

# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2019 [WWW.BRETHREN.ORG](http://WWW.BRETHREN.ORG)

*Overflowing with more and more  
prayers of thanksgiving to God*

2 Corinthians 9:12 ISV



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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
**MESSENGER**

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

# MESSENGER

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**on the cover** *A hike to a waterfall at Graveyard Fields, a mile-high valley in the Blue Ridge Mountains, was one of the activities available at NOAC. Photo by Russ Otto.*

## Remember. Repent. Repair.

**I**n downtown Montgomery, Ala., the Court Square fountain marks the location of an ancient artesian well, a source of water for native tribes before the area was settled by white people.

Later the well became the site of one of the most prominent slave auctions in America. Enslaved people of African descent, brought in by steamboat and train, were marched up Commerce St. to various slave depots and the auction site where the fountain now stands. The commerce of the day involved the selling of people, land, and livestock.

Just blocks away, where one of those warehouses used to be located, is the new Legacy Museum, which draws a solid line between the slavery of that time period and the mass incarceration of today. A little farther is the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which memorializes the thousands of African American victims of racial terror lynchings. Suspended from the ceiling are 600 six-foot steel monuments, one for each county where lynchings took place.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the forced migration of enslaved



WENDY MCFADDEN  
PUBLISHER

African people to North America, to what eventually became Virginia. This is an occasion to remember, to repent, to repair. In the past month, Christian Churches Together made a pilgrimage to Montgomery to observe this anniversary, and the National Council of Churches chose Hampton, Va., for its unity gathering.

This is also an occasion to read. For Christians, a bracing education can be found in *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*, by Jemar Tisby. This straightforward account traces the church's history with racism from the colonial era to now. Reading this book "is like having a sobering conversation with your doctor

and hearing that the only way to cure a dangerous disease is by undergoing an uncomfortable surgery and ongoing rehabilitation," the author warns. "Although the truth cuts like a scalpel and may leave a scar, it offers healing and health."

Observing that we are in a third reconstruction—the first coming after the Civil War and the second during the civil rights movement—Tisby urges immediate and serious action. Christianity in America has been built on sand, he says, and minor repairs won't fix this flawed foundation. "The church needs the Carpenter from Nazareth to deconstruct the house that racism built and remake it into a house for all nations."

*Wendy McFadden*

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## The Spirit planted a seed

**F**irst Church of the Brethren in Springfield, Ill., has a big lawn behind the church building that hasn't been used for much more than giving the mowing crew plenty of work. A garden was suggested, and at least one member expressed an interest in exploring the intersections of spirituality, healthy living, and eating. The catalyst for change came at a district event where members of the churches at Champaign and Polo, Ill., shared about their experiences with community gardens. It was as though the Holy Spirit planted a seed that was just waiting for the right conditions to sprout.

One of the families in the church owns a landscaping company, so the congregation didn't need to look far to find someone to dig up the sod. Others obtained seedlings, seeds, and fencing to keep out the rabbits. On a chilly Saturday in mid-April, the garden was planted and fenced. A family who lives just down the street volunteered to keep the garden watered. One of the pianists shared updates throughout the summer as to how the garden was doing.

The first harvest was ready in early July, and fresh cucumbers, beans, and peppers were donated to a food bank run by one of the Methodist churches in town.

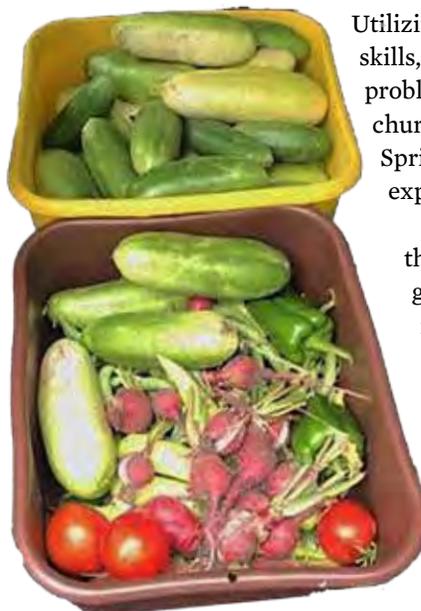
The elementary school down the street was starting a food bank for needy families, and by the beginning of August fresh produce—now including tomatoes, radishes, and herbs—was shared with Harvard Park School.

