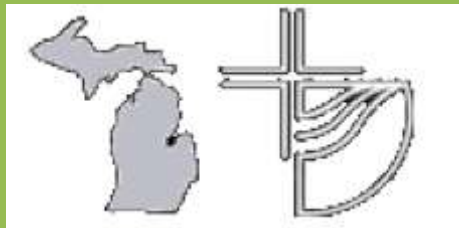


The Brethren Bugle

Michigan District Church of the Brethren Monthly Newsletter



January 2017

Contact Us:

Email Emily at:

brethrenbugle@gmail.com

Follow us on Twitter:

[@michigancob](https://twitter.com/michigancob)

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Michigan District Church of the Brethren

Important Links:

www.michigancob.org

www.brethren.org

Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year!

I hope that this Bugle reaches you well and that you are looking forward to this issue! If there are others in your church who are interested in receiving this newsletter, please send me their information and they will be added to the mailing list!

Please take time to review the letters and flyers below, as they are filled with ways for you and your church to connect with others in our district. The very last page has our District Calendar- if you would like to add your event to this list, please do not hesitate to e-mail me your event information!

Recently, I took on the role as the District Webmaster- so please feel free to direct any questions to brethrenbugle@gmail.com regarding our website, www.michigancob.org.

We will begin working on our 2017 District Directory soon, **if any of your personal contact information has changed in the past year, please forward it to me as soon as possible.**

-Emily Woodruff

Church	2015 Statistical Reports (3/15/2016)	Form A (5/15/16)	Annual Conf. Delegate (6/1/16)	Dist. Conf. Delegate Fee (7/1/16)	Congregational Outreach Forms (12/01/16)	2017 Pastor Renewal Agreements (12/01/16)	Form B (12/31/16)	District Financial Support (12/31/16)
Beaverton	x	x		x				x
Common Spirit	x	x	x	x				x
Crystal	x	x						x
Drayton Plains	x	x	x	x				
Flint	x	x		x				
Hope		x	x	x				x
Lakeview	x	x		x				x
Lansing	x		x	x				
Living Peace Church		x	x	x				
Lost & Found	x	x	N/A	N/A				
Marilla				x				x
Midland	x	x		x				x
Muskegon	x	x		x				x
New Haven	x			x				x
Onekama	x	x	x	x				x
Shalom	x							
Skyridge	x	x	x	x		x		
Sugar Ridge				x				x
The Church in Drive	x	x	x	x				x
Woodgrove	x	x		x				x
Zion			x	x				x

Hello again, Brethren of Michigan!

I pray that your Christmas celebrations were filled with family and friends and a renewed sense of the truth that in Jesus, God truly is with us! In this new year, let us intentionally seek out the opportunities that God gives us to share Jesus' love with others.

In case you missed it, two of our District churches were featured in November's Messenger magazine. Hope's and Common Spirit's work with refugee families were included in an article about how some Church of the Brethren congregations are reviving a ministry that many in our denomination participated in a few decades ago.

We've had a some changes in our ministry family in the past couple of months. Steve Thomas (from the Mennonite Church) has been called as Transitional Pastor for Shalom Community Church following Paul Versluis' retirement this past summer. Mik Sutton resigned from Sugar Ridge in November. Kelly Iseman was installed as the new pastor of the Crystal Church of the Brethren at the end of November. Lansing, Lakeview and Skyridge are also preparing for or searching for new pastoral leadership in the near future.

Please be in prayer for the District Leadership Team as we meet for a retreat January 26-27 in Grand Rapids. Josh Brockway will be facilitating much of our time together. We pray God will use that time to reveal to us how we can best be of service to Christ and the District.

Finally, if there are missing items for your church on the following chart, please get them in as soon as possible, especially your pastoral renewal agreements (those are the legal employment documents I need to have in each pastor's personnel file which are maintained in the District Office) and your Congregational Outreach Forms. If you need replacements, please let Emily or me know and we'll get them to you right away.

As always, thank you for the part you play in helping your church and our district to fulfill the ministry God has given us in Jesus Christ!

May God bless and keep you throughout 2017 and into eternity,

Nate

Annual Conference 2017 Info.

Annual Conference will be June 28 to July 2, 2017 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We've been hard at work planning and getting coordinators in place. We're looking for many, many volunteers to help make this conference run smoothly. If you'd like to help, please contact the individual coordinators directly. With the exception of loading and unloading the truck, volunteers need to be registered for conference.

Unloading the Truck Tuesday June 27: Contact Roy Wise at taraewise@gmail.com. The truck needs to be reloaded on July 2.

