

# Michigan District Church of the Brethren

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**STAFF:**  
**Marie Willoughby**  
**District Executive**

**Pastoral Care Team**  
**Merritt Bongard**  
**Doug Reichenbach**  
**Don Willoughby**  
**The Clergywomen**

## CoB Connection

December 2007      Volume VI No. 7

### I Think About This A Lot – you probably do, too

Even though this statement has been around for a number of years, it is still true.

Carl Dudley refers to a strong correlation of the church school to membership growth or decline. “The importance attached to the church school is second only to public worship...the trend of church school participation in one year will be repeated in denomination membership five years later.” *Where Have All the People Gone?*

(Pilgrim Press, 1979), p. 71, Carl S.

Dudley

From Declining Membership AC paper of 1981

Our 2007 Annual Conference asked us to study again our 1981 paper on Declining Membership in the Church of the Brethren.

How is your church doing?

We have some marvelous curriculum available for Church School.

Let's use it. Continue to encourage everyone to be part of some discussion and/or study group during our 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year.

Sometimes Sunday morning is the best time to gather, sometimes it's Sunday evening or during the week.

And if you are the one to lead out in these gatherings, may you know God's guidance and courage.

**Our church leadership for future years comes through our church school. See next page for a listing of Brethren help.**

*Marie*

### 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Resources** are available through the packets that were mailed in November of 2006 and that are also accessed through the **anniversary committee website**.

A six-session **study guide** on the anniversary theme has also been developed for adults, along with a three session study-guide for youth. They can be obtained on both the website and in the resource packet.

The devotional book **Fresh From the Word** is not to be missed.

Don't forget about the 'old' books on your church's Library shelves. Learn something new there.

**Brethren Press** has a number of other publications for sale related to the anniversary.

See the small catalogue that came in your November **"Messenger"** and in the Source packets to all churches.

The **anniversary curriculum *Piecing Together the Brethren Way*** is still available for use. The Marilla congregation in Michigan has even adapted the fourteen sessions of the curriculum for use in the Sunday morning worship.

**"Faith Alive! Surrendered, Transformed, Empowered"** is a DVD that tells inspiring stories of Brethren who live their faith in ways that make a difference is also available from Brethren Press.

**[www.brethrenpress.com](http://www.brethrenpress.com)**

**1 -800 – 441 – 3712**

#### Other titles:

"The Brethren Heritage Collection"  
4 DVD set

"Without Fear or Hesitation"  
Interactive CD-ROM

"Dan West Peacemaker" DVD

"The Complete Writings of Alexander Mack" book

"The Beliefs of the Early Brethren:1706-1735" book

And a number of Brethren Source Books – see catalogs

"Fruit of the Vine" book, also "A Study Guide"

"Another Way of Believing" book

"The Love Feast" book

Books of poetry and prose, Cookbooks

#### Children's Books:

"Faith the Cow" "Beatrice's Goat"

"Benjamin Brody's Backyard Bag"

"The Meanest Man in Patrick County"

Also in audio book

"The Little Man" "The Middle Man" "The Tall Man"

"LittleMiddleTall" DVD

"Nathan's Secret"

"Sarah Beth's Problem"

"Cassie: the Girl with the Hero's Heart"

"Cassie: After Antietam"

"Enter the Light" the Christmas Eve Service on CBS  
DVD or VHS

New CD (music) "Make a Difference"

"On Christmas Night"

"River Still Running"

"Velvet Light"

"Hymns and sons of the Brethren"

**[www.churchofthebrethrenanniversary.org](http://www.churchofthebrethrenanniversary.org)**

Look under Resources

And all the other great places, too.