At one point it was discovered that a homeless person had been helping themselves to some fresh veggies, to which the gardening crew responded, "Good."

The Harvard Park neighborhood in which First Church of the Brethren is located has a significant number of families who are considered to live in a "food desert," more than a half mile from the nearest grocery store and without access to a vehicle.

Utilizing resources of land, gardening skills, and time to help ameliorate the problem has been a blessing both for the church and the community. First Springfield hopes to continue to expand the garden in years to come.

Even more important than feeding the hungry, as Christ commanded, the garden has grown a greater awareness and understanding of the church's neighbors and their needs. Every part of what God has given, including the soil beneath our feet, can become a resource for serving God, following in the footsteps of Jesus, and growing in the Spirit. —**Bobbi Dykema**



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.

## Rededicated to peace

**S**un, rain, and wind wore down the peace witness of Crest Manor Church of the Brethren's peace poles, planted in 1998.

The congregation rededicated itself to witnessing for peace by planting new peace poles on the International Day of Prayer for Peace. The church also celebrated its new community: not only has Crest Manor changed in 21 years, it now shares its building with First Baptist Church in South Bend, Ind.

With a new peace pole at each entrance of the building, the two

congregations walked, prayed, and sang together on Sunday morning, Sept. 22, with both grief and hope for God's beloved world. The churches prayed "peace" in each of the eight languages on the peace poles. "We pray with Spanish-speakers in our community and throughout this hemisphere and beyond," said one of the prayers, "especially the Baptist and Brethren Spanish-speakers worshipping this morning, for *paz*. We pray for *paz*, peace on earth."

Prayers and testimonies and actions for peace may withstand the years, and the weather. —Anna Lisa Gross



## Out of context for 25 years

**This fall Frank Ramirez reaches 25 years of "Out of context,"** the closing thought that accompanies every lesson in Brethren Press' *A Guide for Biblical Studies*.

"I've always told people that my super-power is persistence," he says, commenting on how he has managed to write "Out of context" some 1,300 times—one for every week starting December 1994. In addition to staying power, he credits the Brethren Press editors for helping him achieve this quarter-century accomplishment, including over the years Julie Garber, Nancy Klemm, and James Deaton.

The idea for "Out of context" was sparked by the work of a friend, Robert Baker of Elkhart, Ind., who wrote a feature called "If I Taught the Lesson" for a Mennonite curriculum. Ramirez's idea was to do something



similar but instead of responding to the lesson, respond to the scripture text. He uses the assigned scriptures as jumping off points, hoping to offer readers something new and different to think about.

As a fulltime pastor and a freelance writer, Ramirez writes "Out of context" in batches of 26 at a time, twice a year, using his spare time over the course of a couple of weeks. He used to print out the 26 scripture texts and lay them out on a table to peruse, pick through, and respond first to those that immediately gained his attention. Now he works digitally, on his laptop scrolling from one scripture to the next, researching ideas, consulting sources, and then letting the writing "sit" for some days before returning to read it again and make revisions.

Many times he tells stories in response to the scripture. Sometimes they are personal, from his life or his

family's experiences. Sometimes they are shared out of reading he is doing or research for other projects. As often as possible, they are stories from history—the history of Brethren and other peoples. In recent years some have come from his work to translate ancient letters. One letter from ancient Rome has stuck in his mind: on one side it was all about ordinary life, including some list of accounts, but on the other side the writer reacted to Masada—the site where a Jewish rebellion failed and those who were trapped by the Roman military committed mass suicide. Not knowing the identity of the writer, Ramirez imagines a Roman soldier affected by the horrors of war.

The way scripture evokes and connects with our stories is "one reason we call it a living Word," he says. The Bible "is wide open. . . . Nobody exhausts scripture. Nobody can say, 'I've learned all there is to learn.'"

—Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

**Service is a hallmark of the Brethren**, so it's no surprise that service projects were a significant activity at NOAC. In addition to the walk for Twa education, about 30 people traveled to Junaluska Elementary School to read to children and NOACers donated some 1,700 books to the school (below right), and a large group of volunteers led by the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District assembled more than 1,000 disaster relief kits (below left).

**“My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all day long, though their number is past my knowledge.”**

—Psalm 71:15

## NOAC by the numbers

**\$26,672.19**

was received in offerings taken up during the five worship services, benefiting the work of the Church of the Brethren denomination.

