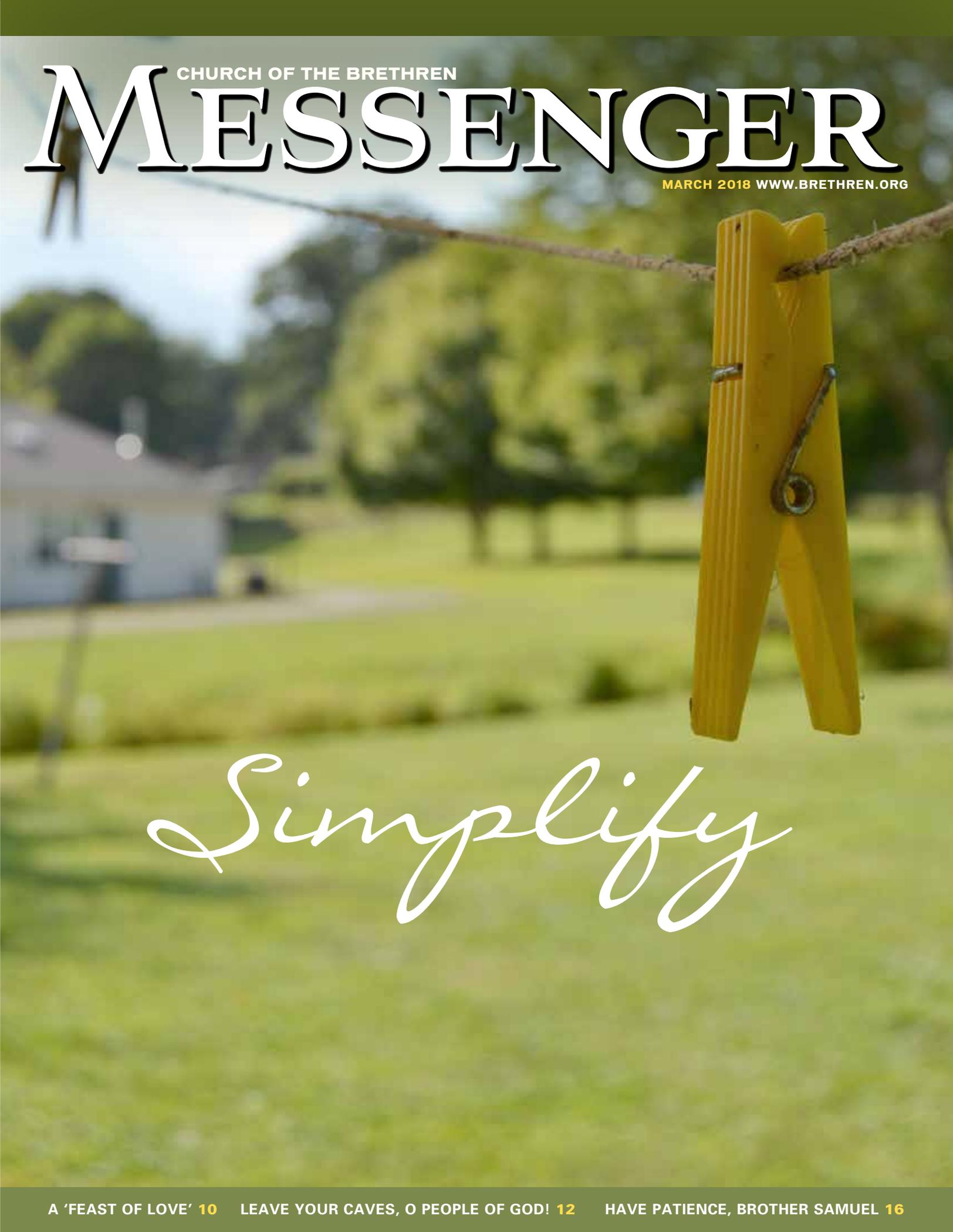


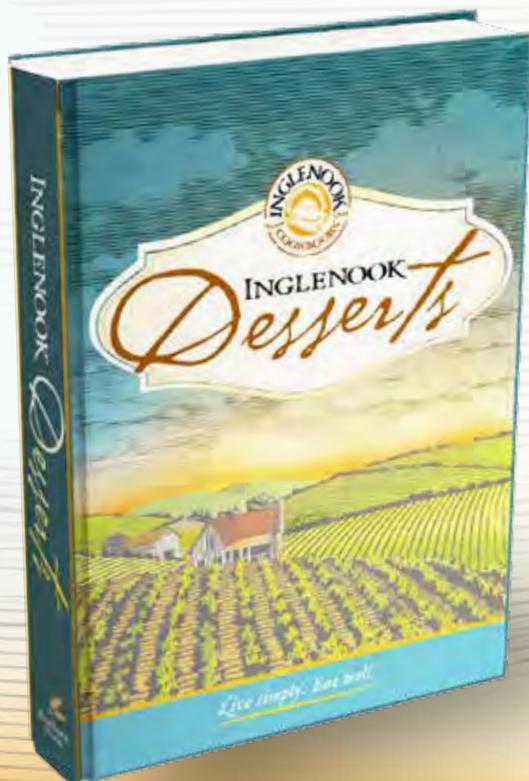
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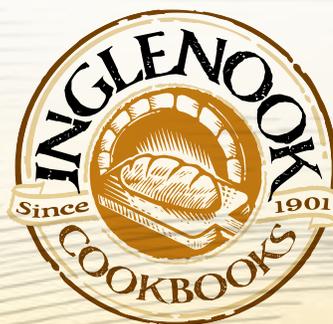
Simplify

KEEP YOUR FORK



SOMETHING
sweet
IS COMING!

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

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Cover photo by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Courtesy of Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren

The power in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wind in the Door* is the power of Naming (which she writes with a capital N). For most of the book, the main character, Meg Murry, is learning what this means.

What do Namers do? They help those they Name become more particularly who they were meant to be. If your name isn't known, you're lonely, explains Meg's new friend, a dragon-sized, many-winged cherubim. Being Named makes you *more* you.



WENDY MCFADDEN
PUBLISHER

A Wind in the Door is the second book in L'Engle's Time Quintet. (An Ava DuVernay movie based on the first, *A Wrinkle in Time*, premieres this month.) The series blends fantasy and science fiction, religion and mythology. Its characters travel across space and time.

In this book, the foes that must be overcome are the Echthroi ("enemies" in Greek). "War and hate are their business," the cherubim tells Meg, "and one of their chief weapons is un-Naming—making people not know who they are. If someone knows who he is, really knows, then he doesn't need to hate. That's why we still need Namers."

When the fate of the universe hangs in the balance, Meg discovers that her brother's life is the fulcrum. To save him, she must make it through three trials. The first is too hard and she wants to give up: She's expected to Name the person she dislikes the most. Why is this hard? Because the power behind Naming is love, and she must find something to love about the person she hates.

But it's Meg's final trial that seems truly impossible. In the climactic moment, she realizes what she must do: She must take hold of the Echthroi and fill their nothingness with love. Even though they are the enemy, she must Name them.

Reading fantasy may seem escapist, but it can help us make sense of our nonfiction lives. How do we respond when each day brings news of another un-Naming? Can we imagine another way of living? How do we summon love not only toward the ordinary unlovable but toward an outright enemy?

We can keep our eyes on the One who Names the sparrows and the lilies, the tax collector and the woman at the well, the Roman soldier and the disciple who falls short. In the divine story, we see that fearsome enemies are no match for fierce love. "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

Wendy McFadden

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‘Kuddles and hugs’

ast fall, the women of Northern Plains

District were introduced to the Kuddles and Hugs

Community Outreach Program sponsored by the Eldora (Iowa) Welcome Center and Railroad Museum. Kuddles and Hugs collects blankets, books, and toys for police to offer to children in crisis situations.



Ladonna Brunk

The Welcome Center mission is to promote tourism, support the community, and offer information on things to do and see around Eldora and Hardin County. The small museum offers interesting railroad memorabilia.

Kuddles and Hugs was begun after the committee heard about a similar project for crisis centers in California. The committee decided to make the idea work for Eldora. The reception and feedback from the Eldora Police Department and the Hardin County Sheriff’s Department were encouraging.

Some situations police officers find themselves in are uncomfortable, and they like being able to offer comfort and distraction in the form of a blanket, a book, or a cuddly stuffed toy. The project prepares bags of these for different ages of children. Each bag is age appropriate and gender neutral.

Support from the community has allowed the program to be put together in about five months, with enough bags to supply the Eldora Police Department now, and to supply the Sheriff’s Department in this coming year.

—Tina John, chair of Kuddles and Hugs Community Outreach Program

Flu victims’ graves make Midland cemetery historic

On the cover of the Jan. 10 Fauquier Times from Warrenton, Va.,

Midland Church of the Brethren pastor Tim Monn stands in the church’s cemetery—one of the places that may put the community of Midland on the National Register of Historic Places.

The church sanctuary was built in 1883, and the church’s cemetery holds graves of victims of the flu pandemic of 1918. It is among 33 properties in Midland that will be surveyed for eligibility for the historic designation.

A few years ago, church member Preston Ratliff earned his Eagle Scout badge by researching the unmarked graves and erecting a monument to the unknown who are buried there.

He was responsible for planning and carrying out the project, including working with the mason to design the monument. A dedication of the new stones and monument took place during the church’s Homecoming in 2013.

The deadly flu of 1918 hit Virginia and Fauquier County in the latter part

of September—the second of three waves to affect the United States, and the most deadly. Life expectancy rates dropped by 10 years in just one year. Some families had to dig graves for their own family members, such was the fear of transmitting and getting the virus. —Regina Holmes



Regina Holmes

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to MESSENGER? Short items with a photo are best. Send them to MESSENGER, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org.



Mid-Atlantic makes a dream come true

The first Mustard Seed House was built in 2003 by Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren, with some help from other congregations. When, in 2015, Mid-Atlantic District began work on another house for Habitat for Humanity, the name Mustard Seed House was chosen again based on the parable of Jesus, that if one has the faith of a mustard seed one can do great things.

In the summer of 2015, district executive Gene Hagenberger brought up the idea of building a Habitat house. Washington County Habitat expressed interest. That fall, at district conference, the idea was proposed to the churches and a workshop was held.

A committee was formed in October 2015: Howard Stevens, Denny Rhoe, Mavin Weigle, Dave Klein, and chair Glenn Young. The committee worked with Washington County Habitat staff including executive director Joy Heptner, program director Jessica Scott, and construction manager Joe Aaron. The committee met monthly for more than a year, and charted the progress of the project.

If each church gave \$1,000 the district could raise \$65,000, and Habitat would raise the remainder from its resources. When word got out, money flowed in from the churches. Habitat raised funding from the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust, Hagerstown CITI, the CITI Foundation, and other supporters.

In the meantime, a family was selected: Waynisha and her two children, Ty'Jhae, now age 8, and Tymi, now age 4. A Habitat house is not a handout, but a hand up. To qualify, she needed to fill out an application and have it approved; attend a homeowner's class that included financial planning, how to manage a household financially, and how to live within her means; pass a financial background check; make a down payment of \$400; and work 200 sweat equity hours. Waynisha completed the hours by working in a Habitat Restore and



helping to build her home. Her good grades in nursing school, and her son's marks, all contributed to the hours needed to complete her part of the contract.

With seed money in hand, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 19, 2016, at the site of Waynisha's future home. The mayor was present to officiate.

Work began to secure permits and raise the balance needed to complete the house. After many challenges, the foundation was laid and building began. The original goal was for completion by Christmas 2016, but because of delays with permits that was not to be.

Each year, district conference received an update that helped raise the funds to continue the work. At district conference in 2017, Waynisha attended with her daughter and shared her dream and hope for the new home. The delegate body responded, and additional money was raised. At the time, the committee was \$8,000 short. Since then, more donations have come in and the district's obligation has been paid in full.

There were also in-kind donations.

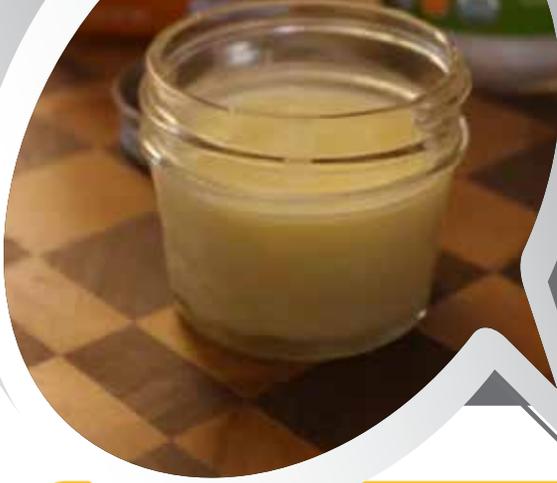
Two electricians donated the wiring and electrified the house. A porch deck was constructed by a carpenter who donated the labor, with the district providing the lumber. The vast majority of the labor was done by volunteers and Habitat staff.

