



Northern Plains District
Church of the Brethren



District News & Announcements

December 2017

*"District News and Announcements" is a monthly e-newsletter for members and friends of the Church of the Brethren in the Northern Plains District. District Leaders, Commissions, Committees, and those doing special ministries share information on programs and activities. Local churches share news and invitations. Send submissions by **December 29th** for inclusion in next month's newsletter to Hannah Button-Harrison, Director of Communications, communications@nplains.org.*

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Banner photo: South Waterloo kids paint pumpkins at the Wednesday night Halloween party. Photo by Barb Miller. Send in your photos for future newsletters! Email communications@nplains.org

1. Submit to the Advent Newsletter

Hannah Button-Harrison, Director of Communications

communications@nplains.org

Attention Churches! - We will have a special Advent newsletter going out on Saturday, December 9th. Please email me with information on any Advent programs or events happening in your church, as well as pictures or stories from events that have already happened. Please send me your events by Wednesday, December 6th.

2. Diapers for Haiti in Ankeny

Rhonda Bingman, Ankeny COB

Dee Reynolds from the Ankeny congregation has been helping many others in the Ankeny Community to help make diapers for Haiti at the Ankeny Methodist Church. Diaper Day Workshop in November resulted in 35 women cutting, sewing and trimming, 18 sewing machines and 144 diapers completed. When all of these are delivered, Ankeny will have contributed 360 diapers for Haiti.

Everyone had a wonderful time with lots of laughter, visiting and fellowship. People from several churches, both young and old helped as well as one woman who will be 101 years old on Christmas Day. She had such a good time doing the final clipping of threads, checking each one, then folding and packing. If you are interested in joining in, please contact Dee Reynolds deereynolds@mediacombb.net. Special thanks goes to Nancy Miller for coordinating the workshops.

3. A Poem Inspired by Brethren Disaster Ministries

Gordon Hoffert, Lewiston COB

Sammy Deacon's* Rules and Regulations

(With apologies to Dr. Seuss)

*Sammy (Samantha?) was one of the leaders at the Brethren Disaster Ministries project in Eureka, Missouri.

*The BDM project was just underway;
We were new on the scene, arrived only that day.
The orientation had first to take place;
When it did we then learned of some rules we would face.*

*It seems that a previous group had two guys,
Who engaged in behavior that wasn't so wise.
The actions in question these gentlemen chose
Had to do with their evening selection of clothes.*

*After working with saws-alls and scrapers and hammers,
These two would then change from their work clothes to jammers;
But sartorial insolence here did not stop,
For their evening attire was without any top.*

*Now Sammy to this scene took major offence,
To the walking about half-undressed of these gents.
Add to that, these two men were not what you'd call thin;
They were challenged to hold all their weightiness in.
Well, the sight of that poundage, which mostly hung out,
Is the gist of what Sammy's complaining about.*

*So we heard some new rules stemming from this infraction:
There would be no repeat of this unseemly action.
We were clearly informed that, at Sammy's behest,
All male types would kindly keep clothes on their chest.
And as for the things to be worn down below,
If you're thinking of PJ's, they'll just have to go.
We listened in silence, recoiling with shock;*

*If it's coming from Sammy it's more than just talk.
We were now face to face with a sobering fact,
We couldn't wear jammies unless we'd quick act.*

*"Now hear us out, Sammy, we know how you felt,
But we're different, we're sleek and we're slender, we're svelte.
Our efforts maintaining our bodies are legion,
Our torsos don't sag to a much lower region.*

*"If you let us wear jammies without any upper
In the slot between bedtime and finishing supper,
We'll suck in our bellies way back to our spine;
You won't be grossed out, it will all work out fine.*

*"Hey, we'll do calisthenics, we'll work out for hours,
We'll free up the time 'cause we'll take shorter showers.
We'll transform our bodies through weight loss, you'll see,
Doing yoga, karate, tae-kwon-do, tai-chi.*

*"We'll go for long runs, we'll do lunges and crunches,
We'll limit ourselves to no carbs in our lunches.
It's not much to ask that you just take this stance:
You let us relax in our nighty-night pants.*

*"And after all, Sammy, you don't have to look;
Get involved in a board game, or read a good book.
We admit we're not he-men or body-build bruisers;
If you want to compare us to them, we'd be losers.*

*"But after a day fighting cabinets and studs,
We'd like to hang out wearing sleepy-time duds
And not have to think about wearing a shirt.
Come on, Sammy, chill out, just relent, it won't hurt.*

*"Still, I guess if we try we can all empathize,
For we've all had a time when we can't avert eyes.
So we promise, our evening time dress won't offend.
But just wait, topless PJ's for men will soon trend!"*

4. Remembering our BVSers

The BVS Team



Greetings from Brethren Volunteer Service!

