

Together on the Journey ...

I was preaching on Isaiah 43 a few Sundays ago, and talked about how perhaps like those ancient Jews in limbo in Babylon whom Isaiah addressed at the time, I feel myself to be languishing in “captivity,” in limbo, feel like my world, *the* world is in some paroxysmal apocalyptic cataclysm. COVID-19 is getting more than old as we approach fall 20: changes in the ways we have to work, if we’re still working, and a discordant rhythm to everyday life; the disruption to our children’s and grandchildren’s education and development; the black cloud of malaise we wake to every morning with the political dysfunction and shaking of the pillars of our democracy; the rending of our civil/social fabric and unity; with all of the attendant physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual health challenges – it gives me some appreciation of what some previous generations went through during dark and trying times of pestilence, war, and depression. I believe that God is “about to do a new thing, and will make a way for us” (Is 43:19), and I pray for all of us the patience and fortitude to hang in there.

This is the time to be patient as we await the availability of a vaccine for this plague. My son Grant was just telling me this morning of the report of a German study of 1,400 plus COVID patients. The patients all tested positive for COVID in March and April, and covered the age spectrum, including asymptomatic as well as symptomatic patients with mild to severe symptoms. Thirty-three (33%) percent of those who tested positive required hospitalization. Eighty percent (80%) of those 1,400 people show signs of heart damage seven months beyond testing. We don’t know what the long-term effects of that heart damage and COVID will be, and so it seems wise to do everything we can to prevent getting infected. All of us would prefer “getting back to normal” and getting back in the sanctuary and resuming our normal groups and classes, but if we can endure the inconveniences and limitations of outdoor and “virtual” worship and gatherings for about as much longer as we’ve already

been doing it, we may save ourselves, loved ones, and neighbors more future pain and suffering than we yet know. Delayed gratification is a virtue.

Also, I think often recently of something my friend and advisor Merlyn Kettering said to me. He said, “We hear a lot of talk about wanting to ‘get back to normal.’” He said, “Let’s stop and think about what normal was. For one thing normal was churches that weren’t growing.” Merlyn said, “I don’t want to get back to normal, I want to go forward to a ‘new normal.’” Merlyn was right, for the most part pre-COVID our churches weren’t growing. One good thing that has come out of COVID is that it has expelled/propelled the church out of the building, from the sanctuary of its fortress walls, into its missional future. The church has had to quickly learn new ways of meeting, communicating, and connecting, and while some of us have gone kicking and screaming from the church into the world and Zoom meetings, many of us have gone, and are adjusting to the new perspectives and learning the new skills that are essential for answering the call of Christ and to be the Body of Christ in this new day. Many of our churches report they are “reaching” more people “online,” connecting and communicating with many more people “virtually” than they did when meeting in the building, and interestingly to me, as a church executive concerned about whether gifts and giving would dry up with the church gathering and worshipping online, many of our churches report steady or even increased giving, as well as more members, along with younger members who are often more IT literate and capable, offering their time and skills to make it possible. Ideally, necessarily, these new and “missional” approaches will/must continue, be added to and combined with our previous practices even when we can meet back in the building together again, hold hands, and sing our beloved hymns. I don’t believe that God brought COVID upon us. I believe God is at work through scientists and systems

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to end this miserable plague, but I will say that had it not happened the church might have stayed hunkered down in the sanctuary until the last one of us keeled over. The learning that we have to and can move out, go online, develop relationships, and communicate and share the love and hope God shares with us in Jesus Christ is something good that has come out of COVID. God can bring good out of any tragic or terrible situation, if we stay open to what God would do.

I'd like to offer an invitation to pastors, church board and leadership team chairpersons, and district leadership team members to connect via Zoom with me and each other to share how you and your congregation are doing, as well as to raise questions, and share concerns and other information.

Request a Zoom invitation link from district administrative assistant Jo Ann Landon at AAMAD@brethren.org for any of these dates and times:

- Tuesday, September 8, 10-11 a.m.
(Let Jo Ann know by Noon, September 3)
- Saturday, September 12, 10-11 a.m.
(Let Jo Ann know by Noon, September 10)
- Wednesday, September 16, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
(Let Jo Ann know by Noon, September 16)

You are in my thoughts and prayers,

Gene Hagenberger

District Executive Minister

From Our District Moderator

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm writing this letter in late August. Earlier this year, I had anticipated we would be in the final weeks of tying up loose ends for the 2020 District Conference by now. I suspected that I would be excited and have some understandable butterflies appearing. I was looking forward to meeting many of my Mid-Atlantic COB brothers and sisters, worshiping together and dealing with the annual business items before us.