**\$5,990**

was raised by the 120-some walkers and runners who participated in the early morning walk around Lake Junaluska to benefit Twa education in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The walk was sponsored and organized by Brethren Benefit Trust. Global Mission and Service will distribute the funds.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

**1,000**

or more disaster relief kits were assembled by some 70 people. The Church World Service kits will be processed at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. A team from Southern Ohio and Kentucky District organized the project.

**1,719**

children's books were donated to Junaluska Elementary School, and a busload of NOACers went to the school to read to children one afternoon. Libby Kinsey was a leader of the effort. About 30 or more people read to the school's 465 children. "The great thing about your group is just the kindness that you had," said principal Alex Moscarelli.

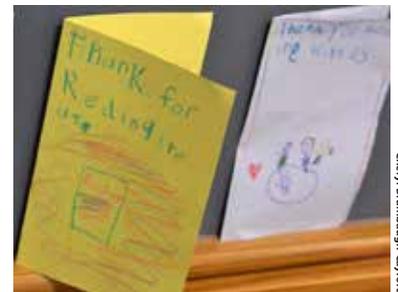


Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

**8**

people were on the NOAC planning team: coordinator Christy Waltersdorff, Glenn

Bollinger, Karen Dillon, Rex Miller, Pat Roberts, Paula Ulrich, and Josh Brockway and Stan Dueck as staff.

