



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

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 10, DEC 2009/JAN 2010

TRANSFORMED BY JESUS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Farewell Messages

Serving as Western Plains District Co-Executive Ministers for the past seven years has been a rare privilege for Elsie and me. We thought we had had fulfilling careers when we retired before. The assignment we are completing December 31, 2009 far exceeds our earlier sense of fulfillment. You Western Plains District folk have been so responsive and open to us and the Holy Spirit. We shall always cherish the opportunity we have had together.

Given our ages and levels of energy it is time to move on to new endeavors that are less challenging and perhaps a little more focused to our current levels of interests and capacities. These are not yet clearly defined. We will take some time

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to rest and to discern these. They will include serving on the Lybrook Community Ministries Board and singing in the McPherson Church choir. It will also include reorganizing our home and lifestyle to fit whatever emerges for us.

There needs to be a rather complete break between us and all district activities and contacts. This is important to facilitate the transfer of leadership to your new, very capable District Executive Minister, Sonja Griffith and administrative assistant, Kendra Flory. It has meant a great deal to have your confidence and support and to be your leaders. Giving up this important relationship is going to leave a big hole in our lives. It will probably be more difficult for us than for you. Nevertheless, for the sake of the future it is important that we give Sonja the opportunity to lead. We believe you will not be disappointed.

The celebration of the transformation movement Saturday evening at Gathering V was an experience of great affirmation and love for Elsie and me and for our ministry among you. What a way to go! We wish each of you could have the opportunity to experience what you gave to us. The reception given us after the celebration was such an outpouring of love and appreciation. Perhaps you are aware that at the District Conference District Board meeting the Board voted to give us the 2001 Buick district car. For this and all your expressions to us we are grateful from the bottoms of our hearts.

The best is yet to come! I said this in my sermon at the Gathering. Even though we have had a great past together, a better, more faithful future lies ahead. You are ready for it. You have great, dedicated, gifted appointed and elected leaders. You have great, dedicated, gifted staff. Most of all I sense an openness to

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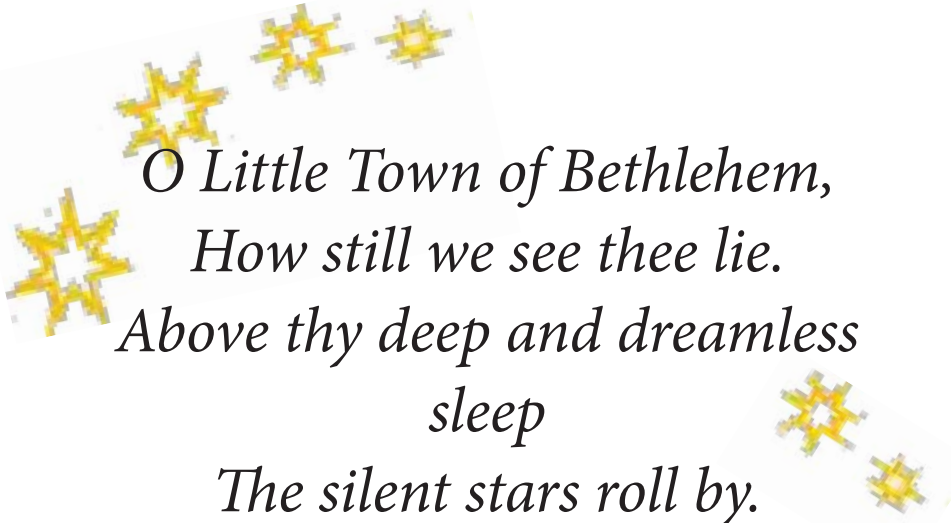
Mon 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Closed 12-1)
Tues 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Wed Closed
Thurs 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Fri 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

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



*O Little Town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep
The silent stars roll by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the
years
Are met in Thee tonight!*



*Christ is coming with
new transforming love
to draw us into new life
with him.*

*Let us receive him in
hope and love and trust
during this season and
for the coming year.*

*Ken and Elsie
and
Western Plains*



the signs of God's presence among you. This will enable you to move forward in wonderful, faithful ways in the future.

We pray God's blessing on each of us.

Ken Holderread

District Co-Executive/Minister

YOUTH MINISTER CHALLENGE FUND GROWING

The Nurture Commission is leading an effort to replenish the depleted investment fund that supports the youth minister position that has been so important in the recent impressive growth of the District's junior high and youth programs. The Commission is trying to raise a total of \$31,500 to guarantee the support of the youth minister position for at least five years into the future.