Alas, this along with many other things are being either cancelled or handled somewhat dramatically different. For my wife and me, family reunions have been cancelled for 2020. We didn't get to do any of the "usual" summer fun trips with our children and grandchildren – like going to the lake for a family swim or spending a day at one of the nearby amusement parks. We cancelled our beach vacation and significantly altered our annual trip to Lancaster County.

I'm fairly certain you can rattle off a similar litany of spring and summer cancellations. Admittedly, this can all be rather depressing. So, forgive me for droning on about the things we didn't get to do. Rather, join with me as we celebrate a loving Heavenly Father. God is still in control. Jesus is still the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Amen? Amen and Amen! Yes, we are social and we miss meeting with and seeing our friends at church and other venues on a somewhat regular basis. It's hard! I get it! I'm feeling it too. However, our God is greater! Reach out to someone by phone or write them a note. Don't let this pandemic keep us apart. Mark your calendars for the 2021 District Conference – October 8 & 9 at the Frederick Church of the Brethren. To God be the Glory!

Allen O'Hara,
District Moderator

Church of the Brethren Resources

- Find Covid-19-related resources for congregations and families at <https://covid19.brethren.org/>
- The Church of the Brethren Annual Report is now available online at www.brethren.org/annualreport
- Annual Conference moderator Paul Munday has completed the summer edition of his quarterly, pastoral letter, "Trail Thoughts" www.brethren.org/ac/2021/moderator

WELTY -

This certainly has been a strange and challenging time and church life has been no exception. But despite the challenges presented by this pandemic, our church was able to come up with a way to provide some outreach in our community. Hearing about the low supplies in food banks across the country, we decided to have a food drive for the local food bank, Tabitha's Table. They serve approximately 117 families in the Smithsburg, MD school district where our church is located. We have donated to them in the past. To have a food drive during the pandemic, we *did* have to think outside the box. Challenges we had to figure out included:

- Since we were under "stay at home" orders, how could we do it in a way to minimize the number of people out and about
- Because we weren't holding in-person worship services, collecting donations at the church wasn't going to be a good option
- Welty is located within a few miles of the MD-PA state line, so we have a lot of families from PA. We wanted them to participate but didn't want them all to have to cross the state line
- It was a tough time financially for many people, including some in our own church family, so we didn't want to ask them to mail a check

In order to overcome the challenges, we decided to have one family in Maryland and one family in Pennsylvania as points of contact and those contacts would also collect all the food donated by those who lived in the same state they did. We contacted the food pantry to find out what they were most in need of at that time and arrange when to deliver the donations. A date was chosen that was several weeks out to allow people time to gather the food without making an extra trip to the store. Notices were sent out to the church family with details. The plan was to pick up the donations in a contact-less manner from the front door area of those who were participating. To contribute, one only needed to notify the contact person and put their donations out on the designated day. As it turned out, the "stay at home" order was thankfully lifted and in-person church resumed the very day before the pre-determined collection date (can I get an Amen!), so many chose to bring their donations to the church.

Everything went smoothly and our relatively small church donated about 300 lbs. of food. In addition we delivered some generous monetary donations for Tabitha's Table, too! Welty COB was indeed blessed to be able to serve our community in a safe manner during this difficult time.

WESTMINSTER - Our church, in concert with St. Paul's UCC, has continued to provide a weekly meal on Saturdays through our Loaves and Fishes Ministry throughout the pandemic. . We are serving clients outside every Saturday.



Many thanks to all who shared their outreach. Please consider sharing how your congregation did outreach for the next District newsletter. Email aamad@brethren.org

Congregational Openings, Placements, Updates:

Beaver Creek – Called Gabe Dodd, beginning mid-November
Broadfording – Interviewing
Brownsville – Profile circulating
Bush Creek – Preparing congregational profile
Denton – Gieta Gresh interim
Grossnickle – Search committee formed
Harmony – Negotiating
Long Green Valley – Interviewing
Manor – Congregational support arrangements
Myersville – Profile available
Woodberry – Open
Woodbridge – Profile circulating. Charlotte Bear interim



A new video, shared by the District Church Outreach, Renewal and Evangelism (CORE) Ministry Team is an invitation to visit and support GraceWay in their journey, with Jesus, in their neighborhood.

This is the link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/nbflWXwjags>

Help support this diverse church plant with your time and financial giving.



