	District Conference, McPherson, Kan.
Aug. 7-9	Senior High Weekend (MH)
Aug. 22	Ethics Training for Pastors, Location TBA, 10 am-3:30 pm
Sept. 7-11	National Older Adult Conference, Lake Junaluska, N.C.
Sept. 18-19	District Board Retreat
Oct. 12-14	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend (tentative)
Oct. 23-25	Gathering V, Webster Conference Center, Salina, Kan.
November 1	National Junior High Sunday
Nov. 6-7	Executive Committee (6) & District Board (7)

Future Dates

Oct. 22-24, 2010	Gathering VI
Oct. 21-23, 2011	Gathering VII (tentative date)

The Shepherd's Voice is published for church leaders, ministers, church board chairs, Christian Education directors, Youth Leaders, church commission chairs, and many others. We encourage your contributions. Deadlines are noted below. Unless otherwise noted, permission is granted to reprint articles for congregational newsletters and bulletins. If you know someone in the above categories who is not receiving the newsletter, let us know.

Church of the Brethren Western Plains

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P.O. Box 394
McPherson, KS 67460

Located in Beegly Hall
McPherson College campus
1600 E. Euclid

Mon 8:30am-3:30pm (Closed 12-1)
Tues 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Wed Closed
Thurs 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Fri 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

The answering machine will be on during hours when the office is closed.

Phone: (620) 241-4240
Email: wpdcb@sbcglobal.net
Web:
www.westernplainschurchofthebrethren.org

District Executive Ministers
Ken & Elsie Holderread
Home: (620) 241-6930
Home: elsieken@sbcglobal.net

Please send all articles and address changes to the District Office.

If you wish to submit articles to the Shepherd's Voice, please read the following:

Next newsletter deadline: On or before March 15th

- Articles should be sent to the district office: wpdcb@sbcglobal.net
- Articles should be no longer than 400 words. Please allow space for any submitted pictures. Note: Pictures will not be returned so make sure to send copies only.
- Information received after the 15th will be included in the next newsletter.
- If multiple copies of the same article are submitted, the last copy will be used and the others discarded.
- Outdated information will be discarded.

Space is limited so some articles may not be published.

The newsletter will be published the following months with combined months noted: Feb, March, April, May, June/July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec/Jan.

Current Distribution: 404
Plus 139 via email