**Remember August 3, 2008, is Celebration Sunday.**

**[www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)**

**Church of the Brethren**

## 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary

### CAR CARAVAN REPORT

At every church we were given an excellent reception with a tour of the building, information about the ministries and history of the congregation, pictures, and delicious snacks or lunch. **THANK YOU**

October 13, 2007 – North West  
Visits to Sugar Ridge, Onekama,  
District Office, Marilla and  
Lakeview

15 caravaners from Skyridge, Hope,  
Muskegon and Marilla

October 20, 2007 – North East  
Visits to Midland, New Life,  
Beaverton, Zion and The Church  
in Drive (Saginaw)

12 caravaners from Hope, Muskegon,  
Marilla, New Life, Zion

October 27, 2007 – South East  
Visits to Flint, Drayton Plains,  
Trinity and Shalom

8 caravaners from Hope, Marilla,  
Flint

OCTOBER 2008 visits are to be  
made to New Haven, Crystal,  
Muskegon, Hope, Lansing,  
Sunfield, Woodgrove and Skyridge

**We hope you will join us then.**

### Quotes from “By-Lines” the district youth newsletter about December 1951:

1951-52 CBYF Cabinet

President – Don Shurte      Treasurer – Richard Mishler  
Vice Pres. – John Stites      Editor – Carol Cramer  
Secretary – Eleanor Frantz      Scrapbook Cus. – Esther Smith  
Advisors – Gladys & Carl Welch  
Council of board Rep. – Richard Mishler, Katherine Stahl  
UCYM Reps. – Ruth Anderson, Katherine Stahl

### Lake Odessa Michigan [no clue as to the author]

Dear CBYFers:

Isn't it queer how some thought suddenly rises up in your mind and demands attention? Maybe it's something that has gone on unnoticed by you for a long time and all at once, it hits you like a slap in the face! Well, it's that way with Christmas in our house. Oh, not that we just suddenly realized there were only a few more days until Christmas. But here, we've grown up in Christian homes and gone to Sunday School and church practically every Sunday of our lives, and we've always celebrated Christmas as the anniversary of Christ's birth. Oh, there may have been a few times when we got so involved in the last-minute rush of deciding what to give Aunt Mary and wondering what Uncle Bill will be sending us that we forgot it was Christ's birthday. But actually, we've always given gifts because we wanted to express our love and friendship for others, not because it was just a custom --- or have we? Well, anyway, last year someone spouted off about folks making Christmas just a commercial affair. Somehow or other that struck home! Are we guilty, too, of commercializing His birthday, or is it just the merchants and people with things to sell?

No use trying to figure it all out during those last few days before the Big Day itself, so we just kinda tucked the thought out of sight down in one corner of our minds and decided to think about it some other time.....Let's see, how, do WE commercialize Christmas? Well, not with the gifts we give the members of our family because often some of them are just small items without much monetary value, but rich in sentiment, and then there's the extra glass of jelly and a mess of fresh sausage we shared with Neighbor Brown who's had a bit of adversity.....

But what about the idea that we mustn't spend more than 25 ¢ for his gift because we know he wouldn't spend more than that on us?..... Should gifts be given just because it is our duty? “And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? For even sinners do the same.” Yep, guess that hits all of us.

<more>

But even worse than that, the thing that sticks in a body's craw is: what can a person do to share with others without making it commercial?

*The paper said (continued on next page) – but the next page is a wonderful report of the “Cabinet Hilltop” meeting – something to share at another time.*

Apparently the district youth were collecting items for sending CHRISTMAS BOXES FOR PINEY WOODS. And they mention it's only 215 days until YOUTH CAMP

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**'BE PREPARED' TO SPEND NEXT  
JULY 6-13 [1952]**

at  
**BRETHREN HEIGHTS CAMP  
JEHNSEN LAKE!**

(this ad paid for by Ted Chambers)

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Local CBYF secretaries who sent news to the BY-LINES: were Nancy Semisch, Detroit; Randall Roose, Crystal; Marlene Van Dyke, Beaverton; Joyce Miller, Pontiac; Lowell Cook, New Haven; Duane Snavely, Sunfield; and Loreen Odean, Sugar Ridge. Their reports will be shared during 2008.

The editor asked: “Is this all of the active groups in Michigan?...Let us know what you're doing”

**Have you invited our  
Heritage Youth Team to  
share in your church?**

They are Julia Hammond and  
Alison Fletcher

Make arrangements through the District Office. Thanks.