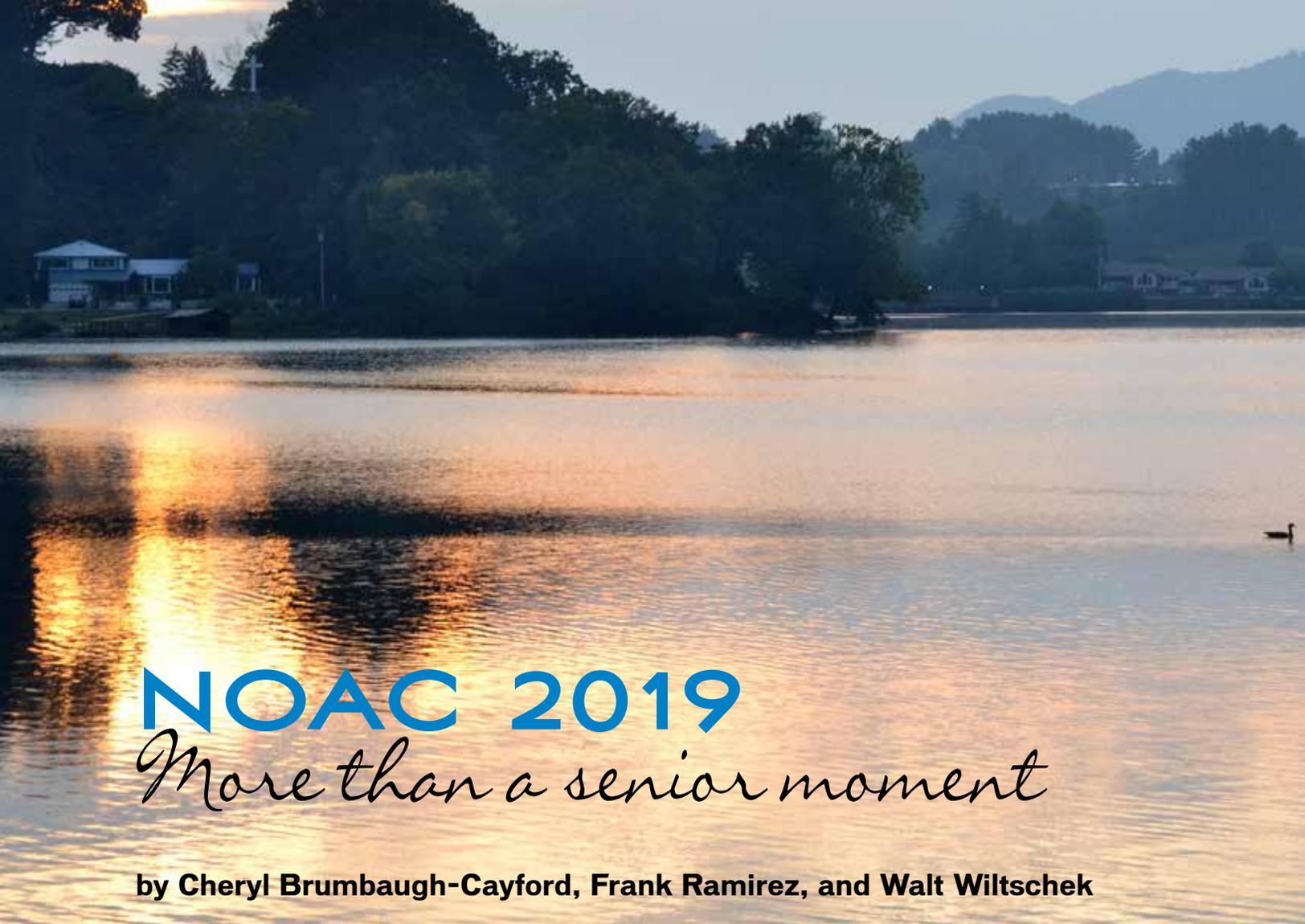


Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

**686**

people registered.

(All dollar amounts are pre-audit.)



# NOAC 2019

## *More than a senior moment*

by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Frank Ramirez, and Walt Wiltschek

### *Festive welcome*

**Traditional bluegrass music**, activity sign-ups, information tables, crafts, and snacks welcomed Brethren to NOAC in a new “Welcome Festival” this year as part of registration. The planning team wanted to provide a space for the NOAC crowd to enjoy fellowship and fun in a comfortable space as they arrived at the conference center.

Music was provided by Michael and Jennifer McLain and the Banjocats, a Nashville-based band that plays nation-

ally. Their NOAC performance capped a tour with stops in Virginia, North Dakota, New York, and elsewhere in North Carolina. “We’ve been really excited to come here,” Jennifer McLain said. “What an event you’re having!”

Frances Townsend of Onekama, Mich., led a unique activity at the festival—an opportunity to tie-dye bandanas for cancer patients who have lost their hair due to treatments. Townsend is connected to an organization called Grateful Heads, based in Roanoke, Va., and attends an annual event where they create about 1,000 of the bandanas. She will donate the colorful NOAC creations to places in need in Michigan. —ww



### *The common good*

**Sr. Joan Chittister laid down a challenge** at National Older Adult Conference, held Sept. 2-6 at Lake Junaluska, N.C.: remember your identity as peacemakers, seekers of justice, disciples of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and people committed to the common good.

With stories both humorous and serious, and statistics and notes from history, she reviewed the many ways the nation has understood the common good as a goal. But this



## “I’d do anything for the Brethren.”

—Sr. Joan Chittister, who writes and speaks on Benedictine spirituality, an advocate for peacemaking and social justice, currently co-chairing the UN-sponsored Global Peace Initiative of Women, opened her address to NOAC by saying that she interrupted a writing sabbatical to be there, something she would do only for the Brethren. She recalled how, many years ago, the Church of the Brethren was supportive of her order, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Pa., when they first started speaking out against nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War.



quest has lost its way, she said, and needs to return to its Judeo-Christian roots and the core understandings laid out in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, particularly the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes are given to us as a means for seeking individual happiness, she told NOAC. If we follow them, we place ourselves and our own needs in the light of compassion and justice for all people and all of creation. —CBC

## Calling for compassion

**The light passed from one candle to another** during a night-time vigil in a tent beside Lake Junaluska. The vigil gathered about 80 people, led by NOAC chaplains Dave and Kim Witkovsky.

It’s become a social media cliché—after every mass shooting, suicide bombing, or other alarming tragedy, the flags go to half mast and people type, sincerely, with a prayerful hands emoji, “thoughts and prayers.”

At the NOAC vigil there were thoughts. There were

prayers. But there was also a pledge to act with compassion.

“This vigil is trying to say prayer is important. It’s critical. It needs to lead us to deeper action,” Dave Witkovsky said. The idea “started as a concern for immigration, praying about immigrant rights,” he said in an interview. “But it’s grown to be a broader thing. And I would say that it’s become more of an opportunity for us to first of all confess the brokenness in our world, and to reflect together on how we can choose to witness for Christ through a different way of being.”

Kim Witkovsky called the gathering into worship. “We gather in this space together,” she said, because “we believe in the power of prayer to move mountains.” —FR





## “You Brethren are the people who brought us together.”

—Ken Medema telling NOAC about the Church of the Brethren’s role in his first meeting Ted Swartz. The two performers announced a new collaboration for a joint tour and invited Church of the Brethren congregations to contact them as potential venues to host performances.

