

August 2017



From the District Conference Moderator

The strife and conflict in our country in recent years has been stressful for all of us. The Church of the Brethren has not been immune to that strife. Without diminishing the issues on which we disagree, I think it would be helpful for us all to step back and refocus ourselves on Christ's central teachings. For that reason, I chose The Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40) as the theme for this year's Mid-Atlantic District Conference on October 13 and 14 at Frederick Church of the Brethren. In those five verses, Christ lays out for us what our relationship to God and to each other should be, in plain and easily understood language.

The foundation of it all is Love. Love for God and Love for each other. Please come and join me at Conference to hear Pastor Kurt Borgmann preach on this topic on Friday evening and then to celebrate through music and drama (and a little business, of course) the love that binds us together even when the world conspires to tear us apart, as we meet to renew our bonds of fellowship and advance the mission of the church on Saturday. I look forward to seeing you there.

Brian Bachman

Moderator

2017 Mid-Atlantic District Conference

Together on the Journey

A few thoughts on the journey...

I was encouraged by the outcome of this year's Annual Conference. I felt like the delegates' adoption of the denominational leadership team's and CODE's (Council of District Executives) recommendation to last year's West Marva query about how to respond to ministers and congregations that might conduct or condone same sex marriages, that any such situations be addressed by district ministry commissions (in Mid-Atlantic, that's our Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team) and leadership teams, informed by denominational and annual conference polity, was

the best we can do at present. I feel that the decision to retain On Earth Peace (OEP) as a denominational agency was important, although there is healing that needs to be facilitated between OEP and members and congregations around the Church of the Brethren, including the way the agency relates to membership. While 57% of delegates voted to terminate OEP's agency status, the vote did not achieve the 66% that would have been required to do so. I was also encouraged by what I sense to be a new spirit of hopefulness and optimism about the future of the Church of the Brethren that seems to be present with David Steele's tenure as General Secretary.

Here in the district there seems to be a growing interest in, energy for, and commitment to church planting and renewal. CEEMT (Church Extension and Evangelism Ministry Team) has been meeting regularly to facilitate planning and support for planting and congregational revitalization. The Dundalk-GraceWay restart is growing with the leadership of restart pastor Brother Yakubu Bakfwash. Individuals and congregations are committing to support through prayer, presence, and finances.

Our district leadership team had a good and productive meeting on August 5 and is looking ahead to doing some long-range planning at its December 2 meeting. Our Program and Arrangements (P&A) team continues to plan what promises to be an inspiring and encouraging district conference. District Moderator Brian Bachman has highlighted some of those plans in his lead article of this newsletter and recently sent a more detailed letter to all of our congregations and pastors. While there is no apparent earthshattering business on this year's agenda, there will be workshops to resource and strengthen congregations and persons, and it seems to me that in this time of increasing political and church polarization, it is especially important to be, pray, and worship God together. We will do that on October 13 and 14 in Frederick. Look forward to seeing you there, and on the journey.

Together in Christ and on the Journey,

Gene Hagenberger

Mid-Atlantic District Executive Minister

From Shepherd's Spring

Hospitality: In Our Home, In Our Church, At Shepherd's Spring

We all know the story of Mary and Martha found in Luke. Martha was busy keeping the house suitable for her guests, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet. When Martha complained, Jesus told her to be like Mary. No matter how hard we try to be like Mary, when we are expecting guests we find ourselves frantically cleaning, preparing the best meal, and making our home suitable for our guests.

Sometimes it feels like more of a chore to be hospitable than a joy to have guests. Adele Calhoun, in his book *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, explains, "Hospitality is not about impressing others with well-decorated homes and gourmet cooking. It's not simply for the gifted or those with clean homes. Neither is it just for women.

Hospitality is a way of loving our neighbor in the same way God has loved us." When Mary took the time to sit at Jesus' feet, she was taking the time to hear more about God's love. When we take the time to grow deeper in understanding God's love, we become stronger in being hospitable to our guests.

Just like you when you have guests to your home or your congregation, Shepherd's Spring welcomes new faces week after week. We work throughout the week serving our guests through our programs; then on Friday, we are frantically cleaning the building and preparing it for our weekend guests. Our goal is to develop a safe place for God's people to come and be together. What is special about our weekend groups compared to our week-long programs is we have volunteers who share their gift in hospitality with us. Our retreat groups are greeted by a friendly face who is steeped in wanting to share God's love with others; sharing Christian hospitality with others. As staff, we know our weekend guests are in good hands because of the gifts God has placed on people's hearts to serve through hospitality. A weekend at Shepherd's Spring serving retreat groups also provides an opportunity for our hospitable volunteers to "sit at Jesus' feet." Volunteers can have time to be with Christ while also being with our guests.

We pray that as a Church we grow in hospitality, that our congregations, homes, and outdoor

ministry center can be a safe place to experience God's love. If you are interested in serving at Shepherd's Spring as a weekend host please contact Britnee Harbaugh through email or phone call. bharbaugh@shepherdsspring.org / 301-331-0635.



Fun was had by all who attended this year's Shepherd's Spring annual Golf Tournament. The morning of June 19 was hot and muggy as the 54 golfers arrived at the Black Rock golf course. Golfers enjoyed a continental breakfast followed by preparations for their round at the driving range and putting green. After instruction by the golf pro, golfers headed out to their respective starting holes. Laughter and conversation could be heard throughout the course as golfers strategized on how to use their mulligans, power balls, and throws to better the scores. As the day progressed, it was evident that thunderstorms were approaching. Even though the day was shortened by the storms all enjoyed the lunch, prizes, and camaraderie the event provided.

This year we added the Church of the Brethren Challenge where congregations were encouraged with prizes to register as many golfers as they could. This was our first attempt at this challenge and we look forward to offering it again next year.