After many delays, much prayer, and many meetings, the house was completed. On Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017, the house was dedicated with Waynisha's family, church friends, community friends, and Habitat staff all in attendance. A worship service was held, and the dream was accomplished. This young family received a home of their own, and a new life.

—Glenn A. Young



“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? . . . But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” —Matthew 6:25b and 33



Recipes for simple living by Katie Heishman

The Brethren value of simple living has challenged me to look at my consumption habits and the pervasive consumer culture. I used to spend a long time in the hygiene aisles at the store, poring over different products. Which is cheapest? Which is best for *me*?

While in seminary, I learned to make a number of hygiene products that previously I had bought—like toothpaste, deodorant, and hair pomade. When I started making these products, I noticed I could pronounce all of the ingredients. They were simple ingredients that fit into many recipes, and even are found in food recipes. It took less time to make the products in my kitchen than it took to discern which product to buy at the store.

Making my own hygiene products has allowed me to avoid marketing and bypass levels of consumerism. The ingredients I purchase are in either glass or cardboard. Glass can be recycled over and over again, and cardboard can be recycled or composted. This allows me to limit the amount of waste I contribute to landfills.

This small act of simple living reminds me that I am made in the image of God, a creator not a consumer. In creating my own things and limiting my consumption, I gain time to spend with God and in service to others.

Toothpaste

When I first started to simplify and limit the plastic waste that I create, toothpaste was one of the first things that I made. It's very simple to make, and much cheaper than commercial toothpaste.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons organic coconut oil
1 tablespoon baking soda
15-20 drops of essential oil (peppermint, cinnamon, or spearmint)

Directions: Place ingredients in a small bowl and stir until well combined. Store in an airtight container.

To use: Scoop a small amount onto a toothbrush. Keep in mind that this toothpaste may be a bit saltier than commercial toothpaste. Coconut oil has a melting point of 76 degrees, and the consistency of the toothpaste may change with changes in room temperature.

Deodorant

There are many kinds of homemade deodorant recipes. If this recipe doesn't work for you and your skin, keep looking for other types of frugal, simple deodorants. This deodorant is not an antiperspirant but does eliminate body odor. Sweating is healthy and natural for our bodies. Tinker with the ingredients to produce a mix that works best for your body—this recipe is customizable. Shea butter may be swapped for



more coconut oil. The amount of baking soda, which acts as the deodorizer, may be increased or decreased.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon baking soda
1 tablespoon organic coconut oil
1 tablespoon shea butter
5-10 drops of essential oil

Directions: Combine all ingredients except the essential oil in a glass bowl. Place the bowl on a pot of water to create a double boiler. Heat the water to boiling. Stir ingredients until fully combined. Remove from heat and add essential oil. (Use any essential oil of your choice. My favorite scent for deodorant is lavender.) After adding essential oil, pour the deodorant into an air-tight container. Cool in the refrigerator for about 20 minutes; then it is ready to use.

To use: Scoop a pea-sized amount of deodorant onto your index finger and apply to underarms.

“LIKE IT OR NOT, WE ARE
WALKING BILLBOARDS FOR THE
GOSPEL.” —*Yakubu Bakfwash*

Simplify

A simple living weekend

by Jan Fischer Bachman

Fifty people from five states traveled to **Camp Brethren Woods** near Harrisonburg, Va., for Simplify: A Simple Living Weekend in November 2017. Diana and Yakubu Bakfwash, Sam Funkhouser, Nancy Heisey, Katie Heishman, and

Jennifer Hosler presented keynote and workshop sessions. Participants and leaders came from the Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, Methodists, Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference, and more. The simple living tips on these pages came from conference participants.

“IF EVERYONE LIVED LIKE WE DO, IT WOULD REQUIRE THREE TO SIX EARTHS. We don't intend to cause harm by the way we live, but our way of living is fundamentally unjust.”

“As followers of Christ, we are called to **SHUN THE TRAPPINGS OF WORLDLY WEALTH.** We can't take the New Testament as our guide and be rich.”

COMMON RESPONSES

to discussing simple living

1. **Denial.** Conversation is shut down or labeled “liberal propaganda.”
2. **Inaction** because of ignorance or because it's the easiest thing to do. “These issues are not on the radar of most plain people.”
3. **Blame** everything on “the system” (corporations, government).
4. Limit responses to **token changes**, without seeing the depth of the issue. This can lull us into a sense of self-righteousness.

“SIMPLE LIVING IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW than it ever has been before, for us as Christians living in the most affluent society the world has ever known. We live like royalty did in other centuries; we don't see it because we're so used to it. That prosperity is made possible at the expense of others. . . . The average textile worker in China earns 12 to 18 cents per hour, and companies are moving so they can pay people even less.”

JESUS COMMANDS US TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR—and the parable of the Good Samaritan tells us that everyone is our neighbor. In loving others, if we are doing something that harms them, we should stop doing that thing. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, we usually identify with the Samaritan, or sometimes the priests passing by. In fact, we are most like the robbers—although not intentionally.

Jesus calls us to repent from our sin. We are to acknowledge wrongdoing and change. For too many of us, the definition of sin is too narrow: sexuality, entertainment choices, and bad habits. Others identify the issues as societal and systemic. “We have to acknowledge our part in that sin.”

Jesus tells us to bear witness to the gospel of the kingdom of God. “Our job is not to save the world but to point to the one who already has.”

“A BENEFIT OF PLAIN DRESS is that it starts conversations and opens doors to talk about Christ.”

“THE DANGER OF PLAIN DRESS is it can lead to legalism and focusing on the outward appearance, rather than the heart.”



No moustache, to ease holy kiss and avoid a military look.

No tie (associated with power).

Makes his own clothing using a 1930s treadle sewing machine and commercial serger adapted to use a treadle.

Fabric is organic, fair trade cotton ordered online.

Clothing can be worn for everything, from playing basketball to going to a funeral.

Vest for modesty (cover suspenders).

Drop-front (instead of zipper fly) trousers for modesty.

High-quality shoes that can be re-soled; these are initially expensive. One of only three or four pairs of shoes total.

Jan Fischer-Bachman

Sam Funkhouser

“THE PROVISION OF GOD IS NOT OURS TO KEEP, IT IS A GIFT TO BE SHARED.”

“NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE DOES GOD EXPLOIT CREATION. HE CARES FOR THE SPARROW. HE IS A SHEPHERD CARING FOR SHEEP.”

“I’M DONE WITH THINKING THAT MY VALUE IS IN WHAT I WEAR.”

Low-maintenance hairstyle that she has cut herself for more than a decade.

All jewelry is fair trade or purchased from artisans when traveling. “Everything has a story.”

Fair-trade or vintage (secondhand) dress, in colors, textures, and patterns that express her artistic gifts, reflect the diversity of God’s creation, and bring joy to herself and others.

No clothing budget—she tries to rarely buy clothing and focus on needs, seeking ethically sourced, long-lasting staple items.

Socially responsible sourced shoes (found online). One of three pairs of dress shoes.

No makeup—it’s expensive and unnecessary.

Biodegradable, socially responsible shampoo and soap. Deodorant without aluminum.

One of three cardigans that go with a variety of colors and patterns.

Bike shorts under dress because she bicycles a lot instead of driving.

Underwear made from fair-trade cotton using wind power (found online). More expensive than discount stores. “We shift as we learn about things and have more money.”



Jan Fischer Bachman

Jennifer Hosler

IDEAS TO TRY

- Consider something you regularly spend money on and don't buy it for a month. Donate the money.
- Take the food stamp challenge and try living on \$4 a day.
- Take an economic sabbath one day per week; don't buy anything.
- Have discussions about simplicity.
- Document your financial transactions for five to seven days. Research who is connected to those transactions, such as farmers, service workers.
- Choose one or two items and explore ways to purchase them that are more fair and just.

SCRIPTURE CONTRIBUTING TO A THEOLOGY OF SIMPLICITY

The word "simple" in the Bible usually means foolish, as in Proverbs 8:5, "O simple ones, learn prudence."

1. *Creation* (Genesis 1-2 and John 1). Everything is made by God through Jesus, creation is good, and humans are to care for it.
2. *Sin damages creation* (Deuteronomy 28, Ezekiel 34:18-19, Hosea 4:1-3, Jeremiah 12:4). Restoration includes restoration of creation (Amos 9:13-15, Romans 8:19-21).
3. *Sabbath rest* (Genesis 2:1-4, Exodus 20:8-11, Leviticus 25:1-7, John 10:10, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 4:1-11). God calls us to step away from financial transactions for a day each week. Physical rest protected farm workers and animals. Every seventh year the land rested.
4. *Wealth and poverty*. We should not worry about or treasure material things (Matthew 6:16-21, 25-34). We should not love money. Right worship includes economic justice (Isaiah 58, Micah 6:6-8). God's way includes generosity and radical sharing (Mark 10, Acts 2 and 4, Galatians 5:22).

"WE ARE CALLED TO DISCERN TOGETHER SO THAT OUR ACTIONS REFLECT OUR THEOLOGY, NOT OUR IDENTITY AS AMERICANS."

THREE ATTITUDES OF INWARD SIMPLICITY

1. All that we have is a gift from God.
2. We trust God to take care of our needs.
3. What we have is available to others.

OUTWARD DISCIPLINES

1. Buy for usefulness, not status.
2. Reject anything that leads to addiction.
3. Develop the habit of giving things away.
4. Refuse propaganda from the custodians of gadgetry.
5. Enjoy things without owning them (parks, library).
6. Develop a deeper appreciation for creation.
7. Be skeptical of buy now/pay later.
8. Use plain, honest speech. Avoid flattery.
9. Reject anything that oppresses others.
10. Shun anything that distracts from seeking first the kingdom of God.

Excerpts from Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*



In 1960, American households spent 10 percent of their income on clothing, 95 percent of it made in the US. This equaled about 25 pieces of clothing per person.

In 2013, US households spent about 3.5 percent of their income on clothing, 2 percent of it made in the US. This equaled about 70 articles of clothing per person.



Courtesy of Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren

A 'Feast of Love'

by Pam Reist

"Wow! 100 hurricane clean-up buckets and I got to help! I like coming to love feast."

"It was moving—I washed my young grandson's feet as we talked about what it means to serve each other."

"There was a real sense of love as we gathered around tables and shared. And all were welcome!"

While our Sunday morning worship attendance at Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren has steadily increased, we noted that over the years attendance at love feast had incrementally decreased. We thought this was due in part to increasingly busy schedules, a reluctance for those at a distance to make the drive, and perhaps a skepticism of washing one another's feet.

Our pastoral team greatly values the ordinance of love feast as a meaningful practice, enacting our faith according to the teachings and example of Jesus. It expresses so well our core values and beliefs: community, love, service, openness, forgiveness, commitment. We wanted to find a way to continue to make those core values relevant and central to all of our faith community.

In an effort to make love feast more accessible to more

people, this fall we planned "A Feast of Love" as part of the Sunday morning worship experience.

We began in the sanctuary with a time of preparation and examination, and the deacons served the traditional bread-and-cup communion with great care. The feast continued as about 200 people of all ages moved to the fellowship hall and gathered around tables for an agape meal of lasagna and covered side dishes. As we shared together, the spirit was celebratory and lively.

We were then encouraged to wash feet or hands with others as a symbolic act of service given and received. At the same time, we offered the opportunity to pack 100 hurricane clean-up buckets as a service option. The whole experience was a beautiful expression of love and service. It was indeed a celebration as we introduced the love feast to a new generation of children and youth.

Our plan is to alternate two beautiful and meaningful services: In the spring the deacons will host a traditional love feast on Maundy Thursday in the evening, and next fall the "Feast of Love" will again be a part of the Sunday morning worship experience.

Indeed, it is our hope that a new generation will find great meaning in this experience that is at the heart of the faith expression of Brethren! 



Courtesy of Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren

Pam Reist is a member of the pastoral team at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, where she has served since 2008.

Windows on a growing faith

Stained glass may not be traditional for most of the Church of the Brethren places of worship, but I can vividly remember the windows in my home church, Pottstown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

The bright sunshine splashed the pews with prisms of color as it shone through the beautiful stained glass windows, portraying pictures of Jesus as shepherd and other symbols, such as a crown and the beautiful lamb. Being a member of the simple-living Church of the Brethren denomination did not exclude me from enjoying these stained glass windows and the stories they told.



JILL KEYSER SPEICHER

As a mission church of Coventry Church of the Brethren, the Pottstown congregation purchased the Fifth Street Methodist Church in 1916, long before I was born. The beautiful brick building with fabulous stained glass windows was the backdrop for my spiritual formation. It was where I learned

the stories of Jesus, grew in faith, and was baptized. When I became of age I enjoyed love feast and communion in the light that passed through them at the pews that overturned to make tables.

But it was not only through those beautiful windows that the light of Christ shone. I can still recall how that same light shone through a number of women who taught me in Sunday school. Mrs. Covely, Johnson, Mitch, Pusch, Reifsnyder, Sassaman, and others touched me with their colorful faith and the love of Jesus.