## **Ministries of Reconciliation Workshop**

**February 16-17 & 23-24, 2008**

Faith-based Mediation Workshop  
Camp Mack, Milford, IN

The Ministry of Reconciliation, a branch of On Earth Peace, welcomes natural peacemakers and those interested in conflict resolution to a two-weekend mediation workshop. A refreshing, faithful approach to interpersonal peacemaking will be taught through a series of interactive and collaborative sessions.

The workshop is designed for church leaders, pastors, deacons, Shalom Team members and anyone interested in introductory level mediation to help others work through their differences.

Schedule is Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is on sliding scale of \$275-\$350. 2.0 CEUs are available to Church of the Brethren ministers. Contact Annie Clark at [annie.clark@verizon.net](mailto:annie.clark@verizon.net) or call 260-982-8595. **Deadline is January 16, 2008.**

## **National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar**

**March 29-April 3, 2008**

High School ages youth and their adult advisors are invited to participate in the 2008 Christian Citizenship Seminar. The theme is on genocide in our world.

The cost is \$350 for this event which takes place in New York City and Washington, DC and gives youth an opportunity to explore the intersection between their Christian faith and important current events in the world.

[www.brethren.org/genbd/yyc/ccs.htm](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/yyc/ccs.htm) or call

Chris Douglas, Director of Youth/Young Adults Ministries at 800-323-8038 x 297

## **2008 NATIONAL YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE - August 11-15**

**YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colo.**

Online registration begins Jan. 7, 2008 at [www.nyac08.org](http://www.nyac08.org). Cost is \$325 for housing, programming and meals.

Congregations are encouraged to help with transportation costs for their young adults.

Gift certificates can be purchased for this. Same website.

## DISTRICT NEWS AND NOTES

The Church in Drive held a Service of Dedication on December 2, 2007, for their meeting place at 1208 Court St, Saginaw. A spaghetti supper came first, then music by *MiddleTree*.

New Life Christian Fellowship pastor, *Merritt Bongard*, led the dedication ceremony. Due to the 'terrible' weather that weekend, District Executive *Marie Willoughby*, sent her sermon via email and it was read by *Ken Good*, Zion.

*Nathan Polzin* serves as lead pastor at The Church in Drive where attendance is growing. *Steve Heska* is director of the Saginaw Valley University Chapter of "Standing in the GAP" a ministry with the college students.

### Congratulations to:

**Bill and Betty Naill**, on their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on October 18

**Brian Mackie and Karen Miller**, on their December 15, 2007, wedding being held at Camp Mack, Milford, IN

**Jennifer Crispin**, Administrator of Camp Brethren Heights, who received her Master's Degree from Arizona State this fall in Soil, Water and Environmental Science.

### Each of our pastors for another year of faithful ministry for Christ and the Church:

*John Glasscock, Henry List, Mike Fletcher, Mike Rath, Don Flint, Doug Reichenbach, Debbie Eisenbise, Russ Garrigus, Anita Smith-Buckwalter, Joe Wav, Art Smith, Bill Naill, Brian Ruth, Frances Townsend, Merritt Bongard, Paul Versluis, David Wood, Randall Bertrand, Kevin Switzer*

**Anna Herdeck**, Skyridge, will be going to Honduras with the Peace Corps in 2008.

## District Senior High Rally at Camp January 25-27, 2008

Speaker – Walt Wiltschek, editor of "Messenger", the official magazine of the Church of the Brethren  
Walt is delightful and entertaining, as well as a spiritual speaker. Help your youth attend this event.

The Youth Cabinet was meeting at Camp December 9 to do planning. Be ready to order soup mixes from them.

This fund raiser helps with transportation to National Youth Conference.  
Fliers will be forthcoming.

## Brethren Beliefs Retreat March 28-30, 2008 for grades 5 through 8 at Camp Brethren Heights

This bi-annual event provides insights and experiences for our younger youth about the Church of the Brethren.

Put these dates on your calendar now.

Adults are always needed – just to be there.

Cost \$35 for the youth, \$30 for helping adults.