## Accumulated wisdom

**Christy Waltersdorff has seen a lifetime** of Church of the Brethren conferences. She was coordinator of National Youth Conference (NYC) in Colorado in 1982, has served on the Program and Arrangements Committee for Annual Conference, and this year coordinated the National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) in Lake Junaluska, N.C., on Sept. 2-6.



She realized that some of the same people who were at that '82 NYC were at NOAC this year, still an active part of the church 37 years later. And she loves being with them.

“It’s the people for me, and what it represents about the church,” said Waltersdorff, who serves as pastor of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill. NOAC “is not just a week to get away for them. They come to get revived and energized to go back into the church and the world and keep working. This group of people isn’t done yet. Their impact is still important.”

The nearly 700 attendees at the conference in September came from a wide swath of the denomination. They traveled from across the country. They hailed from small congregations and large ones. They ranged in age from under 50 to 101. And together, they formed something more.

“This is the accumulated wisdom of the church,” Waltersdorff said. “NOAC is important for the health of the denomination. They still have a voice and have work to do. We need all the voices of faith and wisdom we can get.” —**ww**

## A musical feast

**NOAC music coordinator Bev Anspaugh** enjoyed herself thoroughly. “It’s the greatest joy I can have to hear all these voices in harmony coming back at me,” she said. Anspaugh took the stage at each keynote session and worship service during NOAC. “It’s just wonderful. I love it. It fills me up.”



Beyond the sound of the music, she said the singing says something important about the church itself. “That tradition of four-part harmony—I hope we never lose that, because it takes the community to sing in four-part harmony. It takes all the people singing their part to make that beautiful music.”

Anspaugh and organist Jonathan Emmons jointly led a hymn sing one afternoon, where Emmons provided some recital numbers on the organ. A NOAC choir of about three dozen people, directed by Michelle Grimm and accompanied by pianist Tim Binkley, added to the week’s musical feast. —**ww**

## A walk for Twa education

**Early that Thursday the fog** usually hovering over Lake Junaluska cleared quickly, before the sun rose over the mountains. Around 120 Brethren gathered to walk or run the two-and-a-half-mile route around the lake, together with those seen on the path beside them and those unseen in the Great Lakes area of Africa.

The walk sponsored and organized by Brethren Benefit Trust raised \$5,990 to offer an education to young people among the Twa, or Batwa, people. Global Mission and Service is working with emerging Brethren churches and nonprofits in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to provide these educational opportunities:

**In Rwanda** the work is led by church leader Etienne Nsanziimana. Mission workers Christine and Josiah Ludwick also made the Batwa a priority during their term of service in Rwanda. The program seeks to graduate three

people from university—the first Batwa in the country to attain university degrees—for a total budget of \$3,600.

**In Burundi** education and meals for Batwa students are provided in a program hosted by THARS, with leadership from David Nyonzima. The budget of a little more than \$5,600 per year provides 50 children with 180 meals.

**In the DRC** the Shalom Ministry for Reconciliation and Development led by Ron Lubungo is supporting 28 children at primary school. The annual budget of a little over \$3,000 pays for school fees, uniforms and shoes, and school supplies. The students are among the Batwa most affected by poverty in Ngovi, South Kivu Province.

“Our program is still small, and we could grow it if we had more funds,” said Global Mission and Service executive Jay Wittmeyer. NOAC has contributed half of the \$12,000 he is seeking per year to keep the program going. —FR and CBC

## Perfect attendance

**Virginia Crim, 101 years old**, of Greenville, Ohio, has attended every NOAC. This was her 15th.

She attended the first one with her husband because “we thought it would be an interesting project,” she said. Her hus-

band passed away after they had attended the first three NOACS. “I kept coming,” Crim said. This year she came with her daughter, who was on the planning team.

Asked which NOAC she enjoyed the best, she replied, “Each one was different.” More important than the program are the people. “There were certain people we would meet at NOAC year after year. Many of them are gone now,” she sighed. “We had friends from all over the United States. This was the one place we could get together.” —FR



Go to [www.brethren.org/noac2019](http://www.brethren.org/noac2019) for full coverage of the 2019 NOAC including news pages, webcasts of keynotes and worship services, the Senior Moments newsletter, photo albums, a video wrap up, and more. Coverage was provided by website staff Jan Fischer Bachman and Russ Otto; video and webcast crew Chris Brown, Enten Eller, Larry Glick, and David Sollenberger; writer Frank Ramirez; Senior Moments newsletter editor Walt Wiltschek; photographer and News Services director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford.