They were each very much individuals, like the colored glass in the windows, but they were all dedicated to teaching children about God's love. For example, I learned about Hebrews 11, the "faith" chapter, from Mrs. Reifsnyder, who kept the word "faith" on her chalk board every Sunday.

I am very grateful to these women who reflected to me their personal, beautiful colors of faith.

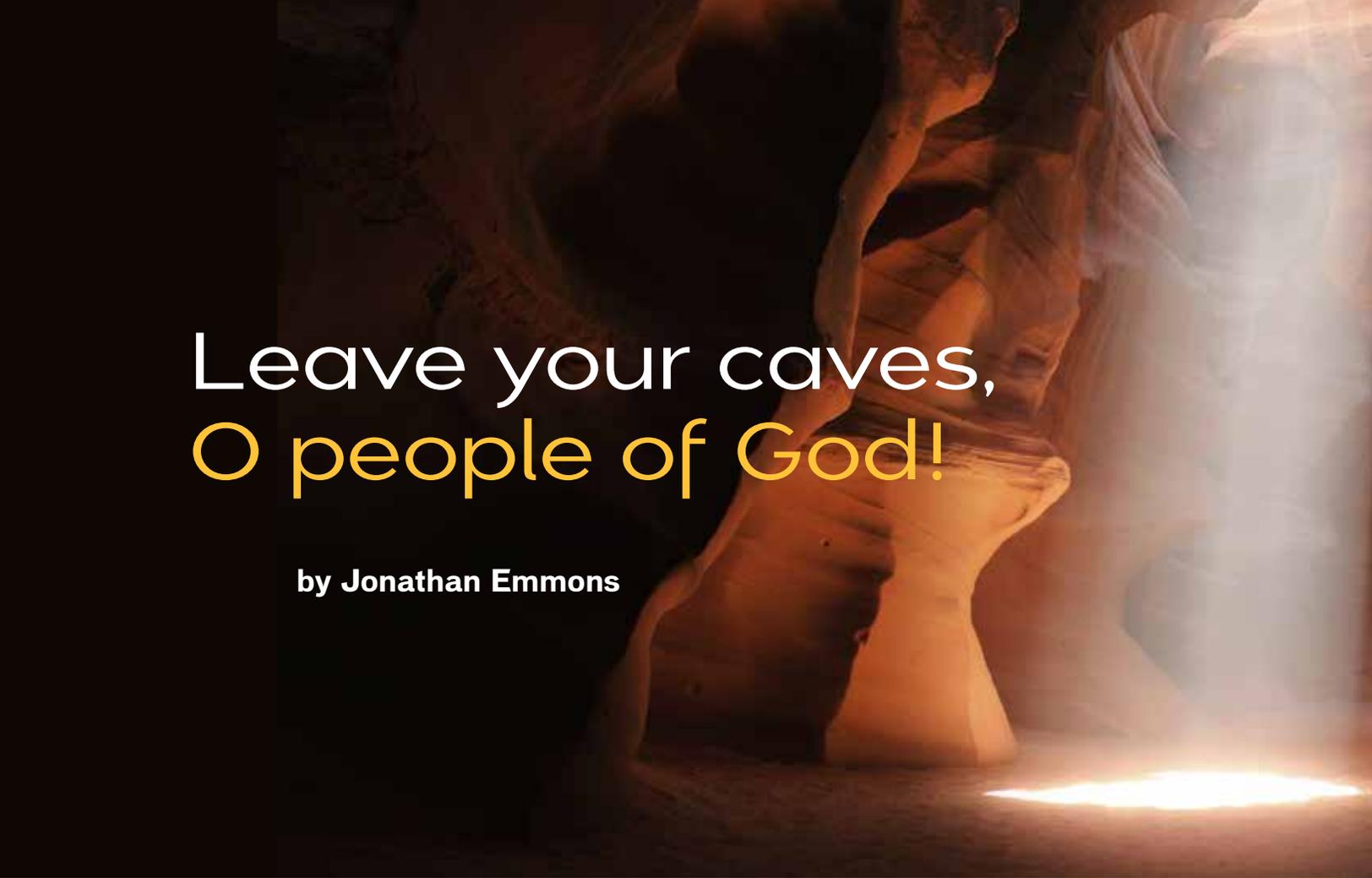
The old church needed to be demolished in 1989, but the windows live on. A portion of the colorful stained glass windows was used to create a beautiful cross that graces the front of the new church building. And along with my memories of life and growing faith at Pottstown, I now have a piece of one of those windows as a sun catcher.

Since moving away from the Pottstown area in the late 1970s, I have been privileged to lead love feast and communion as an ordained minister in a far different setting. But in my heart I still see the young girl washing feet, eating at the table of the Lord, and partaking of the bread and cup in Pottstown, with a backdrop of lovely windows. 

Jill Keyser Speicher is a graduate of Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary and serves as a chaplain. She lives in Sinking Spring, Pa., and is now a member of Wyomissing Church of the Brethren.



IT WAS NOT ONLY THROUGH THOSE BEAUTIFUL WINDOWS THAT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHONE. I CAN STILL RECALL HOW THAT SAME LIGHT SHONE THROUGH A NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO TAUGHT ME IN SUNDAY SCHOOL.



Leave your caves, O people of God!

by Jonathan Emmons

Each year in late summer, I pack my bags for New Mexico. When the North Carolina humidity has nearly gotten the best of me I long for the Southwest, where the dry heat and cool nights are a respite from those southeastern dog days of summer.

No matter how often I return, I discover anew that New Mexico is God's imagination, vastness, and grandeur on display. This landscape is a study in endless variation, a true spectacle in diversity. Oh, what majesty awaits the explorer of the New Mexico high desert: the dizzying heights; the expansive vistas framed by towering, ancient rock formations; the wide, open spaces that seem to bridge heaven and earth.

And then there are those New Mexico caves. Those deep, dark, damp, desolate, caverns. The kind so devoid of light that there is little possibility for life and no hope for growth; the kind where water does not flow; the kind that smell of decay and death.

Progressive and conservative brothers and sisters, we are becoming a people of the cave. It may not have always been this way, but today, we cling to modes of theological expression that leave us in the dark. We are losing our way.

Yes, we know the cave as that place of transformation that bridged Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Yes, it's true that Christianity figuratively holds "the cave"—the "belly of the whale," the "valley of the shadow of death"—as the place of rebirth and renewal. But our caves are not those God-

graced caves. No, these are our self-made caves, our self-sufficient dwellings, projections of our own needs and fears, carrying odors of our own human strivings, reflections of our own cunning, tragic, making of God in our own image. These digs prohibit us from expanding into the infinite vastness of our God.

We hide inside our own caves rather than resting in the expanse that only the Spirit provides. And so, it should be no surprise that the stench of impending split is upon us. It should be no surprise that we are faced with schism.

Will we succumb? Or will we abandon our cave ways?

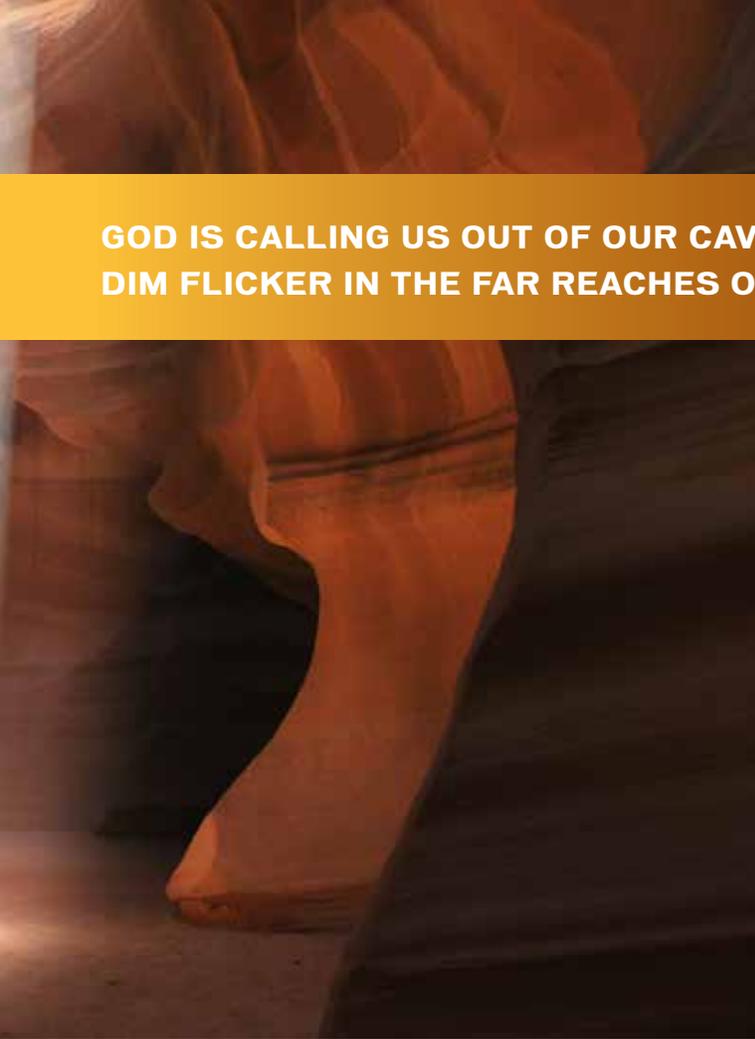
Will we part ways? Or will we find our way to reinvention?

God is calling us out of our caves. God is calling us to find that dim flicker in the far reaches of our cavernous prisons. God is calling us to soar toward the light that will lead us into the abundance of the trinitarian life for which God has made us.

But how? Our caves are familiar, comfortable. How can we possibly find our way?

We will find our way . . .

when enough progressives and enough conservatives have the prophetic courage to leave behind our caverns of theological superiority, to cast our nets in search of a participatory experience with a living God.



GOD IS CALLING US OUT OF OUR CAVES. GOD IS CALLING US TO FIND THAT DIM FLICKER IN THE FAR REACHES OF OUR CAVERNOUS PRISONS.

We will find our way . . .

when we repent of our efforts to claim a monopoly on knowing a God who is beyond knowing, when we renounce our need to understand a God whose ways are beyond our understanding.

We will find our way . . .

when we realize that it is quite possible to cling to scripture too tightly, to miss its meaning and its leadings when we use it as proof for our latest theological exploit or moralistic tirade, all while ignoring that it might be urging us into divine mystery.

We will find our way . . .

when we abandon soft compromise and sentimentalized forbearance and trade it for a way of true liberation from our extreme, shortsighted, and self-serving progressive and conservative perspectives.

We will find our way . . .

when we've committed ourselves to theological humility, to selfless and relentless exploration of our own flaws and faults, a commitment that will surely lead us to the repentant discovery that the speck in the eye of the other is not nearly as blinding as our own plank.

We will find our way . . .

when we can no longer endure the lifeless methods we've devised to interpret scripture, the ways in which our reliance on human logic and reason have turned the mysteries

of the faith into objects to be possessed on one hand, foolish notions to be rejected on the other.

We will find our way . . .

when we realize that we need one another to shine a discomfiting light into our all-too-cozy caves, that we need each other to make the journey into the high desert of God's grace.

We will find our way . . .

when we realize that the safety of our progressive or conservative cellars is precisely that which blocks us from feeling the pull into the life of God, from experiencing a real, direct awareness of God's presence.

We will find our way . . .

when we finally understand that the progressive/conservative divide is an altogether false choice to begin with, more reflective of American political posturing than of the body of Christ.

We will find our way . . .

when we confess the shortcomings of our own viewpoints, for they are the stumbling blocks that obscure the divine reality of our life hidden in God with Christ.

The way is winding and treacherous, but it's the only climb worth our while. This road less traveled is illumined by the economy of God's grace that transforms trials into triumphs, missteps into miracles, sin into salvation.

So maybe these caves are God-graced after all. For if nothing can separate us from the love of God, brothers and sisters, maybe these caves are ready-made for our redemption, fuel that will drive our faithful revival, after all.

Leave your caves, O people of God!

Mount up on the wings of the Spirit and return to God.

Live into the new creation that God is calling forth.

Leave your caves, O people of God!

Choose progressive and conservative no more.

Choose the vast, infinite, mystery of Christ.

Leave your caves, O people of God!

I've tested both. I've known them well.

Neither gives life. Both breed death.

Leave your caves, O people of God!

The view out here is so much better.

And worth the climb. 

Jonathan Emmons is a professional organist in Greensboro, N.C., and has served as organist at Annual Conference and National Older Adult Conference. He recently completed the two-year Living School program at the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M.



COMMUNION BREAD

Serves 50

2 cups flour
2 tablespoons sugar
½ cup cold butter
½ cup cream

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Combine the flour and sugar in a bowl. Cut in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the cream and mix until the dough is smooth and the flour is incorporated.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and, using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough as thin as possible. Cut into 1-inch wide strips. Using a dinner fork prick the strips at 1-inch intervals. Place on a baking sheet and bake until just starting to brown, about 15 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet. Break into serving size pieces at the fork pricks.