As the District Board meetings closed November 14th, we left with uplifted spirits as the total of three-year commitments and other gifts has topped \$18,665 with 28 individuals or churches responding so far. We are not at our goal, but well over half of the funds have been raised and we have faith the churches and members of Western Plains will be coming forth to help before year end.

Nurture commission members will be calling or e-mailing to follow up on letters that were sent out in September. If you did not receive a letter and would like more information on how to help us meet our goal please call:

Beverly Minnich, Chair – 620-345-8683

Emilie Dell – 620-245-5515

Kip Coulter – 580-594-2699

Marge Brubaker – 402-228-6965

Cathy Price – 785-489-2393

You may mail gifts and pledges to Beverly Minnich, Nurture Commission Chair, PO Box 217, Moundridge, KS 67107 or to our district treasurer, Jana Goring, 1300 N. Maxwell, McPherson, KS, 67460. Thanks to all who have helped us move toward our goal and to those who will be prayerfully led to help us in the near future.

DISTRICT BOARD HIGHLIGHTS - NOVEMBER 2009

We met in Wiley, Colorado, and were graciously welcomed by the Wiley congregation at the local school. We appreciate the generosity of Ken and Margie Ullom who were onsite coordinators, and many others from the Wiley congregation who prepared and served meals and hosted many of us in their homes on Friday night.

At this meeting we integrated the technology of webcasting, meaning that some board members who could not make the trip to Wiley were able to use the internet to see and hear the Board meeting, and could interact with those of us "...in the room." This was our first test of this technology for a board meeting. We learned some things in this first run to make the webcast better. A word of thanks goes to our tech guy, Andy Ullom, who planned for and coordinated the webcast. We anticipate webcasting will be a functional and useful tool for us.

Executive Committee recommended two changes to our insurance recommended by Stewards Commission: 1) Increasing nurses' liability insurance coverage at Camp Mount Hermon to \$1,000,000 to match Camp Colorado's policy (additional premium per year: \$40), and 2) to purchase "New church start-up liability insurance" for the Whittier Community church plant in Denver (Premium cost per year: \$16).

The Ministry Commission recommended re-licensing these ministers: Darrell Barr, Ken Frantz, Jud Hornbaker, Joshua Leck, Peg McFadden, Cheryl Mishler, Tracy Stoddart, Chris Stover-Brown, and Mary Beth Tuttle. Ministry Commission reported that three others are still in process and will be confirmed at a later board meeting.

Nurture Commission noted that the fundraising campaign to support a youth minister is at 50% of their goal.

Outdoor Ministry Commission: new members to the Camp Mount Hermon Board of Trustees were called in October: John Hulce, Sr., Steve Ward, Joanna Smith, Jen Jensen, Ken Davidson, Jim Therrien, Dave Mishler and Hazel Lauver.

Dale Minnich made a report on the Church of the Brethren Mission & Ministry Board, and a report on WPD Gathering V in October. Andy noted that since The Gathering, there have been over 445 hits to the Gathering website to see or review the plenary sessions, a number of workshops, and worships. To view these webcasts go to: <http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/webcast/WPGathering2009>

WESTERN PLAINS STAFF TRANSITIONS

by Lisa Hazen, Board Chair

Everything on earth has its own time and its own season. There is a time for birth and death, planting and reaping, for killing and healing, destroying and building, for crying and laughing, weeping and dancing, for throwing stones and gathering stones, embracing and parting. There is a time for finding and losing, keeping and giving, for tearing and sewing, listening and speaking.

--Ecclesiastes 3:1-7 CEV

We are entering a time of transition in Western Plains District which comes with the creative tensions of life. We have celebrated with Ken and Elsie as they retire as district executives on December 21, 2009, after seven years of ministry with us. We give thanks for their ministry.

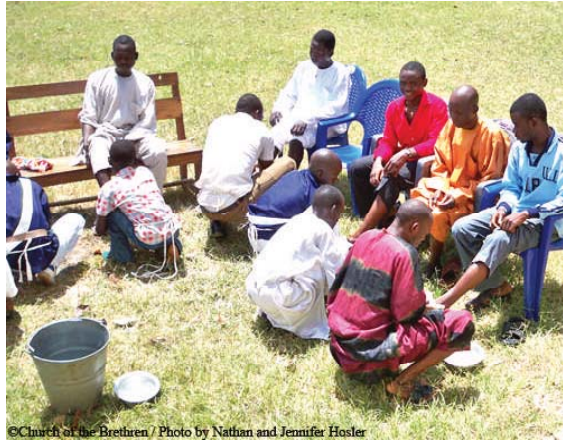
Thank you to those who celebrated with the Holderreads at Gathering V in Salina. The Service of Celebration and the reception that followed was a joyful affirmation of Elsie and Ken's leadership.