Registration: Katherine Haff Contact: kahaff@gmail.com

Hospitality: Michele Kennedy Contact: michelenken@yahoo.com

Meal Ticket Sales: Roya Stern Contact: royastern@comcast.net

First Aid: Rosalie McBride Contact: rosalie.l.mcbride@gmail.com

Head Ushers: Becky and Gary Copenhaver Contact: bgcopenhaver@yahoo.com

Age Group Coordinators:

Early Childhood: Katie Polzin Contact: kpolz2011@gmail.com

K-2: Paulette Reichenbach Contact: dpreichenbach@gmail.com

Grades 3-5: Jenny DeWeese Contact: brootdeweese@aol.com

Junior High: Laura Van Voorhis Contact: lauravanvoorhis@aol.com

Senior High: Dennis Beckner Contact: dennisbeckner@yahoo.com

Thank you for your enthusiasm and service!

Randy Short randyfordsales@gmail.com

Joanna Willoughby jojozazo@yahoo.com

Sending Your Congregation's Delegate to Annual Conference

In 2017, the 231st recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And once again congregations will be encouraged to send a delegate to come together for fellowship and to discern the business of the denomination. For those who may be unaware, here is some information on sending a delegate from your congregation.

Why is it important for my congregation to send a delegate to Annual Conference?

Sending a delegate to Annual Conference is the only way to ensure your congregation has a say in decisions that affect the whole church. The Annual Conference delegate body is one of the most important—if not the highest—level of decision making in the Church of the Brethren. Each congregation may play a vital part in Annual Conference by sending a delegate or delegates. The number of delegates a congregation may send is relative to the number of members in the congregation.

Who can be a delegate and how many delegates does our congregation get?

Each congregation may choose who their delegate(s) may be, and all delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The pastor of a congregation is not automatically a delegate.

The number of delegates allowed per congregation is based on its membership statistics as reported in the Church of the Brethren Yearbook for the previous year. The number allowed is as follows:

1 – 200 members	1 delegate
201 – 400 members	2 delegates
401 – 600 members	3 delegates
601 – 800 members	4 delegates
801+ members	5 delegates

What do delegates and their congregations get from Annual Conference?

Delegates benefit personally from the opportunities for spiritual renewal, continuing education, and faith formation. Their congregations benefit from the spiritual growth that their church leadership may bring back and share with the church. In addition to business sessions, each Conference features daily worship services, Bible studies, insight sessions on a wide variety of topics, support groups, meal events, an exhibit hall with booths and many free resources, a Brethren Press

bookstore, and much more. All of these are open to every Conference attendee. Every congregation that sends a delegate will also receive a copy of that year's Annual Conference minutes.

To take full advantage of sending a delegate, a congregation should make time for that person to report back following the Conference, so that they can share the experience with the whole congregation.

Delegate registration for Grand Rapids will open online on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. The registration fee for each delegate is \$285. For more information about how to send a delegate to Annual Conference, contact the Conference Office by email at annualconference@brethren.org, or call 800-323-8039 ext. 365.

-Jon Kobel, Conference Assistant
Church of the Brethren Annual Conference
1451 Dundee Ave
Elgin, IL 60120
800-323-8039 x365
847-429-4365 direct
jkobel@brethren.org

Flint Water Crisis Ministry Update:

Healthy risk-taking is a big part of exploring faith. I was lying in bed one evening at the end of last winter, wondering what my next step would be. I had just lost my job as a substance abuse therapist due to a transition in service providers. I had little to no capital to make the farm profitable for the season. I was in the middle of writing a book on the embodiment of gospel ethics for *Wipf and Stock Publishing*. And, I happened to be listening to the radio. I heard an interview with a social worker who was organizing a volunteer response to the water crisis in Flint, MI that night, and I instantly felt a call to practice what I was preaching (or, writing about). I made plans to go to Flint.

I spent the first ten years of my life in Flint, near the corner of Ballenger and Corunna Roads. The first house I remember was on Knapp St near the corner of Corunna. When I looked to see where the Brethren Church was in the area, I found that it was, and always had been, a block away from that first house. Stocker Avenue became my workplace for the next seven or eight months. The Hammond household on the north end of Flint became my home away from home for that period. My plan was to deliver some kind of outreach to my old neighborhood as an outreach worker for the Church of the Brethren.

Somebody somewhere told me to contact the Hammonds. I was Facebook friends with Bill and sent him a grand plan of all I could do, and all of the expertise I could contribute to my hometown. Certainly, my plan was to rescue Flint from every plague that had infested it. Bill was excited to be sure, but he was able to calm down my expectations. He and Mary Lorah Hammond, Jennifer Betts, and lots of other Hammonds, welcomed me to town, to church, and then, let me be to find out the necessary work to be done while the water was weighed down with lead.

As it turns out, the church and its sister congregation NOW Ministries did not need a social worker or therapist or community organizer. They needed somebody to help distribute bottled water. That was the immediate and greatest need. My presence was greeted with a lot of enthusiasm – especially the two ministers from NOW. Samuel Smith, aka B.B., was working full shifts at age 70, while relying on a pacemaker to keep his ticker tocking. Mulondo Echols was also present, working overnight full-time at a city hospital emergency room, then coming to the church to distribute water. It rained, it shined, it snowed, and we distributed water to all in needs, moving it from pallets on the sidewalk into the trunks of cars. We were amazed and delighted to distribute three or four pallets of water a day, with me and B.B. staying until 5pm or so to make sure it was gone.