This recipe is from *The Inglenook Cookbook* published by Brethren Press, and was submitted by Betty E. Godsey of Independence, Kan. See www.inglenookcookbook.org. The photo by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford is of communion bread made by the late Mary Jo Flory-Steury for a Church of the Brethren staff retreat in 2008.

Strike a common chord

'll confess up front that I'm a fan of Pixar. I've loved nearly every movie this now Disney-owned studio has produced. It consistently produces quality movies with good storytelling, stunning animation, intriguing characters, and lots of heart.

That said, Pixar's most recent film, *Coco*, may be my favorite. It weaves together a beautiful story about music, relationships, the meaning of family, and the power of memory, all while deeply and respectfully immersing itself in Mexican culture and tradition. It strikes the right chords from beginning to end, literally and figuratively, with the hauntingly beautiful song "Remember Me" a particular standout.



WALT WILTSCHKEK

In the movie, young Miguel has a passion for playing the guitar, but his family frowns on any sort of music for reasons that are teased out over the course of the film. Miguel can't give it up, though, and as he reaches desperation he finally makes sense of his life only by spending time among the dead.

The fast-paced film is set around Mexico's colorful Day of the Dead festival, when families set up photos of departed loved ones and various tributes to celebrate and remember those who have gone before. Miguel finds himself transported to the land of the dead via an accident, and there meets a variety of ancestors and others who help him piece together his mysterious family tree and his music—and who can provide the blessing he needs to return to the living.

As one might expect, the film has a happy ending (it has a bit of Disney-esque predictability, after all), with a particularly touching scene featuring Miguel and his great-grandmother, Coco. Like *Finding Nemo*, *Up*, *Toy Story 3*, and others, it pulls at the heartstrings and is as rich emotionally as it is visually.

It occurs to me that *Coco* resonates rather well with the

Brethren experience—particularly our celebration of the love feast. That unique service likewise draws upon the deepest and best parts of our tradition. It weaves music through its movements, making a powerful connection to one another. It is an act of memory, recalling the worship of generations of Brethren and the humility and selflessness shown by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper and the events that followed. And it reminds us of what it means to be family.

One Cinema Scope reviewer described *Coco* as "a great, lively film defined not only by the joy inherent in music, but by a pervasive love for human beings, imperfections and all." If that doesn't say love feast, I don't know what does.

As with our blood-related family, our spiritual family can sometimes drive us crazy. We wonder how we all ended up under the same roof. Yet in moments such as love feast, we find the common chords that bring us together: foundational beliefs and values that continue to shape us, actions of service and simplicity, and our desire to follow and become more like Jesus.

We don't all like the same music, but some beautiful hymns and other tunes still bring us together in literal and figurative harmony. And in kneeling to wash the feet of others, we are reminded that it's not all about us. It's about our faith and this larger family to which we have been connected. That's why deacons once visited all members to make sure no simmering disagreements or grudges existed between members of the congregation before the love feast service took place.

Coco is an homage to music and to culture, but its lingering note is about the ties that bind. And they are indeed blessed. 

Walt Wiltschek is pastor of Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren and at-large editor of MESSENGER.

ABOUT THE FILM

Title: *Coco*. **Studio:** Disney-Pixar. **Release date:** Nov. 21, 2017 (the film was released in Mexico prior to its US release). **Rating:** PG. **Run time:** 1 hour, 45 minutes. **Awards:** Won Golden Globe for Best Animated Motion Picture.





Have patience, Brother Samuel, have patience

by Gimbiya Kettering

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? (Matthew 5: 47 KJV, Sermon on the Mount).

Samuel Weir. Landon West. Dan West. Merlyn Kettering. Me. I am the daughter of Merlyn Kettering. My father was mentored by Dan West, founder of Heifer Project. His father, Landon West, interviewed Samuel Weir. Samuel Weir was born a slave.

Four degrees between me and a man who was a slave, then free. My father shook hands with a man who shook hands with a man who had been a slave. As I recite this odd branch of the Brethren name game, I am not sure if it brings me closer or further from Samuel Weir.

I am not related to Samuel Weir, though I am a descendant of slaves. They were not Brethren. Not that I

can ever know for sure. Slaves did not own their stories any more than they owned their bodies or their children.

Samuel Weir's recorded story, written by Landon West in a tract in 1897, is only 21 pages long. We know he was born a slave April 15, 1812, in Bath County, Va. At age 12, he was sold by his first owner, William Byrd, to Andrew McClure.

His new owner converted to the Church of the Brethren in 1843. At that time, Samuel was 30 years old and worth at least \$1,500 (about \$50,000 in today's dollars). We know this because that was the price slave traders offered McClure when they found out he had converted and knew his new faith forbade owning slaves.

It seems McClure could have, on a technicality, sold Samuel and then joined the church. He didn't. Samuel Weir, a freed man, applied to be baptized and become a member of the Church of the Brethren, which he credited for having freed him.

Brother Samuel was not the first African American to be accepted into Brethren membership, though he was among the first in that part of Virginia. For much of the next year he continued to work for Brother Andrew, his former owner, while the Brethren tried to understand what best

Special thanks to Bill Kostlevy and Haley Steinhilber from the Brethren Historical Library and Archives for research support; to my aunt, Marilyn Kettering Badger, for being the first person to tell me about Samuel Weir; and to Robert Jackson, an African American of the Church of the Brethren in southern Ohio, whose great grandfather was born a slave, for sharing his perspectives.



BROTHER SAMUEL NEVER MARRIED AND NEVER HAD CHILDREN. SO ALL OF US, REGARDLESS OF RACE, ARE HIS DESCENDANTS. THAT MEANS THAT WE ARE THE ONES TO RETELL HIS STORY. HOW LONG SHOULD HE HAVE HAD TO BE PATIENT? HOW LONG SHOULD WE BE PATIENT?

to do with this new member. I imagine they formed a study committee and made a few reports.

But inasmuch we receive our fellow members with the holy kiss, and there is a repugnance in some of our white members to salute colored persons in this manner, the colored members should bear with that weakness, and not offer the kiss to such weak members until they become stronger, and make the first offer, etc. (1835 Annual Conference).

The Brethren used to greet each other with a kiss. As Carl Bowman notes in *Portrait of a People*, in both public greetings and important moments such as footwashing, the holy kiss “distinguished Brethren from non-Brethren; outsiders were greeted with a mere handshake.”

Almost a decade before Brother Samuel, repeated Annual Conference statements were clear that white members who were uncomfortable extending the holy kiss to black members were not in line with the application of scripture.

[Brother Samuel] being the first colored member received by the church in that part of Virginia, it was soon a question as to how he should be received by the Brethren after baptism—whether with the right hand and kiss of charity, or with only the right hand of fellowship. But after some consideration by the church, it was decided to receive him with the right hand of fellowship, but without the salutation; and in this manner, he was received as a member . . . he was willing to be received on any terms his white brethren were ready to take him (“Life of Elder Samuel Weir,” Landon West).

How did Brother Samuel feel about being denied the kiss? Did Brother Landon ask? Maybe he did but chose not to write it down. Maybe it was included in early drafts but removed so as not to offend “weak members.” Maybe what Brother Samuel said was so hard to hear that Brother Landon chose not to ever remember it again. Maybe no one asked.

Instead, we are left with a story that shows the Brethren at our best: His former owner gave him a horse, saddle, bridle, clothes, and some money to start his journey to freedom, and Brethren guided him across the Ohio River. In Ohio, the Brethren helped him find a job and taught him to

read. It was much more than many white Christians would have done at the time.

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother (Mark 3:31-35 KJV).

When Brother Samuel was a free man on free soil, he was also a man who had lost his blood family. He never again saw his mother, who died in slavery, or his six siblings.

The only family he had was us. Our denomination takes Jesus’ teaching literally—claiming one another as family, as if our common faith is enough to bind us together as brothers and sisters to one another. Part of our tradition, which continues now during business sessions at Annual Conference, is to address one another as “brother” and “sister.”

Yet, in Ohio Brother Samuel was not permitted to worship with white Brethren. They told him to find black people of other denominations to worship with. After learning to read, he studied the Scriptures and felt called to preach, but our priesthood of all believers did not include him until 1881. He was our first ordained African American elder and at 69 years old had been Brethren for over three decades, but his congregation, the place he was permitted to lead, had only black members. He was acknowledged as Brethren, but not fully welcomed.

Brother Samuel never married and never had children. So all of us, regardless of race, are his descendants. That means that we are the ones to retell his story. How long should he have had to be patient? How long should we be patient?

A man who was a slave told his story to a man whose son was my father’s mentor, and I am telling my story to you.

You. Me. My father. Dan West. His father.

Samuel Weir.

Gimbiya Kettering is director of Intercultural Ministries for the Church of the Brethren. Samuel Weir’s story can be found in *The Old Brethren*, by James H. Lehman, available from Brethren Press.

Temporary Protected Status

Much more than a political football



In limbo

How Haitian Brethren are affected in the US

by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

In November, the Trump administration rescinded the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that gave protections against deportation for some 60,000 Haitians who came to the United States after a massive earthquake hit their country on Jan. 12, 2010. The rescission of TPS status for Haiti goes into effect in July 2019.

“The situation is very scary for our people because they don’t know what really is going to happen,” says Ilexene Alphonse, interim pastor of Eglise des Freres Haitiens in Miami, Fla., a Church of the Brethren congregation.

What is TPS?

Temporary Protected Status, protects immigrants from particular countries from deportation and allows them to stay in the United States.

TPS typically is granted after large natural disasters, such as Haiti’s 2010 earthquake, or because of devastating wars. TPS was routinely extended by previous US administrations.

Immigrants get TPS through an application process administered by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services that includes filling out forms and the payment of fees. TPS holders maintain

continuous residence in the US or continuous physical presence in the US after a particular date usually related to the disaster in their nation.

Here is information about the 10 current TPS countries, with numbers of people affected given as of late 2017. The immigration situation is so fluid that this information may very quickly go out of date.

El Salvador: TPS status has been rescinded effective Sept. 9, 2019. More than 260,000 Salvadorans live in the US with TPS protection. El Salvador was granted TPS in 2001 after a series

of earthquakes.

Haiti: TPS status has been rescinded effective July 22, 2019. Close to 60,000 Haitians are in the US under TPS. Haiti received TPS designation after the 2010 earthquake.

Honduras: A decision on rescission has been delayed. Currently TPS extends through July 5, 2018. About 86,000 Hondurans are living in the US with TPS. Honduras received its TPS designation in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch.

Nepal: TPS is extended through June 24, 2018. It was designated after an earthquake on April 25, 2015.

THE CHURCH'S ROLE IS TO STAND BY THESE FAMILIES, ALPHONSE SAYS, "TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER."

"Is it time for them to get out of the country? They are in limbo. It is heartbreaking."

Last year, Alphonse transitioned to leadership of the Miami congregation, one of the largest Haitian Brethren churches, after serving as Church of the Brethren mission staff in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Some 15 families have TPS status in Alphonse's congregation of 198 families—representing about a twelfth of the congregation—but he has a feeling there are more he does not know about. "Some of them don't really want to talk about it," he says.

"We are fortunate," he adds. "Smaller churches will be having more problems." He thinks smaller Haitian American churches will have higher percentages of TPS holders.

Two families from his church already have left for Canada, but none have returned to Haiti. None are planning to, at least for now. They are waiting instead to see what happens. The time of waiting is full of fear, he says. These families are afraid of what the US government might do as the deadline approaches, and afraid of the chaos that will ensue.

Top on the list of reasons not to return to Haiti is that "many of them don't have a place to go," Alphonse says. Many with TPS no longer have immediate family in

Haiti, nor do they know anyone who can put them up or offer housing or jobs on their return. He gives the example of a man with a wife and several children as someone who cannot simply announce, "We're coming to stay."

Another top reason for not returning to Haiti is their American-born children. Haitian parents may face deportation, but their American children do not. All of the families with TPS in the Miami congregation have children born in the US.

These parents "don't know what to do," Alphonse says. "The mother and father will have to leave. Whether they will take the children with them to Haiti or keep them here in school. . . . For many of them, there is nothing in Haiti. To take children with them, that is a concern."

The church's role is to stand by these families, Alphonse says, "to see what we can do to keep families together." He



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Almost 15,000 Nepalese people are in the US with TPS.

Nicaragua: This is to expire Jan. 5, 2019. About 5,300 Nicaraguan TPS holders live in the US. Nicaragua received designation in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch.

Somalia: TPS currently extends through Sept. 17, 2018. An estimated 500 Somalians live in the US under TPS protection. Somalia received TPS designation in 1991—and TPS extensions since then—because of ongoing political insecurity and armed conflict.