The following links offer you addresses for the current BVS volunteers. Our volunteers love receiving cards and greetings from Brethren congregations!

[2017 address list](#) (PDF in label format) * [2017 address list](#) (Word file in case you prefer to create your own mail merge)

The PDF file is designed to print on Avery 5961 labels. When printing from the PDF, be sure to print at 100% (full size). Otherwise the system will change the margins (which are technically outside of the printing area), causing the labels to print incorrectly.

If you would like to read more about BVS, please [download our latest newsletter](#).

If you or someone you know is looking for their next step, BVS has volunteer positions open all year round.

[Find out more](#) or [explore project listings](#).

Thank you for your continued support and interest in Brethren Volunteer Service! May your time of Advent be blessed.

5. Reminder for Church Treasurers

Rhonda Bingman, Financial Secretary

This is just a friendly reminder to Church Treasurers to please send your 2017 allocations to the District Financial Secretary no later than December 15th to allow for mail and deposit time and to ensure they are credited this year. Thank you!

Rhonda Bingman - Financial Secretary

Northern Plains District

820 Raven Lane

Madrid, IA 50156

6. Message from the Moderator

Marilyn Koehler, 2018 District Conference Moderator

marilyn_k@eaglecom.net



Blessings during this Christmas season! May you all know the love and peace of God as you celebrate the birth of Jesus in various ways with family, church members, and other friends. We continue to marvel at the love of God that he 'gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life.' Our faith in Jesus Christ encourages us to 'Press On' to bring the message of God's love to others.

The Planning Committee for the 2018 District Conference has been preparing for another blessed event as the churches in the NP District gather at South Waterloo Church August 3-5, 2018. Our main speakers have been chosen for the worship services—David Steele, General Secretary; Roger Peckover, Team Pastor at Lewiston Congregation, and Donita Keister, Annual Conference Moderator for 2018.

As we continue to plan worship services and prepare for workshops and other conference business, we ask for your prayer support and encouragement for the planning committee and Call team under the leadership of Daniel Butler.

In the months ahead, we will continue to meet and plan for great fellowship and inspiration. Pray for us and provide your input and ideas to make it a blessed time together. Please contact us by phone or email with your ideas.

7. Holiness in our Midst - On Quaker Questions

Janis Pyle

janispyle@yahoo.com

Writer's note: The "Four Quaker Questions" are frequently-used ice-breakers in small groups. They are: 1) Where did you live between the ages of 7 and 12? 2) How did you heat your home then? 3) What or who was the center of human warmth in your family? Why? 4) When, if ever, did God become more than a mere word to you? If you ask participants these questions in a group setting, leave plenty of time for answers, because they call forth deep and strong emotions.

Following is my answer to Questions 3:

The center of warmth in my family between 7 and 12 was the family table each evening in Urbandale, IA, a suburb of Des Moines. Days were hectic with work and school, but at supper time we slowed down. We shared stories from our daily lives while savoring tasty meals. (The recipes were from the Better Homes & Gardens Cookbook.) My father had remarried the year I was 9. My siblings, Jill, 5, Jerry, 8, and Janet, 13, and I were still coming to grips with the death of our mother two years earlier. In addition to moving from a farm setting, we acquired overnight a step mother, an older step brother, Arthur, who had just joined the Navy, and a step sister, Jean, who was in high school. Adjustments were required on all our parts, but our blended family came together with love and laughter as we passed around the spare ribs or pork chop casserole. On Sundays, we had pot roast that simmered in the oven while we were at church. When we got home, we added carrots, potatoes and onions while we changed clothes and anticipated another family time of togetherness. A testimony to our shared meals is the fact that the family table is still important to each of us as a symbol of security in our lives.

8. Leadership Development Musings

Barbara Wise Lewczak, Minister of Leadership Development

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As we come to the end of 2017 Laura and I would like to leave you with a couple of musings and a surprise. As we have pointed out earlier at the NOAC Conference (National Older Adult Conference) of the CoB we were blessed to be led in Bible Study each day by Stephen Breck Reid, professor of Christians scriptures at Truett Theological Seminary, Waco Texas and former academic dean and professor of the Old Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary.

Professor Breck Reid-Steve focused on the book of Ruth (see the October Ministry of Leadership Development article). Each day Steve asked us to ponder three questions. In addition to the three mentioned in October, we were particularly drawn to these three;

What is your family's famine story?