We will welcome Sonja Griffith as district executive on January 1, 2010 and rejoice in her call to lead among us. Kendra Flory will be our half-time administrative assistant. She will work with Elsie in the district office as of November 30 to learn about office processes and practices.

Since Western Plains includes congregations in four states, we are planning for three installations, in different geographical areas, on three different dates. We hope more folks may be able to attend one of them. Each location is open to anyone; the invitation is to come when it best fits your schedule.

The dates, locations, and times for the installations are: 1) January 3, 2010, at 4:00 PM First Central Church, Kansas City, KS; 2) February 20, 2010, at 3:30 PM Hutchinson Community, Hutchinson, KS; and 3) March 6, 2010 at 2 PM at Bethel Church of the Brethren, Arriba, CO.

And, yes, Sonja and I realize that there may be snow or ice, or 55 degrees on any one of these dates. IF bad weather descends on the designated location, please call the host church to confirm if the event is on; or call Lisa Hazen at 316-680-1191.



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KULP BIBLE COLLEGE IN KWARHI, NIGERIA

Love Feast on World Communion Sunday, Oct. 4.

Shown here is the service of footwashing, in a photo provided by Church of the Brethren mission workers Nathan and Jennifer Hosler.

We began with the footwashing. To do this we filed out of the church in groups of about 20 people, men out one door and women out another. We then broke up into pairs and washed each other's feet.

After this was completed we shared a fellowship meal. The meal took place in the pews. People passed what they brought and moved about the room tasting the various dishes. At the conclusion of the meal, which lasted only a short time, everyone returned to their seats for the remainder of the service.

The bread was small cubes of white bread and the wine was, because of the absence of grapes in Nigeria, a strawberry juice blend. This was a dramatically different but strangely familiar experience. As we participated in the celebration, we were drawn to think of the truly international nature of the Church.

(Reflection by Nathan & Jennifer Hosler, *Newsline* for November 4, 2009)
(full text available at www.brethren.org)

At District Conference 2009 the delegates passed a motion that reads: "That the District Conference instruct the District Board to compile and consider the input from today's discussions of the proposed structure changes and bring an updated proposal and transition plan for action by the 2010 District Conference."

Work on the Structure and the Transition Paper has been ongoing since August. At this Board meeting we took action on the revised papers:

The District Board recommends that District Conference approve the new structure design outlined. The new structure would be implemented by the date of the 2011 District Conference on a five-year trial basis. This includes the change of moving the Transformation Vision Chair to the center of the structure image to serve as a partner with the District Executive.

The next task of the Board will focus on information and education about the proposed structure and transition phase. Early in 2009 the Board will be implementing a process to help District Conference delegates and congregations become familiar with the changes.

As the close of our meeting, we recognized the deep commitment to ministry among us that Ken and Elsie have provided. Elsie and Ken reflected on their seven years of ministry in Western Plains, and noted that Western Plains is blessed with people who have gifts and skills for leadership. In closing they shared words of gratefulness to have been called to serve in Western Plains in their seven years. The Board sent them off with the sung benediction of "Go now in peace, Go now in peace, May the love of God surround you, everywhere, everywhere, you may go."

BUS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE?

Consideration is being given to sponsor a bus from the McPherson Church of the Brethren and Western Plains to Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Penn., July 3-7, 2010. If you would be interested in riding on the bus or would like more information contact David Fruth, 1116 Darlow Ct., McPherson, KS 67460 (245-0674) or davebonnie@cox.net.

BUCKEYE CHURCH NEWS

The Buckeye COB, Abilene, Kan., celebrated Homecoming on November 1, 2009, with a full church. Ron McCosh served as guest speaker. Ron grew up in the Buckeye Church and his mother, Phyllis, served as pianist/organist and musical director there for many years. Nearly the entire McCosh family came home to Buckeye to help celebrate. Ron's message, titled "Bought and Paid For," was based on scripture from Ephesians 2. A fabulous potluck lunch followed the service, with many staying to share in fellowship. Buckeye COB was established in 1880, and is generously provided with pulpit services by Ron McCosh, John Hoffman and Cheryl Mishler.

The Buckeye COB was blessed with a special testimony on November 8, 2009, by Sharon Ringler, Sylvan Grove, Kan. Sharon spoke eloquently about her long journey through colon and lung cancer, and her personal experience with an angel while undergoing treatment at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Sharon is an executive woman whose story kept the congregation spellbound. Now free of cancer, Sharon feels she has been commissioned by God to share her miraculous experience with all who will listen. Her story touched all who attended.

