



Church of the Brethren
Western Plains District Office
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THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 9, NOVEMBER 2009

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES THEME

The 224th recorded Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren will be held in Pittsburgh, Penn., on July 3-7, 2010. The theme statement for the Conference will be "Taking Jesus Seriously" from John 14:15, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (NIV).

A statement from Annual Conference moderator Shawn Flory Replogle (McPherson) is available online giving background for the 2010 theme. "We live in challenging times..." he writes in part. "The Church of the Brethren is made for such a time as this," his statement adds. "Among the most central ways the Brethren have lived out their spiritual inheritance—taking Jesus seriously—is through honest reading of the Gospels, followed by straightforward discipleship..." Go to <http://www.cobannualconference.org/pittsburgh/theme.html> to find the full statement.

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YOU ARE INVITED!



The inauguration ceremony of
Michael P. Schneider
as the 14th President of
McPherson College

will be held Saturday, November 7, 2009,
at 2:00 p.m. in Brown Auditorium.
You are invited and encouraged to attend.

DISTRICT WEB SITE

Please note that the Western Plains District web site now has a second address which works just like www.westernplainschurchofthebrethren.org It is: www.wpcob.org

Church of the Brethren Western Plains District Office

P.O. Box 394 • 1600 E. Euclid
McPherson, KS 67460

Phone: (620) 241-4240
Email: wpcob@sbcbglobal.net
www.westernplainschurchofthebrethren.org

Mon 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (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.

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

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

Please e-mail articles and address changes to the District Office at wpcob@sbcbglobal.net

The Shepherd's Voice is published monthly with the exception of June/July and December/January combined issues. Deadline for material is the 15th of the previous month. It is published for church leaders, ministers, church board chairs, christian education directors, youth leaders, church commission chairs, and many others. We encourage your contributions. Unless otherwise noted, permission is granted to reprint articles for congregational newsletters and bulletins. If someone you know who is not receiving the newsletter, let us know. **Notify the District Office if you wish to receive the newsletter via email.**

THANK YOU!

On behalf of the Nurture Commission thanks to the many persons from Western Plains who came forward to volunteer their services to help with the children's program at the Gathering. Many of you stepped forward at the last minute and gave up a workshop or worship time that you were planning to go to when illness kept some of our planned volunteers from being able to attend. We had a successful program for the children thanks to all of you. Again thank you very much.

With the new addition at Webster, I feel that they have a wonderful facility for us to use in taking care of our infants, toddlers & school age children. It was a joy to have 24 children anxious to come to the room each session and some actually cried when they learned it was their last session! That is real reason for rejoicing.

As Nurture starts planning for Gathering VI, we will have a few more names to add to our list of resource persons to help with the children.

If there are ones in our midst that have interest in helping plan or volunteering your time for Gathering VI with the children and you didn't get asked to help this year be sure to contact me at beverly@minnichnet.org to be put on our list.

Beverly Minnich
Nurture Chair

WITH SYMPATHY

Dorothy Huffman, 98, died Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009. She was born Aug. 24, 1911, in St. Joseph, Mo., the daughter of Alexander and Anita (LeMonier) Kernes. She was preceded in death by her husband, Galen, in 1995. Survivors include a son, Galen, of Quinter; daughter, Carole Crist, of Quinter; sister, Peggy Benton, of El Paso, Texas; seven grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Dorothy was a licensed minister in the Church of the Brethren.