From the Children's Disaster Ministries

Facebook page: *CDS is deploying Individual Kits of Comfort (IKOC) to the Gulf Coast for Hurricane Laura and to Northern California for the wildfire response in the next 24 hours. Thank you to all those that have packed so far, we were ready when the call came. However, with nearly 600 going out this week, we need more packs coming in! Let us know if you can help with this important mission.*

You can find a detailed list of contents and guidance on assembling at the end of this newsletter.

Virtual

50th Annual Dunker Church Service



Sunday, September 20 3 PM

Sermon provided by Wendy McFadden,
Publisher of Brethren Press and Communications

Watch for details

Moderator's Town Hall Featuring Andrew Young Slated For September 17, 2020

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday has announced plans for the next Moderator's Town Hall on September 17th, 2020, at 7:00 PM EDT. The featured speaker will be veteran civil rights leader and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young.

The focus of the Town Hall will be: "Racism: Deeper Awareness, Bolder Action."

Andrew J. Young has earned worldwide recognition as a pioneer in and champion of civil and human rights. Ambassador Young's lifelong dedication to service is illustrated by his extensive leadership experience of over sixty-five years, serving as a member of Congress, African American U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Mayor of Atlanta, and ordained minister, among other positions.

During the 1960s, Young was a key strategist and negotiator during civil rights campaigns that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Appointed as an Ambassador to the United Nations in 1977, Young negotiated an end to white-minority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe and brought President Carter's emphasis on human rights to international diplomacy efforts.



SEPTEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Pastor/Board Chair/ District Leadership Sept. 8 Zoom Registration Deadline - noon	4	5 LT Zoom 8:30 am
6	7 LABOR DAY District Office Closed	8 Pastor/Board Chair/District Leadership Zoom 10 – 11 am	9	10 Pastor/Board Chair/ District Leadership Sept. 12 Zoom Registration Deadline - noon	11	12 Pastor/Board Chair/District Leadership Zoom 10 – 11am
		DISTRICT BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DELEGATES MAILED TO PASTORS/CONTACTS				
13	14	15	16 Pastor/Board Chair/District Leadership Zoom 7:30 – 8:30 pm Register by noon	17	18	19
20 Virtual Dunker Church Service 3 pm	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

LT-Leadership Team
CCMT-Calling & Credentialing Team
MITT-Ministry Interviewing Task Team
CETT-Continuing Education

CORE-Church Outreach, Renewal & Evangelism
F&P-Finance and Property
OR&S-Outreach and Service
S&CL-Spirituality and Congregational Life

LCT-Leadership Calling Team
P&A-Program and
Arrangements

**Next District Leadership Team Meeting -
September 5, 2020 by Zoom**

2020 DISTRICT DIRECTORY

Look for the updated District Directory soon. You'll receive it as a pdf attachment. Please let the office know if you would like a print copy.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please submit items for the JOURNEY newsletter by the 20th of each month.

Permission is granted by the Mid-Atlantic District to reproduce and distribute information from this newsletter

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Contact

The Rev. Phillip C Huber
Chairperson, Maryland V.O.A.D.
Chairperson@MarylandVOAD.org
410.375-5053

DART (Disaster Agency Response Technology) Launched by Maryland V.O.A.D.

A new statewide Volunteer and In-Kind Donations platform has launched in Maryland. The DART platform connects Marylanders who want to assist with Volunteer Opportunities, with Disaster and State Agencies needing volunteers. DART also connects businesses and individuals wanting to provide In-Kind assistance (goods and services) with Agencies that have In-Kind assistance needs.

The DART platform is live and now being used to assist the Maryland Department of Aging and Maryland Emergency Management Agency with a major outreach to support Senior residents in their homes in each county in the State. There are two types of Volunteers needed for this outreach. In-Home Volunteers will provide ambulatory assistance, personal hygiene, bathing, etc. Non-Contact Volunteers will remain outside and provide deliveries of food, prescriptions, etc. **More than 480 volunteers are needed to be available each day!**

Those who wish to volunteer should sign up on DART at:

<https://dart-md.communityos.org/>

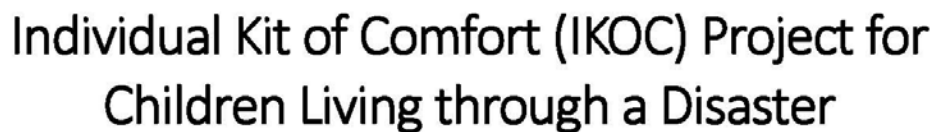
The DART platform has been launched in coordination with National V.O.A.D. Maryland V.O.A.D. is a collaboration of over 30 faith-based, community based, and other non-governmental organizations that have disaster response as part of their mission. During COVID-19, we are responding to community needs through the establishment of donation collection centers across Maryland, supporting food distribution and attending to the state's most vulnerable populations.