Subsidized by the District Nurture Commission Scholarship fund

Oct. 10, 2007                      Email note from former BVSer  
Right now I'm living in North Carolina. I've been here a year in November. I'm working at the Mental Health Assoc. in NC. in a group home for adults with mental illnesses ( in asheville). I also work at a small cafe in Black Mtn where I live as well. I recently adopted a BVSer who is volunteering at Gould Farm. I hope to still be involved and give back what so many good people, like you, did for me when I was volunteering. Thanks again for all the support. I appreciate what you, wanda joseph, and the onekama church all did for me in many different ways. Its nice to know that people care and understand what BVS is all about. Anyway, I hope you are doing well and enjoying the fall colors. I can't wait for the leaves to begin changing down here. Its doesn't really seem like the October I'm used to. Its nice to hear from you!

**Angela Wahr**                      [Sugar Ridge congregation]

**AT Camp Brethren Heights**

The December 7-8 Cookie and Candy Camp had to be cancelled due to lack of registrations.

The **Sr Hi Youth Rally** will be at Camp the last weekend in January 2008.

Make plans to come to the **FAMILY WINTER SNOW CAMP** February 8-9, 2008.

Fliers will come through your pastor and your Camp Board member. Or Contact Jen at Camp now.

[brethrenheights@gmail.com](mailto:brethrenheights@gmail.com)  
231-867-3618

**Brethren Beliefs Retreat** for those in grades 5 through 8, will be at Camp, March 28-30, 2008.

The **District Board's** Spring meeting is at Camp **April 18-19**, with **EVERYONE EXPECTED** on Saturday at 10 a.m. for our annual **"Annual Conference Briefing/ Meet the Moderator"** event. Stay for lunch! and the aft. Bd. Mtg.

**Camp Work days** include May 9-10 and June 5,6,7 Contact Andrew - per above- to come anytime. There is always something to do.

**CAMP OPEN HOUSE & Heritage Trail - May 17, 2008**

Help Camp reach its budget. Send donations yet this year. Has your church or group given \$50 for The Nature Display Case? Call Andrew.

**NEW COMMUNITY PROJECT list of activities:** partial  
In the name of Christ and for Justice and Peace among all peoples

- Over **100 presentations** in schools, college, congregations, youth events, and community groups on topics ranging from global warming to Burma, etc
- Have Tom Benevento developing a sustainable living center to launch **Undoing Global Warming** campaign, save energy and money.
- Four **Learning Tours**, with people from 15-65.
- **Grants** of \$27,000 to partners in Nepal, Sudan, etc. for girls' education reforestation, etc.
- Helped 4 young adults participate in "Project:Nimule" in Sudan as **Solidarity Workers**
- Shares awareness of bill in the US Congress (S2279) to curtail violence against women, called the **International Violence Against Women Act**
- New **grants for women's development** include a Burmese micro-credit enterprise, a women's empowerment initiative in a Christian Community in Honduras, and plans for grants in El Salvador and the Sudan for girls' education and women's development

David Radcliff, Director

Steve Brady, Advisory Board Chair

[www.newcommunityproject.org](http://www.newcommunityproject.org) 888-800-2985

## 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Opportunity

"The Annual Conference Anniversary Committee invites each district to develop an exhibit for Annual Conference, Richmond, VA, July 12-16, 2008, that depicts your district's history. You are encouraged to identify people, places, events and items that have enriched experiences of Brethren beliefs and practices throughout the years of your existence. Choose a method of communicating information about these people, places, events and items that will interest a variety of people, especially children..... [some ideas given for these methods].

Districts need to take all their own equipment to Richmond for the 20' x 10' exhibit space... This is a terrific opportunity to develop an educational display that could be used at district events as well as Annual Conference..... Can you imagine the wealth of history and inspiration presented in unique and attractive ways coming from 23 exhibits of this nature?

