

## INTRODUCTION OF THEME

# “YOU ARE LOVED: DEAL WITH IT! EMBRACE IT! PASS IT ON!”

The Jesus story begins with God, not with us. That’s the surprise. Not with our need for God, not even with our love for God. It started with God! And, God was not motivated by divine disgust with our wicked ways. Not at all. What was the motivation? Love. God loves us! How can we miss that? We are all too often the son who thought that he completely destroyed his place in the family and in the Father’s heart, only to discover that he still was welcomed by a loving Father. Or, we are like the son who thought he had guaranteed his place in his Father’s family by his scrupulous, but sometimes grudging, attention to all the duties and rules for being a “good” son. According to Luke 15:11ff, that son, or we, may never quite realize that it is the Father’s love, rather than our efforts, which gives us a place in the family of the Father. It all begins with God’s Love: So, “Deal with it!”

Jesus was neither the son who tried to assuage his own guilt arising from disobedience nor the son who thought he had earned his place in the Father’s love. Instead, Jesus knew himself the “beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17) and embraced that Love. The Spirit of Jesus within the Body graces us with that same freedom. You are loved! So, “Embrace it!”

Someone has suggested that the world doesn’t need more sales persons for Jesus. Rather, the need is for “free samples.” Persons embracing the Love of God, reaching out with that love. So important is our embracing of the Love of God, that Jesus said we would be identified as his disciples if we love one another (John 13:35). So, “Pass it on!”

Brethren are committed to “Continuing the work of Jesus.” What better way than to accept, embrace, and pass on the Love of God as Jesus has done? Could this be how we can live out our District Vision: “Rooted together in Love to be Christ’s transforming Hope and Power”?

Gather with us for a transforming experience for you personally and for your congregation. How shall we “Pass on” the Love of God today?

# SCHEDULE

## Friday Evening, October 28

- 3:00 – 6:00 Registration
- 5:00 – 6:30 Dinner
- 7:00 – 8:30 Opening Worship:  
Carol Scheppard, preacher
- 8:45 Fellowship Night at the Coffeehouse

## Saturday Morning, October 29

- 7:00 – 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 – 8:15 Morning Watch with Connie Burkholder
- 8:30 – 9:30 General Session: How Disaster Ministries in Colorado are Mutually Enriching, Leaders:  
Susan & Bud Taylor, Darrell Barr
- 9:30 – 9:45 Preview of Workshops
- 10:00 – 11:30 Workshop Block #1
- 11:45 – 1:00 Lunch

## Saturday Afternoon

- 1:00 – 1:45 Shared Interest Groups
- 2:00 – 2:50 General Session: Living and Loving Together: A Simple Peace,  
Moderator: Ken Frantz
- 3:00 – 4:30 Workshop Block #2
- 4:45 – 6:00 Dinner

## Saturday Evening

- 6:30 – 8:00 Worship: Debbie Eisenbise, preacher
- 8:30 Campfire & Coffeehouse

## Sunday Morning, October 30

- 7:00 – 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 – 8:15 Morning Watch with Connie Burkholder
- 8:30 – 10:00 Workshop Block #3
- 10:30 – 12:00 Closing Worship: Walt Wiltschek, preacher
- 12:15 – 1:15 Lunch & Depart

“YOU ARE LOVED: DEAL WITH IT! EMBRACE IT! PASS IT ON! ”

October 28-30, 2016

# THE GATHERING

WEBSTER CONFERENCE CENTER  
SALINA, KANSAS



A transformational initiative  
of the Church of the Brethren  
in Western Plains



## SPEAKERS

**Carol Scheppard** is moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, vice president and dean for Academic Affairs at Bridgewater (Va.) College, and a member of Lebanon Church of the Brethren, Mount Sidney, Va. She first encountered the Brethren in New England, where she joined Genesis Church of the Brethren, Putney, Vt. With blessings from the Genesis community, she completed her master of divinity degree and was ordained to teach philosophy and religion at Bridgewater College. She also holds degrees in Anthropology, Special Education, and Religious Studies. Carol enjoys time on her little farm, sharing life with her rescued/adopted menagerie including two goats, one horse, one very large dog, two cats, and four fish.



**Debbie Eisenbise** serves as Director for Intergenerational Ministries for the Church of the Brethren encouraging and assisting congregations with child protection, abuse prevention, ministry to and with persons of all abilities, and overseeing the biennial National Older Adult Conference. She is an ordained minister, spiritual director, storyteller, poet, gardener, cook and world traveler. She lives in Michigan with her husband, teen-aged daughter, and a cat.



**Walt Wiltschek** is currently living in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where he is working as a part-time staff writer for Eastern Mennonite University and volunteering for camps while examining ministry and teaching opportunities. He finished up this spring as campus pastor and director of church relations at Manchester University and was previously editor of *Messenger* magazine for the Church of the Brethren.