WEBCAST SESSIONS FROM GATHERING V

Worship and plenary sessions and several workshops were webcast live and are archived to be viewed on the Bethany Seminary website. The following are available:

- Friday, Saturday, and Sunday worship services
- Plenary Sessions:
 - Living Into the New Creation, Jonathan Shively
 - A Faith Community in a Time of Rapid Change, Shawn Flory Replogle
- Workshops:
 - Resistance and Change: How You and Your Congregations Become New Creations, Jonathan Shively
 - Casting the Net: Outpost Ministries, John Snyder
 - Across Generations, Shawn Flory Replogle
 - Worship in the Small Church, Carol Mason
 - Service of Celebration (honoring Ken and Elsie Holderread)

Go to: www.bethanyseminary.edu/webcast/WPGathering2009

Click on the (*view recording*) link in red located to the right side of the session you want to view. The webcast will open in a new internet browser window. The internet browser will contain 4 or more smaller sections: a chat section, a participants section, a video section, and a display section which will usually contain a power point. The video will start soon. You can pause the webcast at any time or you can skip ahead by clicking in the time window along the bottom of the window.

If you plan to view it in a group setting, please test out the webcast in the location you plan to view it prior to use. If you have problems connecting or viewing the video, please email Andy Ullom at: uts_mac@yahoo.com for assistance.

WESTERN PLAINS DISTRICT BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEPTEMBER 18-19

- The Holmesville, Nebraska, congregation hosted our board retreat, providing meals and lodging. Some board members were housed near Holmesville or Lincoln. We rejoice in the offering of extravagant hospitality. Thank you for serving in Jesus' name.

- Our 2010 moderator, Brother Keith Funk, led the board in retreat, bringing scripture, song and a call to spiritual practices that call us "to desire to know Christ," (Philippians 3), and a call to be shaped by Christ to become "... a culture of transformation," in Western Plains.

- Minutes from the board meeting on July 21, 2009, and the reorganization of the board on August 2, 2009, were approved.

- The witness commission will partner with the outdoor ministry commission to share a peace emphasis during the camping season in 2011. They are also exploring ways to communicate with congregations about the ministries of the witness commission.

- On the recommendation of the ministry commission, the board approved Mike Schneider, who pastors the Wiley Church, to be ordained in-place.

- Stewards presented financial reports.

- Outdoor ministry commission shared "The Articles of Organization for Camp Mt. Hermon Trustees." The board approved the document.

- Executive committee reported on the ongoing process of the District Structure Working Group, who processed the comments from small groups at District Conference, and made changes reflecting those conversations. The board will review the revised copy in November.

- Executive committee recommended to the board to proceed with a design for a logo which would focus on the vision statement of Western Plains District (*i.e. Rooted in Love to be Christ's transforming hope and power!!*)

On behalf of the board, member Becki Bowman will work with McPherson College's internship program to find a graphic arts student(s) to create logo possibilities to bring back to the board. The board will then make the final decision as to how the logo will be used.

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

We are excited about the great things that are happening with the youth of our District! During the past few years the number of youth attending District Events has increased from below 10 to over 60! One of the major factors prompting this surge of growth at Youth Events such as The Gathering, District Conference, and National Youth Conference, is the fact that the District has been able to secure the assistance of a Youth Minister. Jennifer Jensen is that very gifted and qualified person. In the last four years, under the Youth Minister's leadership, our youth's participation in District Events has grown by leaps and bounds! Her responsibilities range from: nurturing the spiritual and personal growth of the youth and planning and coordinating all District Youth activities, to recruiting qualified volunteers to assist her as needed, and in facilitating fund-raising activities. There are many more responsibilities as well.

The salary paid to the Youth Minister has been made possible by funds designated to the youth ministry by the Rocky Ford Church of the Brethren, at the time of the sale of their property. These funds will eventually be exhausted. With that in mind, we have sent to each church in the Western Plains District, a letter and attached pledge sheet, outlining our needs and asking each one to consider including in your forthcoming budget for the next three years, an annual financial commitment designated for the District Youth Minister Fund. It is our hope that there will be many commitments; not only as a church but as individuals as well. Please make out checks to: Western Plains District; Attn: Treasurer, and designate for:

District Youth Minister Fund. Please prayerfully consider generously supporting this worthwhile "investment" in all of our futures. Thank you and God Bless You!

Written by Catherine Price of Mont Ida Church of the Brethren on behalf of the Nurture Commission of the District Board.