For more information about Maryland V.O.A.D. please go to: <https://mdvoad.communityos.org/cms/> or email: Chairperson@MarylandVOAD.org.

<https://dart-md.communityos.org/>

Maryland V.O.A.D.

410.375-5053

[illegible]

- **Appeal - Our goal is to build 2,500 newly designed Individual Kit of Comfort (IKOC).**
 - **Packs are designed to be given to children between the ages of 4-10.**
- **Collection Plan - Beginning immediately through September 30, 2020, CDS will be collecting IKOC packs to be distributed to children affected by disasters.**
- **Contents of each IKOC**
 - The contents of the kit are designed to have multiple uses and come with an activity guide for creative ideas to use the contents, along with resources for parents helping their children begin the healing process.
 - Please note: Each kit needs to meet these specifications so that children can all receive an equal play kit. Please do not add or substitute items. (see visual list for examples)
 - **Mesh A4 Pencil Pouch** – holds the materials in each pack – the items requested all fit nicely inside the A4 pouches, measuring 13.5 x 9.5 inches
 - 1 dough (2 oz.)
 - 1 clay cutter
 - 2 rulers (12-inch)
 - 1 mini-deck of cards

- 1 small beach ball (5-inch)
 - 12 paper plates (6-inch plain white)
 - 2 animal finger puppets
 - 2 simple small wooden cars
 - 2 small bean bags (3.5 inch)
 - 3 rolls of washi colored tape (1/2 inch (10mm) wide)
 - 1 child-sized jump rope
 - 1 watercolor paint set (8 colors with brush)
 - 1 small 3x5 notebook
 - 1 colored gel ink pen
 - 2 washable markers
 - 1 stuffed plush dog (not larger than 4 inch)
 - Activity/Trauma idea guide (supplied by CDS)
- **Funds** – The more packs we can produce in the next few months, the more children we can provide packs for – this may take a bit of creativity in funding and working together!
 - Larger quantities ordered of supplies will provide more cost savings
 - Church groups, Sunday school groups, families are encouraged to participate
 - CDS has some grant funds set aside for the IKOC project
 - Matching funds initiative in place with current funds available as needed
 - With the current material list, the price per pack is approximately \$17
- **Packing** –
 - Follow social distancing guidelines currently in effect for your geographic area.
 - Safety is a priority for all!
 - It works best to do quantities of 12 in ordering online, some bulk items are cheaper in larger quantities (100). The Mesh Pouch on Amazon comes in quantities of 24.
 - Recommend one person do the purchasing and tracking for group
 - We have additional supporting documents to help with group packing, order tracking, and engagement of congregation if interested.
- **Shipping Completed Packs**
 - Save some of the boxes you receive materials in for repackaging completed packs
 - Once Packs are completed and ready for shipment – contact Lisa @ CDS for information on shipping. lcrouch@brethren.org
- **Monetary Donations**
 - Gifts to the Emergency Disaster Fund are an important way to support CDS disaster efforts and can be specified to sponsor IKOC's.
 - Donate online at <https://churchofthebrethren.givingfuel.com/cds> with IKOC in comments
 - or mail check to Emergency Disaster Fund, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120 with a note indicating IKOC-CDS.
- For More information: cds@brethren.org or call 410-635-8734.

Individual Kit of Comfort by Picture



A4 Pencil
Zippered Pouch
Mesh (1)



2 oz Dough – Any
Brand (1)
*(discount school
supply has a
great generic one
or Crayola brand
on Amazon)*



Wooden track cars
(2 per pack)
*(can buy up to 5
sets at a time on
Amazon)*



Watercolor paint
set with brush (1)



White paper
plates 6 inch (12
per pack)



Washable
markers
(2 per pack)



Washi Tape
(3 rolls per pack)



Small Plush Dog –
no larger than 5
inches



3.5 square
bean bags
(2 per pack)



12 inch Rulers
(2 per pack)



mini-deck
of cards (1)



Children's jump
rope (1)



InkJoy Gel Pen
(1)



5-inch beach ball
(1)



Clay cutter
(1)



3 x 5 notebook
(1)



Animal finger
puppets
(2 per pack)

**** Kits need to meet these specifications so that children can all receive an equal play kit. Please do not add or substitute items.**