For the past 21 tournaments, our staff, volunteers, and sponsors have worked to serve our vision. This year's tournament raised approximately \$4,500 for summer camp programming. We are enjoying a successful camp season, serving 157 campers! Campers come to Shepherd's Spring to experience the blessings of Christian community through our intergenerational and specialty residential camps. Thank you to all the golfers, volunteers, and sponsors for helping to make all of this possible. For the 2017 21st Annual Shepherd's Spring Golf Tournament Results and list of sponsors; see our website at www/shepherdsspring.org/events/events/golf_tournament.

MAD Disaster Response Auction

A letter from the General Secretary:

Dear Mid-Atlantic District Office,

Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of the Church of the Brethren. It is through your generosity that ministries grow and lives are changed. Your gifts do great things. Thanks to your faithful support we have engaged in many exciting projects. Individuals attended life-changing gatherings like the Church Planting Conference, Young Adult Conference, Annual Conference, and National Older Adult Conference. Volunteers became the hands and feet of Jesus through ministries like Brethren Volunteer Service and Workcamps.

Representatives from the Office of Public Witness participated in events related to peace and justice issues. Young Adults explored their vocations in ministry through Ministry Summer Service. Events for the coming year were also planned to continue the ministries of the Church of the Brethren.

Your gifts help support the work of partnerships in Haiti, Nigeria, South Sudan, and many other places around the world. Your faithful giving undergirds service-focused ministries and opportunities for faith formation. Your generous contributions empower ministries that speak peace and extend Jesus' table through dynamic programs and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Thank you for helping to continue the work of Jesus.

It is a blessing to partner with you to carry the light of Christ into the world and to boldly share the love of Jesus with neighbors down the street and around the world. On behalf of all staff, volunteers, and board members of the Church of the Brethren, thank you for your time, prayers, gifts, and passions. We are honored to serve with you in this important work.

In Christ's Peace,

David A. Steele, General Secretary

For Our District

Children's Disaster Services Workshops

Here are the fall 2017 locations, dates, and contact information for the workshops:

- **Bridgewater, VA, Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, September 22-23, 2017. Local contact: Gladys Remnant, 540-810-4999, gremnant@aol.com.**

- **Jacksonville, FL. Florida Christian Church, September 29-30, 2017. Local contact: Tina Christian, CDS Gulf Coast Coordinator, 561-889-2323, cdsgulfcoast@gmail.com.**
- **Northville, MI. Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church, November 10-11, 2017. Local contact: Jen Pifer, 734-776-1667, cakegirl680@gmail.com.**
- **Bethel, PA. Little Swatara Church of the Brethren, November 17-18, 2017. Local contact: Jean Myers, 610- 678-5247, jean@aol.com.**

Anyone 18 years of age or over is welcome to attend this 2-day training (27 hours) and become a certified CDS caregiver. References and background checks are also required for certification. Once caregivers complete certification, all expenses are paid for disaster responses.

The training is an overnight experience, simulating a shelter situation. It includes an overview of the work; understanding phases of disaster and how caregivers fit in; working with disaster partners, children, and family needs following disaster; supporting resilience in children; setting up a children's center with a Kit of Comfort; ethical guidelines; and the certification process.

Please forward this information about these workshops. Registration is online at our website: www.brethren.org/cds/training/dates.html. If anyone has questions about these training events, please email or call Kathleen Fry-Miller at 260-704-1443. She can provide brochures, fliers, or other materials to share about the program and workshops.

Kathleen Fry-Miller, Associate Director, Children's Disaster Services

Who Are We?



The Mid-Atlantic District's **Church Extension and Evangelism Ministry Team (CEEMT)** is a group dedicated to church renewal, church planting, and evangelism. CEEMT seeks to

- To ignite a passion for new ministry and revitalization of churches in our district
- To provide resources and catalysts for transformational, healthy, vital, and growing congregations

To meet these goals, we will

- recruit prayer partners (that's you!)
- explore potential preaching points across the district
- network with church planters
- host educational workshops on missional church

Ctrl+Click to follow this link to sign up.

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CEEMT Prayer Requests for August

Pray for the Graceway (Dundalk) restart led by Pastor Yakubu Bakfwash and his wife, Diana Yakubu Bakfwash. The Graceway congregation was birthed out of the former Dundalk congregation and began in February 2017.

Last year, Yakubu and Diana visited the Mid-Atlantic District on a "discernment journey" and also joined us for District Conference in Easton. They are working at a multi-ethnic church plant in Dundalk, where attendees have been averaging 35 people from the U.S. and numerous countries in Africa (such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Rwanda, and others).

Pray that God would continue to raise up leaders within their growing congregation.

Pray for God's blessing on Yakubu and Diana's work, meeting neighbors and mentoring refugees in the greater Baltimore area.

Pray that God would provide computers for GraceWay COB, as they seek to start a computer training course for community members.

Pray for wisdom for the restart board, made up of a variety of district stakeholders, which provides guidance to Graceway.

PLACEMENT UPDATE

Broadfording Interviewing, Glenn Young, Interim
Columbia Profile circulating, Gerry Hanberry, interim

Denton Profile circulating, interviewing, Dawn Lare retiring 9/30/17

Easton Interviewing, Rusty Curling, interim

Frederick Profile circulating, interviewing, Craig Smith, interim Lead Pastor

Friendship Profile circulating, pulpit supply
Union Bridge Profile circulating, negotiating interim, Jim Benedict retiring 8/31/17

Woodbridge Claire Flowers-Waggenger resigned effective 8/20/17

DISTRICT CALENDAR

Please see the "More August Events" attachment for a list of district event.

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