Sudan and South Sudan: Sudan,

which has suffered decades of civil war and armed conflict, first received TPS designation on Nov. 4, 1997. South Sudan seceded from Sudan and became a nation in 2011, and received its own designation on Nov. 3, 2011. TPS for Sudan has been rescinded as of Nov. 2, 2018. TPS for South Sudan is extended through May 2, 2019, because of ongoing armed conflict. About 1,050 Sudanese and fewer than 100 people from South Sudan are in the US with TPS.

Syria: TPS is to expire on March 31, 2018. It was first granted on March

29, 2012, because of an intensely violent civil war. Almost 7,000 Syrians have TPS.

Yemen: TPS is extended through Sept. 3, 2018. An estimated 1,100 people from Yemen are in the US with TPS. Yemen received designation on Sept. 3, 2015, because of the civil war and emergency situation for civilians there. 

Sources: US Citizenship and Immigration Services; CNN; *The Miami Herald*; "Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues" by Jill H. Wilson, published by the Congressional Research Service

IN HAITI AND OTHER COUNTRIES . . . THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SENT HOME BY THOSE PEOPLE TO THEIR FAMILIES EXCEEDS ALL FOREIGN AID GIVEN TO THOSE COUNTRIES.

is meeting with an immigration lawyer for advice about what the church can do, if anything. At this time, he says, “we don’t know what that might be.”

Alphonse’s church is involved in planning a march for immigrants in the Miami area, to take place this spring, and will be inviting other congregations and the community to join in.

“We need prayer,” he responds, when asked what he would like to tell the wider church. In light of President Trump’s disparaging comments about Haiti and African nations, he concludes that “we can’t rely on the government for anything.”

Their dependence is solely upon God, and the grace received through Christ. 

The end of remittances: How Haitian Brethren are affected in Haiti

by Jeffrey S. Boshart

While in Haiti in December last year, I had a conversation with a woman who has spent a great deal of her time outside Haiti looking for work and ways to support her family still at home. She’s now back in Haiti after probably 20 years living abroad.

Her name is Elisanne Sannon. Although she hasn’t ever been to the United States, her story is reflective of many others who have traveled similar paths.

Peggy, my wife, and I first met Elisanne when she was part of a Brethren congregation in the Dominican Republic—the Mendoza congregation in the greater Santo Domingo metropolitan area. Many members of this congregation worked in a textile factory in the capital. The factory itself was originally in Haiti, but during the military coup that ousted President Aristide in the early 1990s, and subsequent US embargo of goods coming from Haiti, the factory was forced to close and relocate in the DR. The owner invited his employees to relocate as well.

Elisanne became a member of the Community Development Committee that worked alongside Peggy and me to help administer a micro-loans program in the early

2000s. She was a theology student at one time, taking classes given by Nancy Sollenberger Heishman. She also is a trained nurse.

In the latter part of that decade, numerous Haitians, including Dominican Brethren of Haitian descent, began finding their way to Brazil looking for work. Elisanne was one who made that journey, along with her husband. While in Brazil, her husband died. At the same time, the economy there began to suffer.

Last year, she finally gave up and returned home to Haiti. Other Haitians moved on from Brazil to Argentina and Chile. Many Haitians also go to Mexico, to places like Tijuana, in an attempt to cross the border into the US. Those who succeed may end up in immigration prisons, after which it is not clear what happens to them—some may be deported, some may stay under TPS.

I asked Elisanne if she knew any families preparing to return from the US because of the end of TPS. She did. What would that mean for those families? She said they will lose their only significant source of income. In Haiti and other countries with large numbers of citizens living abroad, the amount of money sent home by those people to their families exceeds all foreign aid given to those countries.

In a 2016 piece on remittances—the term for money sent home by migrants working abroad—National Public Radio reported, “Developing countries got \$131 billion in official aid in 2015. And they got \$431.6 billion in remittances.” This staggeringly high figure comes from a Migration and Development Brief from the World Bank.

If her situation doesn’t change soon, Elisanne would like to try to come to the US. She has worked off and on, part-time, with several Church of the Brethren-related programs in Haiti, including the Haiti Medical Project, the Global Food Initiative, and the Global Women’s Project program teaching women and some men how to make bedspreads.

The irony of her statement, knowing the reception that immigrants face in the US these days, is heartbreaking. It also highlights just how desperate people are in Haiti and other countries, willing to risk everything in search of a better life for themselves and the family members who depend on them. 

Jeffrey S. Boshart is manager of the Global Food Initiative and the Emerging Global Mission Fund for the Church of the Brethren.

Bound together, clothed in Christ

Registration opened in mid-January for the 2018 National Youth Conference (NYC) planned for July 21-26 in Fort Collins, Colo. As of Jan. 31, 1,032 youth, advisors, staff, and volunteers had registered—but many more are expected before registration closes on April 30.

NYC is offered every four years for youth who have completed ninth grade through one year of college (or age equivalent) and advisors. The speakers, including new and familiar names this year, will address the theme “Bound Together, Clothed in Christ” (Colossians 3:12-15).

Kelsey Murray, NYC coordinator, invited youth groups from across the country to hold registration parties in January. She also has been collecting fundraising ideas.

Registration parties

Three congregations in Virgina District shared a registration party. Oak Grove and Peters Creek youth groups got together to register and welcomed youth from Antioch, who had already registered but “came for the games and fun.”

Youth at the Frederick church in Maryland registered with “some delicious Olive Garden! We enjoyed it, family style!” reported Britnee Linton.

Belinda White of Community of Joy Church of the Brethren in Maryland reported that instead of holding a registration party, their group focused on serving others. “We are part of the Cornerstone Collective, four churches of different denominations, working together to house 40 homeless men for two weeks. Our youth serve dinner, play games, and spend time at the shelter instead of our regular youth group meeting during this time.”

Fundraisers

Congregational meals are ever-popular youth fundraisers. The Lititz church in Pennsylvania held a 19th annual pork and sauerkraut dinner on New Year’s day, serving more than 1,800 meals. Youth at Crest Manor Church of the Brethren in Indiana, and the Highland Avenue church in Illinois, both got the memo about how much Brethren enjoy baked potato bars, while youth at Little Swatara in Pennsylvania served soup and sandwiches.

More fundraiser spotlights:

Jaylin Kimble, a senior at the Manassas church in Virginia, organized a variety show that raised \$1,420.

Youth from Beacon Heights in Indiana have been selling coffee.

Oak Grove Church of the Brethren holds ongoing fundraisers so youth don’t have to raise all the

money for NYC in one year. Their indoor yard sale brings in \$4-5,000 every year.

Making and selling fudge is a sweet fundraiser for youth at Cedar Grove in Ohio.

The NYC speakers

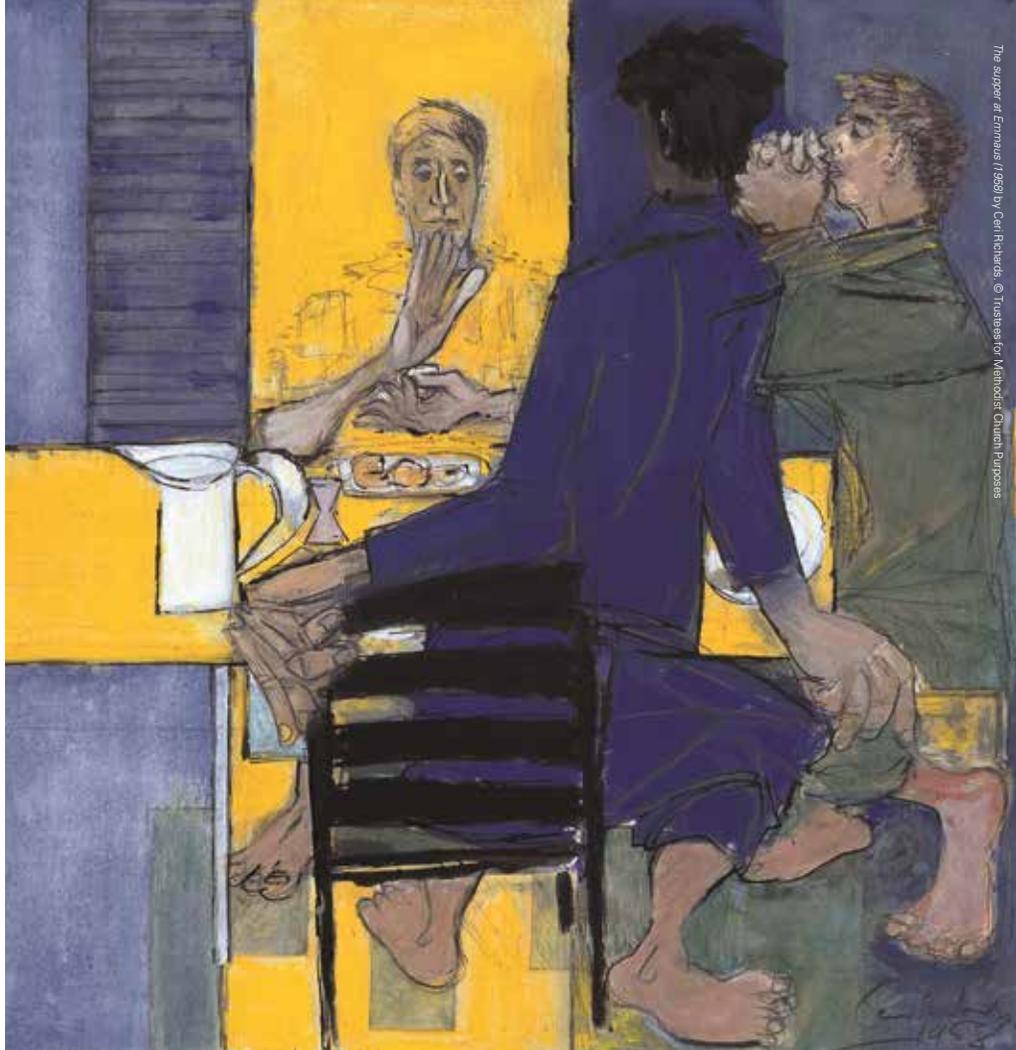
- Michaela Alphonse, pastor of Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren and a former mission worker in Haiti.
- Jeff Carter, president of Bethany Theological Seminary.
- Dana Cassell, pastor of Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren in Durham, N.C.
- Christena Cleveland, an author, speaker, and professor at Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C.
- Audrey and Tim Hollenberg-Duffey, pastors at Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren. Audrey was one of the coordinators for NYC 2010.
- Eric Landram, pastor at Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.
- Jarrod McKenna, a minister and activist from Australia. He was a hit at the 2014 NYC, where he coined the term “Dunker punks” to identify youth who take part in the Brethren heritage of radical discipleship to Jesus Christ.
- Laura Stone, chaplain at an Indiana hospital and a former Brethren Volunteer Service worker.
- Ted Swartz, a Mennonite actor and comedian, and Ken Medema, a Christian musician, are teaming up for a joint performance.

Medema has re-written lyrics to his song “Bound Together, Finely Woven” to fit the NYC theme. The winner of a youth contest to cover the song will perform during NYC. See www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/documents/2018/song-cover-contest.pdf. Entries are due April 1.

A youth speech contest also is being held. The winner will present their speech at NYC. See www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/documents/2018/speech-contest.pdf for guidelines. Entries are due April 1.

More details and registration are at www.brethren.org/nyc. All registrations, fees, and forms are due April 30. 





The supper at Emmaus (1958) by Carl Richards. © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Emmaus moments

by Christina Bucher

In their book *Jesus Speaks: Learning to Recognize and Respond to the Lord's Voice*, Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola write that we all need “Emmaus moments,” because “faith is activated by events and experiences, not by theories and theologies.”

The original “Emmaus moment” occurs in Luke’s story of an encounter between the risen Lord and two disciples as they share a meal in Emmaus, a small village located not far from Jerusalem.

Luke’s story divides into two main sections: the journey of two disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27) and a meal in Emmaus that results in a new way of seeing (Luke 24:28-35). There are three characters: Jesus and

two disciples, one of whom is named Cleopas. The story takes place just after Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, and burial. Jesus’ death stuns his followers. They did not expect their leader would die.

A few women go to the tomb in order to anoint the body of their teacher and friend, but they discover the tomb to be empty (24:1-12). Two men tell them that Jesus “is not here, but is risen.” When the women tell the disciples about their discovery, their news is not well received but, rather, is viewed as “nonsense” or “an idle tale” (24:11). Only Peter responds by running to the tomb to see for himself.

Why is anyone surprised? Why do they consider the women’s report of the empty tomb to be nonsensical? The disciples’ surprise has two parts. First,

they did not expect Jesus would die before accomplishing his mission. Second, they assumed that Jesus’ death ended his mission. Their belief did not prepare them for either Jesus’ death or Jesus’ resurrection.

Shift scenes now to a road that leads from Jerusalem to Emmaus, where two people are traveling. Who are these two people, and why are they interrupting the story about Jesus’ resurrection?