What is your Boaz moment?

Who was your mentor during transitions?

As we gather with friends and family and contemplate about this past year we challenge you to ponder these questions and we would love to hear your responses (more on these questions in January).

Now the surprise: the first congregation to contact us and schedule a leadership training and/or gifts discernment event to be accomplished in the first quarter of 2018 will receive a \$20.00 gift certificate from us to

Brethren Press. Who will be the first? Let us make 2018 "The Year of Leadership" in the Northern Plains District!

We wish each of you, your families, and congregations a Spirit filled Advent, Blessed Christmas, and Many Blessings in the New Year.

9. In the Church Kitchen (and other memories from Prairie City)

Members and friends of Prairie City Church of the Brethren recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of their church building. As part of the celebration, the congregation published an informative and delightful history.

Read ["In the Church Kitchen and Other Memories of the Prairie City Church of the Brethren and its Building Built in 1917 as Remember by Betty Jo Buckingham and Others."](#)

10. Ministry Changes

Tim Button-Harrison, District Executive

de@nplains.org

Alan McLearn-Montz has accepted a call from the Bakersfield (California) Church of the Brethren. He will start in January 2018. In Northern Plains District, Alan served as pastor of Ankeny Church of the Brethren and as Interim Pastor of the Ottumwa Church of the Brethren. He and his wife Brenda have been members of Panther Creek Church of the Brethren. They have two adult children, Amanda and Jess. Notes of appreciation for Alan's time in Northern Plains and support in this new ministry may be emailed to him at alanmcmo@gmail.com.

Sue Bollinger will conclude her service as Ministry Coordinator for Lewiston Church of the Brethren and Gordon Hoffert will begin serving in that roll starting December 2017. Sue has served as Lewiston's Ministry Coordinator since 2001. Sue and Gordon will both continue to serve as part of Lewiston's Preaching Team along with Roger Peckover.

Calendar of Events

2017

- **December 9** – Iowa Peace Network Open House, Stover Memorial Church of the Brethren, 2:00-4:00
- **December 12** - West/Central Iowa Pastors, 10:00
- **December 14** - Waterloo Area Pastors, Golden China, 12:00

2018

- **January 15** – District Conference Planning Committee Conference Call, 7:30 p.m.
- **January 20-26** - Winter Meeting of Council of District Executives
- **February 2** - Executive Committee, Stover Mem. COB
- **February 3** - District Board, Ankeny COB
- **April 9-12** - Council of District Executives, Professional Growth Event, Bethany Seminary
- **April 12-13** - Council of District Executives, Executive Committee, Greenville, OH
- **April 27** - Executive Committee, location tbd
- **April 28** - District Board, location tbd
- **June 11-15** - Day Camp, Hammond Avenue Church
- **June 22-23** - Primary Overnight Camp, Camp Pine Lake
- **July 1-4** - Summer Meeting of Council of District Executives
- **July 4-8** - [Church of the Brethren Annual Conference](#), Cincinnati, Ohio
- **July 10-14** - Sr. Youth Camp, Camp Pine Lake
- **July 15-19** - Jr. Youth Camp, Camp Pine Lake
- **July 21-26** - [National Youth Conference](#), Fort Collins, CO
- **July 29-August 2** - Middler Camp, Camp Pine Lake
- **August 3-5** - District Conference, South Waterloo COB
- **September 1-3** - All Ages Camp, Camp Pine Lake

District Staff & Leadership

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Daniel Butler, Moderator-Elect, 2018 District Conference

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AREA 1: ENGLISH RIVER, LIBERTYVILLE, MONROE COUNTY, IOWA CITY, FAIRVIEW, OTTUMWA, PRAIRIE CITY

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AREA 2: IOWA RIVER, SOUTH WATERLOO, IVESTER, ROBINS, CEDAR RAPIDS, HAMMOND AVENUE, FREDERICKSBURG, GREENE, TOLEDO

(currently discerning new cluster ministers)

AREA 3: LEWISTON, ROOT RIVER, HANDS OF CHRIST (ROCHESTER), OPEN CIRCLE (BURNSVILLE), COMMON SPIRIT (MINNEAPOLIS)

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AREA 4: PANORA, PANTHER CREEK, DALLAS CENTER, BEAVER, ANKENY, STOVER, PEACE (COUNCIL BLUFFS), SALEM

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AREA 5: WORTHINGTON, SHELDON, LIVING PEACE (SIOUX CITY), BIG SKY (FROID, MT)

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