On a dreary, rainy Sunday, three cars of congregants made their way from the Buckeye COB in Abilene, to the Washington COB in Washington, Kan. The invitation was graciously extended during The Gathering, and three-fourths of the Buckeye congregation made the 70-mile trip and were received warmly. The message was provided by Cheryl Mishler, who provides pulpit supply for both churches, and was followed by a delicious lunch of stew, sandwiches, salads, cake and home-made ice cream. The Buckeye church plans to return the invitation as soon as weather permits. While both congregations sometimes struggle to continue, it was apparent to all that we share belief and commitment.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to the McPherson youth and junior highs who have taken on the service project of preparing the district newsletter for mailing each month. It is a wonderful help!

Elsie Holderread

CAMP NEWS

Many thanks to George Over, George Junkermeier, Jan and Howard Duncan, and Roy Grosbach who worked so hard on the reservoir at **Camp Colorado**. Well done!

At the October 10 Mt. Hermon reorganization meeting the following trustee board officers were elected :

Chair - Joanna Smith

Vice Chair – David Mishler

Secretary - Jen Jensen

Treasurer - Hazel Lauver

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE NEEDS KITS

CWS is asking congregations and groups to help replenish the supply of CWS *Emergency Clean-up Buckets, Baby Kits and Hygiene Kits* for distribution to domestic and international partners. Most recently, Church World Service has provided Emergency Clean-up Buckets and Hygiene Kits to partners in Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa and Kentucky for clean-up following storms and floods there. And, CWS Baby Kits are being distributed to vulnerable families in Ghana and Honduras. For more information on kits, visit

www.churchworldservice.org/kits.

PASTORAL UPDATES

Congratulations to Mike Schneider who was ordained November 15 at the Wiley (Colo.) Community Church.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

2010

January 3	Installation for District Executive, First Central (K.C.), 3 p.m.
February 8-10	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
February 19-20	District Board, Hutchinson, Kan.
February 20	Installation for District Executive, Community (Hutchinson), 3:30 p.m.
March 6	Installation for District Executive, Bethel (Arriba, CO), 2 p.m.
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 16-17	District Board, Ottawa, Kan.
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)
June 27-July 1	Pre-Junior (MH)
July 3-7	Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, Penn.
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, Quinter, Kan.
Sept. 27-29	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
Oct. 22-24	Gathering VI
Nov. 12-13	District Board, Antelope Park, Lincoln, Neb.

Future Dates

Aug. 4-7, 2011	District Conference, McPherson, Kan.
Oct. 21-23, 2011	Gathering VII (tentative date)



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!

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 Whittier 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:

December: *Let this prayer be for peace. So much troubles our souls at the divisions of people, in Lybrook, in churches, in the world. Let us come together this season of Christmas, to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. May we learn even more about the ways of peace that will bring the reign of God! And may it come to Lybrook and to us all!*

FOR THIS WE PRAY...

Please hold Tom and Janet Crago in prayer as they undertake a four-month work assignment with Church of the Brethren leaders in the Dominican Republic beginning December 1st.

Continue holding John Elder, his family, and the Garden City congregation in prayer as he undergoes nine weeks of chemo therapy for large-cell, slow growing cancer in his lungs. This will be followed by surgery, and after a time of recovery, another nine weeks of chemo therapy.

Our prayers are with Ed Switzer as he recovers from quadruple heart bypass. Ed is active in district work and is one of our area ministers.

Neva Carlson passed away on November 13 after her battle with cancer. Our sympathy and prayers go out to her family, Tahnee, Todd, and John. Neva has been active in district work as well as her congregation.

NEW CHURCH PLANTING CONFERENCE

May 20-22, 2010 at
Bethany Theological
Seminary in Richmond,
IN. More details as they
become available.



WOMEN'S RETREAT 2010

Have you already bought your 2010 calendar yet? Yes? Oh, great, because now you can put the Women's Retreat on one of the beautifully white pages! Cover March 19-21 with your intention to BE THERE. And we even have the theme for it. Taken from a Maya Angelou poem, we are calling the Retreat "And Still I Rise!"

This is a retreat by women of the Western Plains District for all the women of the Western Plains District. Meeting at the Hesston *Crosswinds Conference Center*, we will utilize the amazing talent with which the Western Plains District is blessed. This talent will be in the service of an uplifting, inspiring time that will celebrate overcoming adversity and living triumphantly as risen people. We anticipate art, song, worship, and fellowship time. We will be giving you added details over the next two to three months. For now, however, just write on those blank pages, so when the time comes, you will have chosen this opportunity that is being created just for you . . .and you . . .and you!

Planning Committee

First Central Church of the Brethren
Lenexa Fellowship
Olathe Church of the Brethren
Messiah Church of the Brethren