Cleopas is a minor character as characters go in the Gospels. He appears only once, here in this story set on the road to Emmaus. I should note that there is some disagreement on this point. Some people identify Cleopas with Alphaeus, the father of James, who was one of the twelve (Luke 6:15). Others identify him with Clopas, who is

THE TWO DISCIPLES CLING TO THEIR THEORY OF WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN. THEY STRUGGLE TO RECONCILE RECENT EVENTS WITH THEIR ASSUMPTIONS.

the husband of a woman named Mary (John 19:25). Catholic and Orthodox traditions further identify this individual as a brother to Joseph (the husband of Mary, Jesus' mother), which would make Cleopas a member of Jesus' extended family.

Even more intriguing is the identity of the unnamed disciple. Although illustrations of this story usually portray the two disciples as men, some interpreters suggest that the two travelers on the road to Emmaus are Cleopas and his wife. This makes sense to some readers, since the two disciples invite Jesus to a meal in their home.

The precise identity of the two disciples is less important than the story of their Emmaus moment. These two travelers have been in Jerusalem and they know about the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. The phrase "two of them" tells us that these are two of Jesus' disciples, not from the inner circle of twelve, but from the larger group of Jesus' followers. As they walk, they talk about recent events. Then, a third traveler joins them. We readers of Luke's Gospel are told that this is Jesus, but the travelers do not recognize him. In fact, Luke says, "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (v. 16).

We may wonder about this. What prevents them from recognizing Jesus? Perhaps their despair over Jesus' death prevents recognition. Or, perhaps their assumption about Jesus' mission blocks their ability to see clearly who walks with them. They explain to the stranger, "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (v. 21). To complicate matters further, they are confused by the women's report of the empty tomb. Clearly, the events that transpired conflict with what these two disciples had expected would happen. Reality and

theory collide.

There is more than a little irony in Luke's storytelling. When the disciples encounter Jesus, they are shocked that this new traveling companion does not know about recent events. In reality, Cleopas and his companion are the ones in the dark.

Another surprising turn of events in the story occurs when Jesus calls them "foolish" (v. 25). Many of us in their situation would have looked for the first opportunity to ditch a stranger who insults us, but fortunately they do not. In fact, they invite Jesus to stay with them in Emmaus.

Hospitality is a key virtue in the Bible, and the letter to the Hebrews instructs its readers to practice hospitality: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (13:2). The theme of "entertaining angels unawares" appears early in the Scriptures when Abraham and Sarah prepare a feast for three mysterious visitors who show up at the door of their tent (Genesis 18:2-15). It occurs again in Luke's story set in Emmaus.

The artist Barry Motes has interpreted the meal at Emmaus in the contemporary setting of a food court. His *Supper at Yummaus* takes place over a meal of KFC. (You can see this image online at his website, www.jbmotesart.com.) As I age, I become more and more certain that I know it all, that I have seen it all, and that nobody can tell me anything really new. I become more and more resistant to Emmaus moments. But viewed in the light of Luke's story, *Supper at Yummaus* prompts me to open myself to the surprise of the

ordinary. It reminds me that insight can occur anywhere and at any time, even over a fast food meal in a shopping mall food court.

In the Gospel story, the two disciples cling to their theory of what was supposed to happen. They struggle to reconcile recent events with their assumptions. They had hoped for a certain future that has not come to pass, and they don't know what to make of it.

Enlightenment breaks through at the moment the two disciples receive bread from the hands of their Lord. A Welsh artist, Ceri Richards (1903-1971), paints the moment of enlightenment in his *Supper at Emmaus*. Jesus nearly dissolves into a yellow background that forms a cross of light (or enlightenment). The two disciples respond physically, but in different ways. One rises up from his seat. The other appears pensive, in a pose suggesting prayer. Luke does not distinguish between the two disciples' responses, but Richards' painting suggests that we react differently to revelatory moments. Some of us jump up ready to act on new information; others need time to process.

Richard Harries, who discusses this painting in his book *The Passion in Art*, interprets the large hands and feet of the figures in Ceri Richards' painting: "The moment of recognition of the risen Christ is also the moment of realisation that his work continues through human hands and feet."

An Emmaus moment: Jesus' ministry does not end with his death, but rather, it begins something that he calls his disciples to continue. Simply. Peacefully. Together. 

Christina Bucher is professor of religion at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

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Brethren from the DR, Spain start churches in Europe

In the 1990s, a wave of Dominicans began leaving their home country to look for a better life in Spain. Members of Iglesia de los Hermanos (the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic) were among them. In time they established the Church of the Brethren in Spain.

As the economy sputtered in Spain, some members were on the move again. Several moved to London some years ago and started a house church. This preaching point was recognized in 2016 by the Asamblea or Annual Conference of Iglesia Evangelica de los Hermanos (the Church of the Brethren in Spain).

Last fall, on the way to the 2017

Asamblea, Global Food Initiative manager Jeff Boshart and Fausto Carrasco, pastor of Nuevo Comienzo, St. Cloud, Fla., stopped in London. They visited Karen Meriguete, founder of Roca Viva Church of the Brethren, and several other members. She recently turned over leadership of the new fellowship to her brother, Edward De La Torres, and has begun a second plant in a different neighborhood of London.

Meriguete and most of the other house church members are of Dominican heritage but are Spanish citizens, which allows them to move freely across the European Union. House churches are starting in Holland and Germany as well—all springing from the Brethren in Spain. —Jeff Boshart

Grants support disaster work, hunger relief, seminary in India

Brethren Disaster Ministries has directed grants from the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) to the Disaster Recovery Support

Initiative, to develop new project sites, and to assist families displaced by violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Global Food Initiative (GFI) has given grants to a Going to the Garden retreat, an aquaponics system in Haiti, community gardens in Spain, and a feeding ministry in Mexico.

In addition, a grant of \$15,000 has been given by Global Mission and Service to Gujarat United School of Theology in India, for repairs to classrooms and other facilities. GUST is a seminary of the Church of North India, a long-standing ecumenical partner.

An EDF grant of \$50,000 funds work in the US Virgin Islands by the Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI), following Hurricanes Irma and Maria. DRSI is a partnership with the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

An EDF grant of \$25,000 funds development of new project sites for Brethren Disaster Ministries, related to last fall's hurricanes and fires.

An EDF grant of \$10,000 to Shalom Ministry for

Reconciliation and Development in the DRC follows two grants totaling \$15,000, which have distributed food to 950 households or nearly 7,500 people.

A GFI grant of \$4,892.50 funds an aquaponics system requested by the community development staff of Eglise des Freres Haitiens (Church of the Brethren in Haiti). It is a prototype to be replicated elsewhere in conjunction with the Haiti Medical Project. The project is a cooperative effort of Eglise des Freres, Capstone 118, and GFI.

GFI grants of \$4,455 and \$3,850 support community gardens of Iglesia Evangelica de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren in Spain). The projects are sponsored by the Gijon and Aviles congregations, and the Lanzarote congregation in the Canary Islands.

A GFI grant of \$4,450 funds a second Going to the Garden retreat for community gardeners, to be held in New Orleans, La., hosted by GFI partner Capstone 118. It will focus on the role of the church in local advocacy for healthier food systems, hands-on advanced gardening, and social entrepreneurship.

A GFI grant of \$1,000 purchases a stove and refrigerator for a Bittersweet Ministries feeding program in Tijuana, Mexico.

BVS volunteers work across US, N. Ireland, Japan

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) units 316 and 318 trained in the summer and fall of 2017. Unit 317, offered jointly with the Brethren Revival Fellowship, was canceled due to lack of participants.



BVS Unit 316

Front, from left: **Katie Hiscock** of Kalamazoo, Mich., is placed at Casa de Esperanza de los Niños, Houston, Texas; **Kyrie Branaman**, Wheat Ridge, Colo., is at Quaker Cottage, Belfast, Northern Ireland; **Bev O'Neal**, Memorial Church of the Brethren, Martinsburg, Pa., is at Heifer Ranch, Perryville, Ark.; **Maya Davis**, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, is at Quaker Cottage; **Sam Farley**, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, Ind., is at Camp Mardela, Denton, Md.; **Tori Bateman**, Indian Creek Church of the Brethren, Harleysville, Pa., is at Office of Public Witness, Washington, D.C.; **Verena Jauss**, Weil im Schoenbuch, Germany, is at Heifer Ranch. *Second row, kneeling:* **Dannie Otto**, Urbana, Ill., is at World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; **Frieden Gresh**, Fairview (Md.) Church of the Brethren, is at ABODE Services, Fremont, Calif.; **Joan Huston**, Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, Lebanon, Pa., is at Brethren Disaster Ministries. *Third row, standing:* **Kelsey Murray**, Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, is at Youth and Young Adult Office, Elgin, Ill.; **Barb Shenk**, Urbana, Ill., is at World Friendship Center; **Lea Herres**, Wittlich, Germany, is at ABODE; **Megan Wiens**, McPherson, Kan., is at Creation Justice Ministries, Washington, D.C.; **Erv Huston**, Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, is at Brethren Disaster Ministries; **Hannah Tutwiler**, Pleasant Valley (Va.) Church of the Brethren, is at Human Solutions, Portland, Ore.; **Justin Domingos**, Lakeside, Calif., is at San Diego (Calif.) Peace Campus; **Lisa Hoesel**, Herrnhut, Germany, is at Habitat for Humanity, Lancaster, Pa.; **Deborah Mowry**, Loysburg, Pa., is at Sisters of the Road, Portland, Ore.; **Stephen Miller**, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren, is at Asian Rural Institute, Japan; **Bob O'Neal**, Memorial Church of the Brethren, is at Heifer Ranch; **Eske Hicken**, Offenbach, Germany, is at Sisters of the Road.

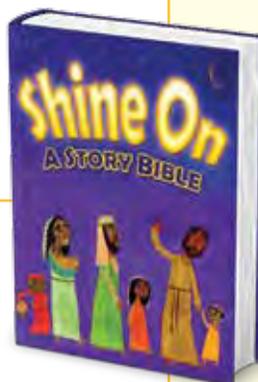


BVS Unit 318

Front, from left: **Chloe Soliday**, Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa., is at Creation Justice Ministries, Washington D.C.; **Grey Robinson**, Glade Spring, Va., is at the Workcamp Ministry, Elgin, Ill.; **Justyna Krumpholz**, Wiesloch, Germany, is at Project PLASE, Baltimore, Md.; **Hannah Hernley**, New Paris, Pa., is at Capstone 118, New Orleans, La.; **Jan Kock**, Wesel, Germany, is at Deep Roots, Earleville, Md. *Back:* **Katinka Kalusche**, Hamburg, Germany, is at Highland Park Elementary, Roanoke, Va.; **Marvin Best**, Hohn-Grenshausen, Germany, is at ABODE Services, Fremont, Calif.; **Tyrese Taylor**, North Manchester (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, is at ABODE; **Jonathan Faust**, Bad Feilnbach, Germany, is at SnowCap, Portland, Ore.; **Daylon Frye**, Goshen, Ind., is at Habitat for Humanity, Lancaster, Pa.

Brethren Press sends story Bible to churches

Brethren Press has sent 425 copies of *Shine On: A Story Bible*, including 5 copies of the Spanish version, to Church of the Brethren congregations across the country. The gifts were funded by an offering taken at the 2017 Annual Conference. Shine is a curriculum of Brethren Press and MennoMedia. "The good news we all share with children transforms their lives. Annual Conference shares this vision and has partnered with Brethren Press for a special initiative aimed at growing faith in children," said the cover letter. "Please accept this gift from all of us."



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“THANK YOU FOR THE EXCELLENT DECEMBER MESSENGER. IT WAS RELEVANT TO THE SEASON, UPLIFTING IN SPIRIT, AND CHALLENGING IN THOUGHT.”

A flood of memories

“Staying Alert” in the December MESSENGER brought a flood of memories of a cool October day in the early 1950s. My husband and I had been waiting over two years to adopt a boy. Mrs. Jones (not her real name) from Child Welfare pulled up and called out, “Mrs. Henry, your boys are here and you must pick them up now!” I was certain I misunderstood so I asked her to repeat what she said. “Yes, there are four boys and you have to take the two middle ones.”

To this day, I couldn’t tell you where we drove to get our little three-

and four-year-old boys. But there they were, looking so scared, with only thin summer clothes on and carrying nothing. They were thin and pale. The four-year-old kept holding his brother’s hand and reassured him, “All is well,” and, “We’re going to have our own room.”

I’m sure one never feels totally prepared or qualified to take on such an awesome task as parenthood, but somehow we do. The road may get a bit rough now and then, but the good always wins.

Now I am 94 and both those sweet, loving boys are gone. The younger died of a massive heart attack when

he was 47 years of age. His brother died of a blood clot when he was 61.

I have such beautiful memories. Yes, my boys died way too young, but someday I can sit down with them and laugh about all the fun we had when they were children.

Penny Henry
Bedford, Pa.

Relevant, uplifting, challenging

Thank you for the excellent December MESSENGER. It was relevant to the season, uplifting in spirit, and challenging in thought!

In 2000, I traveled to Iona. The pilgrimage was a deeply spiritual one.