**If you'd like to be part of planning, preparing, and presenting such a display, please contact Marie at the district office as soon as possible.**

## District Calendar for 2008

*Many other events will be added throughout the year.* **Keep Handy**

**January** 12 – Camp Board meeting at Camp  
18- 19– District Board, at Skyridge, K-zoo  
25-27 Youth Rally at Camp  
26-Feb 1 Winter Council of District Executives mtg

**February** 8- 9 – Winter **Family Retreat** at Camp for all

**March** – 8-10 – General Board meetings, Elgin;  
16 –Palm Sunday 23 – **EASTER**  
28-20– **Brethren Beliefs Retreat**, grades 5 thru 8  
29 –Apr. 3 – Christian Citizenship Seminar, NYC & Washington DC

**April** 4- 5 – **Pastors/ministers family**  
retreat at Camp  
4- 6 – “Mission Alive” Conference, Bridgewater VA  
12 – Camp Board meeting, Camp  
18-19 – District Board meeting, Camp  
19 – **District Wide Annual Conf. Briefing/  
Meet Moderator, camp 10 a.m.**  
24-27 – Cross Cultural Celebration and Consultation,  
Elgin, IL Register online @ [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)  
Key Word Cross Cultural Ministries  
??? – Regional Youth Conference, Manchester Coll

**May** - Camp work days May 9-10, and June 5-6-7  
15-17 - Church Planting Conference, Richmond, IN  
17– **Open House** at Camp Brethren Heights  
and Long Term Planning session – open to all

**June** - 6-7 – Camp Board meeting, at camp;  
5, 6,7 Camp Work Days  
22-28 – Camp 67 Dean –  
29-July 1 Sampler Camp (Sun-Tue) Dean –

**July** 12-16 *Annual Conference, Richmond, Virginia*  
18-19 – Family Camp – Dean –  
20-26 – Camp 100 Dean – Tiffany Herrold  
27-Aug 2 – Camp 45 – Dean – Wendy Russell

**August 3 – 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Sunday –  
locally, and internationally**

**August** 3-9 – Camp 89 – Dean – Becky Phillips  
11-15 – National Young Adult Conference,  
Estes Park. CO

**15-17 DISTRICT CONFERENCE, and District  
Wide Worship** Debbie Eisenbise, Moderator

**September** 1-5 NOAC, Lake Junaluska, N Carolina  
**Camp Work Days** – all welcome!  
27 Camp Board

Remember to **clear dates with the District Office  
before** scheduling any District Event

**Address section**

# **CAMP BRETHERN HEIGHTS**

## **NEEDS OUR FINANCIAL HELP**

### **NOW!**

**Please make  
sure your gift  
is sent asap.**

**Thank you  
very much!**

**Sign up to use the camp!**

**It costs more than it used to,  
but what doesn't?**

**"The earth is the Lord's,  
and everything in it;  
the world, and all who live in it!"  
Psalm 24.!**

**Send donations to the District Financial Secretary  
Lee Long  
408 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
Breckenridge MI  
38615-9544**

**Pastor/Spouse Retreat April 4-5, 2008  
at Camp Brethren Heights**

## **Michigan Songbook Project**

**Composers** may send up to five submissions to the District Office by **February 1, 2008**. Poets may work with music writers and combine efforts for a submission.

An ad hoc committee from the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Team will review the submissions and select no more than two from any one person for inclusion in the songbook.

All selections will be used in some way during the 2008 Michigan District Conference.

Register now, on-line, for the April 24-27, 2008, **Cross Cultural Consultation and Celebration** in Elgin, IL. No registration fee. Various housing options. CEUs given to pastors who attend. [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org) Key word "Cross Cultural"

### **OUR LOVELY JOURNEY**

Don and I really enjoyed our trip to California on Amtrak in November 2007. It was our first adventure this way. We've driven, we've flown, and now we've ridden the train.

It took 4 hours from Grand Rapids to Chicago. We left Chicago at 2 p.m. on a Thurs, and Don's brother picked us up in Roseville, CA (north of Sacramento) at 4 p.m. on Saturday. I liked the gradual time zone changes. Our deluxe bedroom had adequate space and all meals were included in the ticket.

Besides good visits with 2 of Don's brother's & their wives, and our daughter, Brenda, we enjoyed seeing a Polish refugee who lived with us briefly in 1985, some old friends and some other relatives. At the north end of Napa Valley the Old Faithful geyser delighted us at Calistoga, as did the Petrified Forest in northern California. We even saw smoke from the Malibu fires in the Los Angeles area. We got to church in Roseville, Modesto and LaVerne.

The train that brought us back to GR on Nov. 29 is the one that crashed the next morning in Chicago! *Marie*