ANNUAL REPORT FORMS

Forms A (pastor & moderator) and B (church officers) were mailed on October 1 and are due December 31. Those forms are mailed directly to congregations from the Church of the Brethren Yearbook Office in Elgin, Ill.

The Outreach (Self-Allocation) Form was mailed from the District Office in September to treasurers.

The Statistics Report will be mailed December 1 from the Yearbook Office and is due February 1, 2010.

All of the information gathered from these forms is beneficial for the district and denomination. Please take time to complete and return all forms. THANKS!!

Contact the district office if you have any questions.

KENDRA FLORY TO BE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Kendra Flory, a member of the McPherson congregation, has been named as the District's new administrative assistant beginning on November 30. Kendra is a graduate of Bridgewater College and is a 2009 graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary. Kendra, along with Sonja Griffith, who assumes the district executive post on January 1, will comprise Western Plains' new staff as Ken and Elsie Holderrad retire at the end of the year. Kendra brings strong gifts in communication and fine computer skills to the task, along with an eagerness to serve the church in a role other than pastoral ministry at this time. Welcome, Kendra!

PRAYERS FOR LYBROOK COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Please put these prayers on your list during your time of prayer each day. (And please do not neglect the other prayer needs of the district and its new church plant in Denver, its ministries and churches and camps and all its needs!) For Lybrook, however, we fervently ask you to pray as follows:

November: A prayer of thanksgiving for the provision of God in the things that the Mission and its people need. Each person on the board, each person who has been at the Mission in the past, each person who is at the Mission now, each person who has contributed of time and resources, and service and soul; each person who has prayed this year has been important to the vision and its realization! Blessings to all!



THROUGH EYES OF YOUTH

Today our young people have awakened from children's dreams, to reality shaken.

With vibrant hearts and tender needs,
They see with eyes afresh - new leads!

For answers to today's sick world,
the age-old sickness in which all are hurled.

Into every young generation,
God reveals His true invitation;

For love and peace, shared 'round the earth,
A goal that's been sought since time's own birth.

The youth will lead the throngs of tomorrow,
Will they bring peace and love, or sorrow?

Let's hasten to win the youth of the nation,
For through their eyes, God brings revelation.

"Oh Lord, bring all the youth new vision,
Help them to seek thy will in each decision.

Their hearts are fresh and fertile soil
Lord, plant your seed of faith so loyal.

Help us to care for all our youth
To respect and guide their quests for truth."

Amen

*This original poem is shared to expand the vision:
"Rooted Together in Love to be Christ's Transforming
Hope and Power"*

*These footprints that lead to Jesus will transform us to rise above circumstances, with
Christ beside us (and in us) we will soar with Him to new heights!*

TRANSFORMED BY JESUS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Cast the Net on the Other Side

The theme of Gathering V is *Behold a new thing! Do you perceive it?* What is the new thing in Western Plains District? It is Christ continuing to burst forth into all facets of our lives in all kinds of surprising, exciting, creative, and renewing ways. Do you perceive it is the invitation to look for signs of this breaking forth? I believe the greater importance is not the miraculous renewal but rather the sign of Christ's presence in it.

Let us view the John 21 story of casting the net on the other side to inform us about this. After the crucifixion and the not yet understood resurrection, some of Jesus' disciples went back to fishing. Jesus, their leader and their hope for the future, had been torn out of their lives in a way that left them as outcasts everywhere they went. With nothing else left to do they spent the night fishing. They caught nothing.

Someone on the shore, whom they did not recognize, taunted their lack of success and suggested they cast their net on the other side of the boat. For some unknown reason they followed this instruction even though that went against all good sense about fishing. Good sense said cast only on the shallow side. They turned around in the boat and cast the net into the deep. Immediately the net was filled to the breaking point with huge, wonderful fish. These full nets were a sign of Christ's presence that opened their eyes to recognizing Him. In their excitement they rushed to the shore to commune with Christ.