“Then some people came, bringing to Jesus a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him...” Mark 2:3-4



Your congregation is invited to join

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If you are committed to and actively engaged in ministry to and with persons with disabilities.

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- Facility modifications allowing persons with physical limitations to fully participate in church life
- Program changes to meet the needs of those with developmental and/or learning disabilities
- Staff hires or volunteer designations to advocate for and assist those with varying abilities
- Building relationships with local agencies serving persons with disabilities or mental illness

Go to www.brethren.org/openroof to submit an application and share your story by **June 1**.

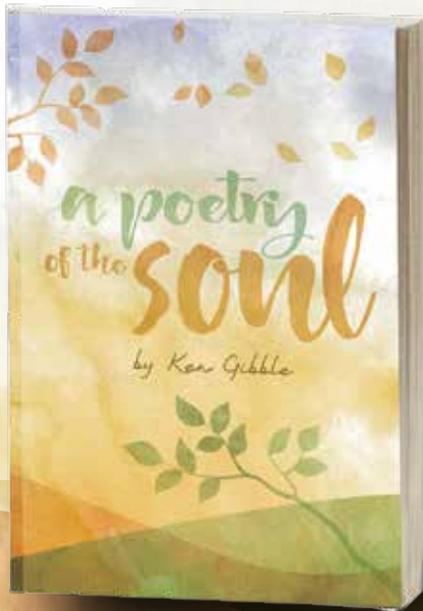


Other inspiring stories can be found in *Circles of Love: Stories of Congregations Caring for People with Disabilities and their Families* available from Brethren Press: www.brethrenpress.com.

For additional information contact Congregational Life Ministries: Congregationallife@brethren.org - or - 800-323-8039 x303. Sponsored by Congregational Life Ministries.

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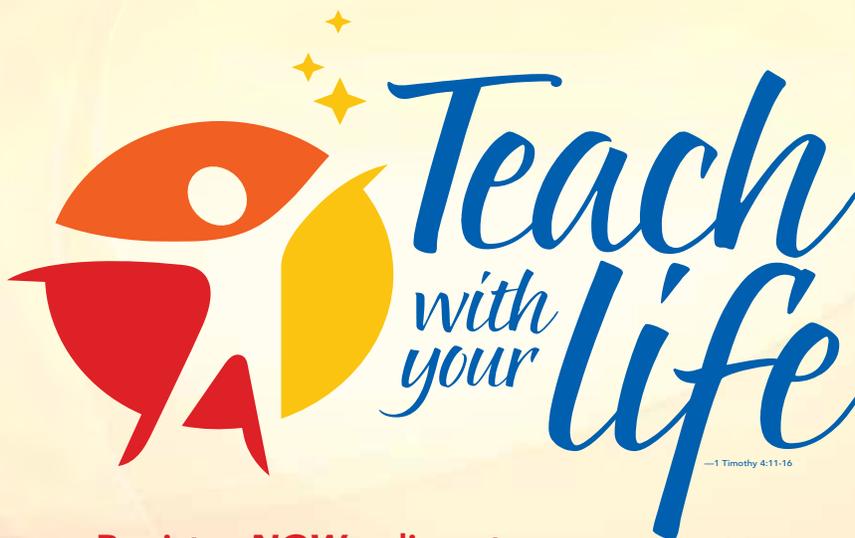
During that time and thereafter, I grew an affinity for Celtic Christianity that I am certain influenced my final decade of pastoral ministry. I so often felt that Brethren have much in common with Celtic Christianity.

John Bell's article made me think about Kenneth Bailey's book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, which brings the Middle Eastern culture to bear on the stories of Jesus. Most significant was learning how the shape of homes in that era, and even today, contrast with our usual imagery of the nativity stories.

The home was one room with an attached guest room. It was the guest room that was full, not an inn. Animals stayed in an area adjoining the one room. The manger was probably a stone or crude wooden one used by the animals along the connection with the one room.

The family with whom they stayed may have been acquaintances or relatives of Joseph. The family didn't know he was coming, so the guest room was

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full of others. They included Joseph and Mary in their own space.

I'm not sure such revelations will alter our nativity sets or Christmas pageants, but they are important to understand how 2,000 years and Western culture have affected our interpretation and display of the stories.

Robert E. Alley
Harrisonburg, Va.

Disappointed by conflict

The Leadership Team faces an interesting conflict. Their statement was quite revealing. The problem is that many view someone who is gay as being less than a person who is heterosexual.

It seems bizarre that a person called to the ministry through faith and belief is discounted to the bargain bin because they're "known to be engaging in homosexual practices." What does that mean? The phrase is so deliberately vague that it serves only as an excuse to dismiss. A person who is called to the ministry and accepts the challenges and duties of the

Get off the Bench and Back in the Game, in which attitudes, decisions and actions that derail us from God's purposes for our living are challenged so we are able to fulfill the purposes God desires of us in the context of our life endeavors. *Incredible Healing Miracles God Performed*, which describes remarkable physical healings. *The Universe and Life, Beginnings, Endings and the Last Beginning*, that brilliantly engages the exercise of belief in both science and the Almighty God from the big bang to the final destiny of all who have lived and will yet live. *Squirrel Hollow*, exciting stories that teach moral lessons for children ages 4-10. *Animals in Heaven, Of Course*, that describes of the future time when the delights of God's fantastic heavenly animal kingdom on the new earth yet to be created, and the glorious bliss of the Celestial City, the abode of the Almighty God, will be enjoyed by all believers. All the books were written by Frank Leaman and may be purchased at amazon.com.

A Brethren Prayer and Worship Summit A call is going out to come together for a denomination-wide Brethren Prayer and Worship Summit, to be held at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, just south of Harrisonburg, Va., on Route 11, on April 20-21, 2018. This is a follow-up to a gathering that was held at Moorefield, W. Va., on August 19, 2017, where much concern was expressed about the direction of the denomination, especially related to the issue of homosexuality. Attendance at this gathering was limited, but about fourteen districts were represented. From that meeting the concerns were pre-

sent to the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren in its October meeting.

It was determined that the next step should be to hold this Prayer Summit to seek God's direction for our future. The nature of this gathering will not be to conduct any kind of official business. We will not be discussing issues or making motions or signing petitions or taking votes in any manner. The over-arching theme of this event will be found in the great revival verse of the Old Testament, II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Some Brethren speakers have been invited to focus on sub-themes of repentance and confession, grace and forgiveness and healing and hope. They are Julian Rittenhouse, Shenandoah; Stafford Frederick, Virlina; and Joel Billie, President of EYN, Nigeria. There will be no cost to attend this event. A few offerings will be received. Most of the leadership of this event will be volunteering their time and travel.

This is being called a Big Brethren Prayer Meeting. The main building at the Fairgrounds can accommodate 1,000 or so around round tables. The invitation is wide open for all Brethren. **COME ONE, COME ALL!** Come to be humbled. Come to be challenged. Come to be revived. Come to move forward. Do not come to be critical! For additional information and registration please visit the website: brethrenprayersummit.com. Online registration is highly recommended. Seating is limited, so register early.

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Hillcrest residents pictured clockwise: Linda Hart, Beryl Fordyce, Gwen Carr, Pat Holt, Linda Short, Herb Holt and Bob Ratliff.

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LETTERS

office deserves the same recognition, support, and acceptance received by any other minister. To do less is failing to work together.

I was disappointed to see a district split over this issue. To me, that is the attitude of the kid who says he is going to take his toys and go home. It also

means that civil dialogue comes to an end. It's easier to believe misinformation and innuendo, and to judge those, when there is no active communication between the differing opinions.

Not every church has to embrace same-sex relationships, but when a congregation does reach out to fulfill the

spiritual needs of those searching, they shouldn't be degraded for doing so.

Myron Jackson
Cabool, Mo.

To the Leadership Team

This letter responds to the November 2017 article, "Leadership

TURNINGPOINTS

Please send information to be included in Turning Points to Diane Stroyeck, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin, IL 60120; 800-323-8039, ext. 327; dstroyeck@brethren.org. Information must be complete in order to be published. Information older than one year cannot be published.

New members

Bethany, Farmington, Del.: Donald D. Forrester

Brook Park Community, Ohio: Alan Kraus, Anitra Kraus

Chambersburg, Pa.: Anastasia J. Deardorff, Joshua Gordon, Desean Lindo, ShyAnn Snyder

Champaign, Ill.: David DeLeon, Michelle Wojtaszek

Chiques, Manheim, Pa.: Trent Groff, Emily Lehman, Matthew Lehman

Eel River, Silver Lake, Ind.: Ben Schrock, Monica Schrock, Mary Sollenberger

Ephrata, Pa.: Chad Aughinbach, Erica Aughinbach, Stacey Ebersole, Amy Emrey, Eric Emrey, Brent Good, Tamara Good, Linda Strubel, Tom Strubel, Hugo Zorrilla, Norma Zorrilla

Frederick, Md.: Abel Guajardo, Brandi Guajardo, Aaron Henry, Joanna Boyce Henry, Brandon McCartney, Susie McConnell, Daryl Poffenberger, Ruth

Poffenberger, Craig H. Smith, Victoria Smith
Garden City, Kan.: Andrea Brown, Cole Brown, Kirk Brown, Sara Brown, Rusty Landon, Tony Piccone, Valerie Piccone
Green Hill, Salem, Va.: Cole Keister

Heidelberg, Myerstown, Pa.: Dawn Bucher, Cody Eberly, Harold Martin, Priscilla Martin

Lancaster, Pa.: Michael Howes

Lincolnshire, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Cheryl Thomas, Paul Thomas

Lorida, Fla.: Harry Drake
Mountain View,

McGaheysville, Va.: Jesse Carwell, Jessica Carwell, Lisa Thacker, Tim Thacker

Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Addison Beamesderfer,

Cassie Bollinger, Marcus Forney, Luanna Kline, Luke McCune, Avery Stoner, Brenna Stoner, Cadence Stoner, Adam Wagner, Ben Wenger, Jeanette Wenger

Mill Creek, Port Republic, Va.: Allison Brunk, Abby Clayton, Erin Clayton, Chloe Michael, Haylee Michael, Anneliese Perkins, Kemper Siever, Makenna Siever

Palmyra, Pa.: Diane Cave, William Cave, Sierra Garrison, Ken Maulfair

Pine Creek, North Liberty, Ind.: Kayla Dent

Pine Glen, Lewistown, Pa.: Ruthie Aurand, Patricia Crosson, Vaughn Crosson, Louise Ditmer, Beth Kline, Russel Kline,

Hazel Klippert, Colton Markley, Michelle Markley, Alexis Spade
Pleasant Chapel, Ashley, Ind.: Roy Vierck

Pottstown, Pa.: Bob Lare, Dawn Lare, Eric Mohn, Mary Mohn

Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.: Pauline Armstrong, Angie Davis, Joe Davis, Leon Davis, Luke Davis, Madi Davis

Rossville, Ind.: Dennis Bond, Diane Williams, Griffin Williams

Somerset, Pa.: Brittany Saylor, Emily Saylor

Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Ronald Finney

Warrensburg, Mo.: Doris Brown, David Curtis, Kathryn Rankin, Mark Rankin, Barb Siney, Ron Siney, Shirley Willcockson

White Hill, Stuarts Draft, Va.: Chesne Baska, Pete Baska, Nancy Holcomb, Tim Holcomb, Janis Keith, Jimmy Madison, Tommy Madison, Charlie Parker, Chayla Parker, Betty Thompson

White Oak, Manheim, Pa.: Jackson Cassel, Curtis Groff, Cole Martin, Katelyn Zimmerman

