



Theme Statement

The Apostle Paul wrote to the members of the church in Thessalonica in 2 Thessalonians 1:3, “We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.” (NRSVue)

This was Paul’s second letter in just a few months’ time to these early Christians. And already in this second letter, Paul acknowledges that he is hearing of their growing faith and love for each other. Is that what we’re hearing in the Church of the Brethren?

The Church of the Brethren I want to be a part of today is one that is growing in faith and love for each other. But we likely won’t observe growth in our denomination if we don’t focus on bringing and keeping young people in our congregations.

This year’s logo, designed by my daughter, Deanna Beckner, shows a smaller hand and a larger hand forming part of the cross together. Growing abundant faith, as 2 Thessalonians 1:3 speaks of, goes hand in hand when our love for one another is also increasing. It means older folks and younger ones sharing in the ministry of faith together. It means teaching in our local congregations, camps, and throughout denominational programming so that children, youth, and young adults feel connected by mutual love. It means allowing our emerging young leaders to begin to lead. We will likely need to think differently to allow the Holy Spirit to help us be the church we need to be in this era.

Even if a congregation only has one child, one youth, or one young adult, we need to be intentionally interacting with them to keep them engaged and active in the life of our congregation. Let’s commit to work hand in hand at building up the Church of the Brethren. Together we can foster faith to grow abundantly among our brothers and sisters of all ages!

—Dennis Beckner, Moderator