They began immediately working out implications of living into the future with the resurrected Christ at the helm of their lives again. At that point they surely did not understand what all that meant. However, they had seen a sign. They were ready to follow and find out what it meant. Their faith had been restored. They continued to seek signs and guidance as it came. They started the Christian movement!

I'm not quite sure why we here in Western Plains heeded the message written in a book by Claude Payne, an Episcopal bishop, to turn around and cast the net on the other side as he represented Christ to us. He told us the story of transformation happening with Episcopalians in Texas. He told us how it happened. He told us it could happen anywhere. It can start with an individual. It can start with a congregation. It can start with a district. It can start with a denomination. He told us it could start with us. We started

GATHERING V AN INSPIRING EVENT

About 300 persons converged on Webster Conference Center in Salina on October 23-25 for the District's fifth Gathering conference, a project of its transformation movement. If they came for inspiring preaching exploring the theme, "Behold, A New Thing—Do You Perceive It?" or for stretching ideas for ministry back home, lively music, and Brethren fellowship and fun, they were not disappointed. Jonathan Shively, Carol Mason and Ken and Elsie Holderread were the preachers while Shively and Shawn Flory Replogle led related general sessions. Eleven workshops were offered. Marie Rhodes and Seth Hendricks were featured leaders at an excellent youth retreat. Numerous persons led about 16 hours of children's activities and infant care. Conference participants enjoyed new facilities this year that enhanced the workshop and community building dimensions of the event.

On Saturday evening there were several activities celebrating the ministry of Ken and Elsie Holderread in the District since 2003. A "Service of Celebration" used visuals and teams of narrators to tell the District's story during their time of ministry. A reception in their honor followed.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

First Central Church of the Brethren in Kansas City celebrated the International Day of Prayer for Peace on September 20. Churches were asked to speak to and pray for an issue that causes a lack of peace in the community. First Central chose health care reform as an issue that not only causes a lack of peace at hearings, but a lack of peace for any family with too little or no insurance that faces a disastrous financial burden in addition to illness. The service was planned and coordinated by Paul Cesare, along with the help of many other church members. It began with a service of story and prayer, and included persons from the AME tradition, from Islam, from Unitarian with background of Jewish and Roman Catholicism, and from the United Church of Christ. Corrie Edwards of the Kansas Health Consumers Coalition gave a very informative presentation. The celebration was highly successful. The respectful crowd appeared in TV moments on Kansas City stations and in an article in the Kansas City *Star*.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

2009

November 1	National Junior High Sunday
November 7	McPherson College Presidential Inauguration of Michael P. Schneider
November 13-14	Executive Committee (13) & District Board (14), Wiley Colo.

Future Dates

Feb. 8-10	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
Feb. 19-20	District Board
March 12-13	Men's Retreat, Heartland Center, Great Bend, Kan.
March 19-21	Women's Retreat, Crosswind Conference Center, Hesston Kan.
April 9-11	Regional Youth Conference, McPherson
April 23-24	District Board
May 20-22	Church Plant Conference, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.
May 30-June 5	Sr. High Camp (CC)
June 4-6	Come Along with Me Camp (MH)
June 6-12	Junior Camp (CC) Jr. High Camp (MH)
June 13-19	Jr. High Camp (CC) Sr. High Camp (MH)
June 20-26	Pre-Junior Camp (CC) Junior Camp (MH)
July 3-7	Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, Penn.
June 27-July 1	Pre-Junior (MH)
July 29-Aug 1	Executive Committee (29) & District Board (30 & Aug. 1)
July 30 -Aug. 1	District Conference, McPherson, Kan.
Sept. 17-18	District Board Retreat
Sept. 27-29	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
Oct. 22-24	Gathering VI
Nov. 12-13	District Board
Oct. 21-23, 2011	Gathering VII (tentative date)

to believe and to hope that it could.