Wedding anniversaries

Black, Selby and Sara, Union Bridge, Md., 60

Heisey, Paul and Dorothy, Newmanstown, Pa., 70

Kerschensteiner, Ed and Anna Lou, Boise, Idaho, 65

Knepper, Royal and Faye, Markleton, Pa., 65

Kover, Virgil and Floy, Lititz, Pa., 68

Liller, Paul and Jeanne, Keyser, W.Va., 65

Lohrer, David and Deborah, Palmyra, Pa., 50

Martin, Jim and Marjorie, Myersville, Md., 65

Myers, Homer and Mildred (Mickey), Smithsburg, Md., 65

Myers, Paul and Ella, Fostoria, Ohio, 60

Payne, Maurice and Betty, Knoxville, Md., 66

Reese, Wilbur, Jr. and Susan, Keymar, Md., 50

Reynolds, Lawrence and Elsie, Palmyra, Pa., 65

Rousselow, Leroy and Maxine, Waterloo, Iowa, 75

Schnierlia, Mike and Paula, Freeport, Ill., 50

Summers, Roy and Jean, Hershey, Pa., 68

Wenger, Leon and Lorraine, Ephrata, Pa., 60

Wright, Oren and Shirley, Oakley, Ill., 55

Zimmerman, Phil and Mary, Frederick, Md., 50

Deaths

Anthony, Margaret Alegra, 84, Hagerstown, Md., Dec. 7

Aushman, Hilda, 97, Adamstown, Md., Oct. 17

Baile, Betty Jane Stewart, 93, Warrensburg, Mo., Feb. 21

Baile, Glen, 95, Warrensburg, Mo., Nov. 3

Batalona, Remio A. M., 88, Fort Wayne, Ind., Dec. 27

Beck, James E., Sr., 94, Lititz, Pa., July 4

Bowman, Jerry L., 79, Glen Arm, Md., Nov. 19

Brenner, Lillian V. Breeden, 89, York, Pa., Nov. 30

Bright, H. Byron, 81, Ashland, Ohio, Dec. 15

Brubaker, John Henry, 94, Manheim, Pa., June 5

Brubaker, Lorraine B., 87, Sinking Spring, Pa., Aug. 17

Case, Janet Sue, 74, Ashland, Ohio, Nov. 23

Clemens, Greta D. Bricker, 84, Wyomissing, Pa., Oct. 17

Clemens, John E., 74, Palmyra, Pa., Dec. 30

Collette, Charleen Davis, 72, Fort Wayne, Ind., Dec. 26

Connor, David Willard, 74, Temple, Pa., March 31

Dahms, Lyle William, 88, Freeport, Ill., Oct. 25

Davis, Delores A. Shank, 87, Mount Morris, Ill., Jan. 2

DeGrange, Virginia C. Lantz, 93, Hagerstown, Md., May 14

Engle, Olive Ruth Young, 86, Frederick, Md., Sept. 2

Flory, Dale Keith, 85, Amboy, Ill., Dec. 23

Fordham, Robert V., 54, Dixon, Ill., Jan. 3

Fouts, Annabelle L. Berg, 83, Maysville, W.Va., Nov. 16

Frye, Mary, 81, Castle Rock, Colo., Nov. 6

Furry, Gene G., 83, Shippensburg, Pa., Nov. 4

Team issues statement to the denomination.” A district in our denomination has had the temerity to follow the teachings of Jesus that we should relate to each other in terms of love, compassion, acceptance, and justice instead of being bound by institutional

dogma and doctrine. It is this latter, by the way, that has been the cause of the decline of the institutional Christian church starting in the middle of the 20th century.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Leadership Team showed some real

leadership? Instead of trying to punish the “offending” district, the team would affirm the district's position, recommend that we begin undoing our institutional legalisms, and find ways to focus on and emphasize the real teachings of Jesus.

Galen L. Miller
Wenatchee, Wash.

Gallup, Donald, 86, Mount Morris, Ill., Dec. 17
Garner, Oscar V., 101, Pemberville, Ohio, Dec. 18
Geib, Clarence B., 84, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 16
Glass, Lola Mae Baker, 93, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 18
Groff, Richard L., 90, Palmyra, Pa., Aug. 10
Hamilton, Bessie F., 85, Shippensburg, Pa., Aug. 24
Harsh, Norman Luther, 91, Roanoke, Va., Nov. 29
Heinemeyer, Mary Ann, 80, Johnstown, Pa., Oct. 24
Hess, Don, 85, Massanutten, Va., Sept. 6
Hickman, Charlie, 82, Brook Park, Ohio, April 24
Hochstetler, Evelyn L. Gannon, 80, Ashland, Ohio, Nov. 25
Hoffman, Kathleen Crouse, 93, Frederick, Md., Sept. 5
Hostetter, Julie Mader, 66, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 12
Hott, Erma R. Weaver, 90, Annville, Pa., Sept. 21
Jay, Jeanne Mason, 93, Brook Park, Ohio, March 15, 2017
Jumper, Laura Mary, 94, Shippensburg, Pa., Sept. 22
Kaylor, Alvin, Jr., 93, Lititz, Pa., Aug. 27
King, Donna Joan Swoveland, 84, Hagerstown, Ind., Sept. 14
Kulp, David, Palmyra, Pa., Aug. 2
Landes, Wallace B., Jr., 65, Palmyra, Pa., Sept. 21
Lied, Ernestine, 91, Reading, Pa., Aug. 1
Lyle, Tommy Roosevelt, 81, Roanoke, Va., Dec. 14
Martin, A. Jeanette Myer, 88, East Petersburg, Pa., Jan. 8
Martzall, Mabel F. Eshleman Martin, 99, Lititz, Pa., Dec. 28
May, Nancy, 72, Wyomissing, Pa., July 7
McCoige, Sally Laudeman, 79, Fort Wayne, Ind., Dec. 23
McCune, Naomi Betty, 97, Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 22
McGuigan, Elva, 93, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 29
Moses, Shirley Ann Stone, 81, Brook Park, Ohio, Jan. 12, 2017
Moxley, Ralph Walter, 96, Frederick, Md., Dec. 5
Novak, Carol J., 67, Dixon, Ill., Nov. 24
Potter, Loleta Mae Cunningham, 87, Boonsboro, Md., Oct. 19
Redner, Earl, 91, Lancaster, Pa., April 5
Risser, Ruth Shuey, 91, Adamstown, Md., Aug. 4
Rivers, Jason, 38, Mohnton, Pa., June 12
Rodeffer, William Howard, Jr., 63, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 5
Rodgers, Everette C., 97, McGaheysville, Va., April 15
Russell, Charles W., 64, Roaring Spring, Pa., Nov. 15
Sauder, Lewis D., 96, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 23
Saylor, Dean L., 51, Lititz, Pa., Oct. 9
Seidel, Carolyn Yates, 79, Clifton, Va., Dec. 11

Shorter, Mark Adrian, 50, Frederick, Md., Aug. 27
Smith, Sherril A. Meckley, 79, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 30
Spangler, Joyce, 62, Floyd, Va., Nov. 24
Stewart, Helga B., 79, West Lawn, Pa., May 26
Stout, Joel Evan, 52, Cambridge City, Ind., Oct. 24
Stout, Ruth Lucile Lumpkin, 93, Greens Fork, Ind., July 16
Tisdale, Thomas Clinton, 78, Stuarts Draft, Va., June 1
Toms, Beatrice Clingan, 103, Olney, Md., Nov. 2
Vaughn, Thomas E., 52, Shippensburg, Pa., Nov. 7
Vinck, Harold L., 90, Olmsted Falls, Ohio, May 19
Wagner, Gladys M., 92, Garden City, Kan., Dec. 28
Walls, Richard Thomas, 78, Morgantown, W.Va., Nov. 1
White, Don E., 86, Bradenton, Fla., Dec. 14
White, Myrtle Stauffer, 94, Lititz, Pa., June 29
Wiggins, Althea M., 86, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 21
Wiles, Donald William, Sr., 65, Frederick, Md., Oct. 10
Williams, Linda L. Balsbaugh, 70, Harrisburg, Pa., June 2
Wingert, Miriam Wanner Heffley, 84, Hanover, Pa., Dec. 24
Wisner, John, 88, Frederick, Md., Oct. 26

Younkins, Rebecca Best, 71, Hagerstown, Md., Oct. 29
Zayas, Elizabeth (Betty) May, 89, Lombard, Ill., Dec. 21

Ordained

Guterriez, Libia, Southeastern Dist. (Bethel International, Morristown, Tenn.), Nov. 19
Longbrake, Joshua, Pac. S. W. Dist. (Circle of Peace, Peoria, Ariz.), Nov. 19
Park, Calvin F., Mid-Atl. Dist. (Frederick, Md.), Oct. 29
Rabenstein, Traci, S. Pa. Dist. (Mechanicsburg, Pa.), Nov. 26
Rudy, Tabitha, Virgina Dist. (Ninth St., Roanoke, Va.), Jan. 7

Licensed

Asamoah, Angela, Pac. S. W. Dist. (Circle of Peace, Peoria, Ariz.), Jan. 7
Bolt, Mark Allen, Virgina Dist. (Coulson, Hillsville, Va.), Nov. 26
Crissman, Leslie, W. Pa. Dist. (Oakdale, New Bethlehem, Pa.), Nov. 13
Frazee, Gina, W. Marva Dist. (Oak Park, Oakland, Md.), Oct. 29
Kauffman, Eric K., S. Pa. Dist. (Buffalo Valley, Mifflinburg, Pa.), Nov. 8
Parfitt, Stephen, W. Pa. Dist. (Greensburg, Pa.), Nov. 12
Row, Michael, W. Plains Dist. (Bethel, Carleton, Neb.), Nov. 19

Sizemore, Timothy, Southeastern Dist. (Peak Creek, Laurel Springs, N.C.), Nov. 26

Placements

Dell, Ernest, pastor, Beech Run, Mapleton Depot, Pa., Jan. 1
Horner, Tammy, from interim pastor to pastor, Beachdale, Berlin, Pa., Jan. 7
Landerman, Robert, pastor, Baltimore, Woodberry, Md., Apr. 2
Miller, Timothy, from interim pastor to pastor, Aughwick-Germany Valley, Shirleysburg, Pa., Jan. 7
Park, Calvin, from youth and young adult pastor, Frederick, Md., to pastor, Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa., Jan. 1
Powers, Thomas, from pastor, Masons Cove, Salem, Va., to pastor, Daleville, Troutville, Va., Jan. 1
Rose, Bill, pastor, Pound River, Pound, Va., Dec. 10
Shoemaker, Ernest, pastor, Hollins Road, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 1
Thomas, Cheryl, from team interim pastor to team pastor, Lincolnshire, Fort Wayne, Ind., Jan. 1
Thomas, Paul, from team interim pastor to team pastor, Lincolnshire, Fort Wayne, Ind., Jan. 1
Wiltchek, Walt, pastor, Easton, Md., Dec. 1

Trust, betrayal, and the promise of Easter

On a cold January evening, my pastor held a brainstorming session with people from several ministry groups in our congregation. We were to help pull together creative ideas for worship during Lent. She started off with a theme appropriate to the season that prepares us for Easter: growth into new life—the way a plant survives underground as a seed through the dark winter, and emerges and grows in the light of spring.



CHERYL BRUMBAUGH-CATFORD

But the conversation turned a corner. Suddenly we found ourselves talking about trust, and betrayals of trust. The person who shifted the topic said he was struck by great examples of trust during the last days of Jesus’ earthly ministry: people trusted in the promise of a Messiah, the disciples followed Jesus into Jerusalem at a time of dangerous politics, the owner of that

Palm Sunday colt loaned out a valuable animal on trust. Others responded with examples of betrayal: the disciples fell asleep in the garden, they ran and hid after Jesus’ arrest, Peter denied him, the crowd chose Barabbas.

We wondered whether anyone in those stories escaped the guilt of betrayal. The women at the foot of the cross were held up as an example until we remembered the unresolved ending of the Gospel of Mark: Those same women fled from the empty tomb without sharing the news of resurrection.

What about Jesus? Were his words on the cross, “Remove this cup from me,” and “My God, why have you forsaken me?” some kind of betrayal? Or were they agonized pleas from someone facing a gruesome death, who still wanted to live?

Betrayals of trust are in the news every day. #MeToo has brought such betrayals to the fore and demands that we pay attention. Some who say #MeToo were betrayed by friends or family, some by people in positions of power and authority, some by bosses, some by strangers. All have been

betrayed by a society that looked the other way, hasn’t insisted on basic standards of human decency, hasn’t wanted to bring to light what’s been going on in the dark.

For me, the abuse of girls on the USA Gymnastics team by Larry Nassar is most heart wrenching. The opportunity to tell their stories and finally be believed, in a court of law, seems to have helped many of them—now young women—begin the process of healing. “Little girls don’t stay little forever. They grow into strong women that return to destroy your world,” survivor Kyle Stephens said to Nassar at his trial, quoted by Julie DiCaro in the *Washington Post*.

But now their parents are having to face their own guilt, publicly. They are both betrayed and betrayers. DiCaro writes, “For years, young women reported Nassar’s abuse to parents, police, and school staff members, only to have their reports ignored.” There was a “seemingly endless litany of missed opportunities to stop Nassar and prevent other children from abuse.”

An unrelenting light is being focused on betrayals of trust. Its chief targets may be the Nassars and Weinstens of the world, who thrive by building structures that take advantage of trust, but in this new reality is anyone truly free of the guilt of betrayal? We may be tempted to take refuge in cynicism. We wonder if #MeToo will fade, or go too far, and nothing will change.

Easter, however, invites us to allow our stories of trust betrayed, experiences of abuse and violence and pain, our guilt, emerge from darkness and heal in the light. Easter invites us into God’s unrelenting love.

When we give praise simply for victory over death, perhaps we put Easter in too small a box. Dare we reimagine our Easter alleluias?

Christ is risen!

He was betrayed, abused, tortured.

He said, “Remove this cup from me.”

He said, “My God, why have you forsaken me?”

Yet he lives, and we may live too.

Christ is risen indeed!

Alleluia! 

EASTER, HOWEVER, INVITES US TO ALLOW OUR STORIES OF TRUST BETRAYED, EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AND PAIN, OUR GUILT, EMERGE FROM DARKNESS AND HEAL IN THE LIGHT.



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Dlama — Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN) Staff in 2014



photo by Roy Winter

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