We soon got more help. I was surprised to come into town one day and find members of Save the Children working with us at the church. Even more surprising – they were members of the Bruderhof community in Rifton, NY. The Bruderhof is an Anabaptist group related to the Hutterites. They own everything in common like the Acts II church did, and because of the way they support one another financially and vocationally, they were able to

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o send members of their community to volunteer across the United States, and across the world. My family had visited Rifton when I attended seminary, and I was able to renew some friendships.

And then, the real work began. The full scale of the crisis was beginning to unfold, and the reality of how much water was needed to meet community needs was staggering. The Pastor of NOW Ministries decided that our site on Stocker could distribute 18 pallets daily, three days a week. Until we received some employees funded by the state, B.B and I were often there, sometimes with Mary, distributing water until dark. Those were full days, and sometimes frustrating, but ever-rewarding. There were other rewards as well, and important work done my more people than I could mention.

First Flint CoB and NOW Ministries threw a block party for the neighborhood, and it was a huge success. One of the reasons it was so successful is that most everyone who attended was from our neighborhood. Many of the block parties in Flint were appealing to a certain crowd, but ours was overwhelmingly a neighborly event. It was one that might have brought a tear to Bill Hammond's eye, but it also made a lot of kids and adults run for a dry spot. An antique fire engine was on hand with a water canon that soaked about every square inch of Stocker, and all who were standing in it.

A lot of people received food as well. For July and August, school-aged children ate free lunch at First Flint. We had fresh fruit to share with folks picking up water. We had small neighborhood dinners that grew into what is now a dinner church where Mary and Jennifer serve 15 folks on Tuesday nights and engage in some important talk about faith and relationship building. B.B. and I delivered water to shut-ins, and I made visits to houses that were in need of outreach and a witness to the love and mercy of Christ who were otherwise not able or not willing to receive services. Many broken persons received the love of Christ despite their addiction to drugs, alcohol, or mental illness. We were even able to treat an individual who overdosed and was thrown off the bus at our corner. Of course, we often called these folks into the church basement to eat lunch and engage in some conversation, which resulted in one saved soul and one bag of candy being stolen from B.B.

I also gained an opportunity to spend quality time with my two youngest children, and it gave them an opportunity to get an idea of how some folks serve God. My kids worked and ate side-by-side with neighborhood kids. In fact, there were times when the neighborhood kids saw B.B. and I falling behind, and they came over to help. There was one night when we had four volunteers from Stocker Street and a kool-aid stand to top it off. The diversity of the neighborhood surrounding First CoB is an asset, and it is an asset our District and Denomination should take advantage of wherever our churches stand in the middle of urban communities.

The most important part of my experience of going home was seeing the faithfulness of the Hammond family and First Church of the Brethren. These are folks committed to Flint, to their neighbors, and to the love of Christ. The dedication of the folks at First Flint was an inspiration to me, and their value to their community was evidenced by the words of all who know them. My intention in going to Flint was to experience the emptying of privilege – forgoing gainful employment to serve others in need. Mostly, I received the privilege of being ministered to; By the neighbors I met in Flint, and by the whole Hammond family, First CoB, and NOW Ministries.

For more reading about the outreach in Flint, please see my blog written to share my experiences in a little more depth. <http://gospeloftheabsurd.wixsite.com/baptizedbyflint>

Special thanks to Common Spirit and Beaverton Churches, Mike and Dorothy Wolf of Hope CoB, and Paul Crumback for the kind of understanding that drives me to serve others. Thanks also to the Michigan District for their important contributions to this ministry.

-Scot Miller

We'd love to have high schoolers join us for a fun weekend at Camp Brethren Heights as we explore the theme of Annual Conference this summer! Please spread the word! The Winter Rally is especially exciting because camp has many great sledding hills! We hope to see you there!

Michigan District Senior High Youth Winter Rally

Dates: January 27-29, 2017

Cost: \$30

Location: Camp Brethren Heights

Theme: Risking Hope

Check in time: 7pm on Friday (Jan 27)

Packing List -

- Clothes for 2-3 days (a set for Sunday Worship)
- Bedding, towel & shower supplies
- Bible & journal
- Snacks & games
- Outdoor winter clothing

Camp Brethren Heights Address

478 Brethren Heights Rd



Please RSVP by January 20th to Amanda Thomas: kthomas.amanda@gmail.com
(Please indicate any special needs or dietary considerations when RSVPing)

January

12- Program & Arrangements
20-22 Winter Youth Rally at Camp Brethren Heights
21-26- CODE, Melbourne, FL
28-Clergy Tax Seminar- Register by 1-20-17 at
<https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/clergy-tax-seminar/>

March

5-6 New Pastor's Retreat
7-8 CODE Midwest
11-Program & Arrangements
18-District Leadership Team Meeting
23-Bethany Board Meeting