## YOUTH RETREAT

District Youth Coordinators Shawn Flory Replogle (Sr. High) and Nicole and Phil Sampson (Jr. High) have planned another fun-filled, Spirit-driven, jam-packed weekend! Youth will be challenged to consider what the Gathering theme (“You Are Loved”) has to do with them. Youth will have the opportunity to participate in a service project, the ropes course, participate in Worship, and much, much more!

## CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

The Gathering features program and care for children from infants through 5th grade. Several blocks of care are provided for infants through four-year-olds. Children five years through 5th grade participate in Bible School activities during much of the time adult activities are scheduled on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. For more information and the children’s registration form, go to [www.wpcob.org](http://www.wpcob.org).

## REGISTRATION

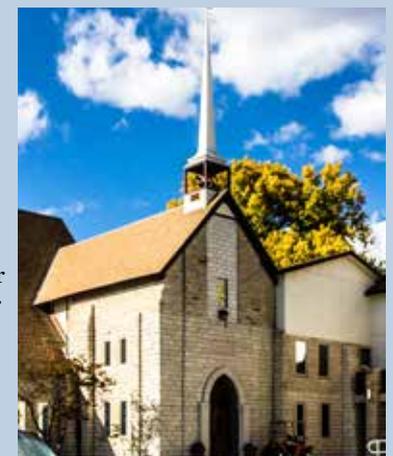
The registration fee includes all conference meals, programs, activities, and on-campus lodging. A motel list with special conference rates is available for those preferring off-campus lodging. Persons choosing to stay in motels pay their own housing and are charged the same conference fee, still a subsidized rate.

	By Oct. 17	After Oct. 17
<b>Adult</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$70</b>
<b>Youth</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$70</b>
<b>Family max.</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>\$180</b>

Visit [www.wpcob.org](http://www.wpcob.org) or call **620-241-4240** for registration forms and more information.

## LOCATION

The Gathering is held at Webster Conference Center at the north edge of Salina just north of I-70, exit 253 (Ohio St.)—about two miles east of the junction with I-135. On-campus housing is “winterized camp style,” with single beds, decent mattresses, and some handicapped accessible rooms. Most lodgings have bath facilities in the room. Normally 4-5 persons of the same gender share a room, although a limited number of family rooms are available. Bring your own bedding (including pillows) and towels. RV hook-ups are also available. [Webster policy does not allow pets on campus or in campus housing.](#)



# WORKSHOPS

### Open Conversation – Carol Scheppard

A free-ranging discussion of hopes and dreams on whatever topics are of interest to the group.

### Recreation: Ideas...Insights...Practice! – Ed Switzer

Are you interested in some ideas for leading fun non-competitive games? Come join us for a “replay” of some camp activities while learning techniques and skills that will help everyone have a fun time. Let’s laugh at and with each other and perhaps be inspired to become a camp leader!

### Toolbox for Working Effectively with Youth and Older Children – Stephanie Guyer

This workshop will focus on developing leadership skills in working with young people. We will discuss how to work with youth that may have difficult behaviors, how to encourage appropriate peer interactions, and how to foster positive coping skills. All who are interested in working with older children and youth in any capacity are invited to attend.

### Using Conflict Analysis Tools – Gail Erisman Valeta, Gary Flory, Leslie Frye

This workshop will focus on understanding and using tools for managing differences in congregational and other settings. One of the sessions will work with “Conflict Mapping.” The other will deal with the “Conflict Tree.”

### Creativity and Imagination: Including Persons of All Abilities – Debbie Eisenbise

We are all artists. Regardless of age or ability, our faith is deepened through imagination and creative expression. The church is enlivened when all are encouraged to share these gifts. What is the call to intentionally welcome, empower and include persons of all abilities in the church? How do we seek out and create community with those members of the Body of Christ that Paul says are “indispensable”? How do we lay the groundwork and develop a culture that not only recognizes but utilizes all persons’ gifts in mutual ministry?

### The Joy of Family Music – Erin Flory Robertson

Did you know that all children are musical? Come join us to experience the joy of family music with Music Together, the pioneer in early childhood music education. We’ll sing, dance, and have an instrument jam in a 45-minute Music Together class. Then, we’ll learn about and discuss what we experienced in the class, as well as how important your role is and how you can support your child’s music development at home.

### Restorative Discipline and “Making Things Right” – Alison Flory Replogle

During this workshop we will take a look at how Restorative Discipline is being used in the school community and what Restorative tools we can use at home with our own children. We will add to our toolboxes with ways to hold ourselves and our children accountable as we “make things right” when relationships are broken.