We started sharing Bishop Payne's message among ourselves. We started praying and searching the scriptures. We got excited. We viewed our excitement as a sign of Christ's presence and work among us. We began to open ourselves to new possibilities and new life. Before long we began to see signs of new life happening in many settings. A sense of hope spread through district events. Signs of new hope and vitality were felt in a variety of ways in congregations. After the responsiveness of our first Gathering five years ago we began to sense that a transformation movement had come alive among us. Many of us have sensed this to be a sign of Christ's presence among us. Each year since we see more signs all over the place - congregations changing from despair to hopefulness - new people coming to church - ministry outposts developing - congregations purging deadwood from membership roles - congregations praying for one another - an abundance of persons sensing a call to ministry - our diverse group of ministers gaining a sense of unity. All of these and more are seen as signs of Christ's presence among us.

Behold a new thing! Do you not perceive it? Now I have some reflections about this for our district:

Even though it feels good we have not yet arrived. When we think we have, our newness will quickly go stale. Perhaps new rounds of newness will replace what we presently perceive as new.

Some of the best stuff that has happened—the greatest signs of Christ's presence—has been outside/beyond our intended design. At first this was troublesome for me; now I welcome it.

The "vision" has been laid on us. Our job is not creating it, but to be accountable to one another and to God for what is given to us.

The accountability starts with me (1st person). "Working on our own wagon" is always at the core of the transformation experience. When we only want to see others change we are not fully open to God.

We are called to keep looking for signs of Christ's newness. It never stops.

Let's not get too caught up looking for results. Our focus is looking for signs of Christ's presence and mystery.

The best is yet to come. There already is much to celebrate; much to enjoy. Yet I believe God has much more in mind for Western Plains District.

It may be through intercultural involvement so that our congregations begin to reflect the makeup of our communities.

It may be through greater growth and vitality in present congregations.

It may be through planting new congregations.

It may be through sharing and enabling our Brethren values in our neighborhoods and in the world.

It may be through engaging young people and all generations together.

It may be something completely unexpected.

It may be in response to the vision and creativity of our new staff and elected leaders. They are truly gifted people

But most of all it surely will be in opening ourselves to seeing ongoing signs of Christ's newness in our midst that calls forth our joyous, generous response.

Ken Holderread

District Co-Executive/Minister

CONGRATULATIONS!

Paula Worley (Wichita) received the Young Alumni Award on October 2 during Honors Convocation at the McPherson College Homecoming. The purpose of the Young Alumni Award is to recognize achievement and potential for accomplishment of a McPherson College young alumnus. Paula is currently a family physician at GraceMed Health Clinic. An alumni panel discussion followed the convocation.

Valetta and Roland Kesler of Quinter, Kan., are currently volunteering at SERRV in New Windsor, Md. They are in their 20th year of volunteering on the Brethren Service Center campus.



DISTRICT NYC BUS

Approximate Bus Pick-up Schedule on Saturday, July 17, 2010:

Wichita Church of the Brethren 5:00 a.m.

1103 N Jefferson St. (316) 263-0274

McPherson First Church of the Brethren 6:15 a.m.

200 N Carrie St (620) 241-1109

Quinter 9:30 a.m.

Sinclair Gas Station at exit 107 off of I-70

Bus will return on Thursday, July 22, 2010 to the same locations.
Times TBA!

Cost: \$100 per person

Deadline to book your seat: April 15, 2010, but book soon –
spaces are limited!!

Benefits: Ride with your district friends! 😊 No need to worry about a vehicle! Youth sponsors get to sleep on the way, too! 😊 Get to know others from your district before arriving at NYC! 😊 Play games! 😊 Watch movies! 😊 Best of all...revel in the memories on the way home! 😊

How to book your seat:

Contact Jennifer Jensen by phone or email with the following information:

***Name of bus rider, address, phone number, pick-up location & home church*

Jenniferkay14@yahoo.com (put "NYC Bus" in the subject line)
402-643-4032

NOTE: Your seat is NOT booked until you have received confirmation from Jen!!

District T-shirt Information coming soon!