## NOAC featured daily Bible study as well as daily worship services:



Bible study leader **Paula Bowser** is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren living in Englewood, Ohio.

**Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm** of the

Bethany Seminary faculty preached the opening sermon on the topic of welcome, titled “Reaching for the Strange and Beautiful.”

**Jennifer Keeney Scarr**, pastor of Trotwood (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, gave a sermon titled “In the Clouds and in Our Bones” on the cre-

ation story and the story of Noah.

**Jeanne Davies**, pastor of the Parables congregation now meeting in Lombard and West Dundee, Ill., preached on “The Welcome Table.”

**Walt Wiltschek**, pastor of Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren and

MESSENGER at-large editor, gave a sermon titled, “Ready. Fire. Aim: Reaching Through Conflict.”

**Dennis Webb**, pastor of Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, closed the conference speaking on Mary’s experience at the empty tomb in John 20.



“We as Christians have an opportunity to follow Jesus through our racialized society . . . the Jesus who identifies with the least, the last, the lost. . . . **Follow Jesus and embrace a new belonging to other people’s suffering** because shared suffering is . . . where we live out our anti-racist discipleship in the way of Jesus.”

—Drew Hart, assistant professor of theology at Messiah College and the author of *Trouble I’ve Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*. He opened his talk to NOAC by sharing “greetings from Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren—that’s my new congregation!”



# Teaching as ministry

Many Brethren have been involved in education over the years, both in public and private education outside the church and in Christian education classes within it. As a new school year began, MESSENGER posed the question: How do you see your work as a ministry? Following are some of the responses.

## I am in ministry!

by Kim Boardman

**W**ay back in my 30s and 40s, almost every time I led worship the late Milton Ewert would be sure to approach me with the same comment: “Kim, you should consider going into the ministry.” To which I always responded the same way: “Milton, I am in ministry!”

Of course, he wanted me to consider attending seminary classes to go into the set -apart ministry, and I was referring to the fact that I already had followed a calling into the teaching ministry—now in my 32nd year. There is no doubt that teaching is a career choice and a job, but as so many teachers have experienced, it definitely has moments of being a true calling and ministry.

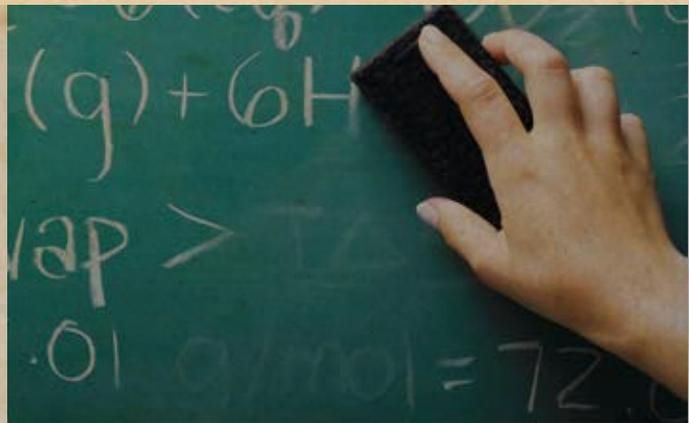
Working with 11- to 14-year-old students every day

is not easy. But in this society, so many students come into classrooms hungry, not sure where they will be sleeping when they leave school, afraid of violence or of being alone all night. Many are caught between parents who fight over them in court. Others have family members in prison.

I used to think I was being ridiculous for teaching my students things like photosynthesis and respiration when they simply needed survival skills. But it didn’t take me long to realize that being in school is their way out, and often their safety net. My ministry is to make sure that my classroom is as safe and educational as possible.

Every seventh and eighth grader who comes into my class and my school has the right to learn about photosynthesis and respiration, and the US Constitution, and algebra, and how to write a strong persuasive essay. In addition, and maybe more importantly, every student has the right to be treated with respect and value and

WE HAVE DIFFERENT GIFTS, ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO EACH OF US. IF YOUR GIFT IS PROPHECYING, THEN PROPHECY IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR FAITH; IF IT IS SERVING, THEN SERVE; IF IT IS TEACHING, THEN TEACH; IF IT IS TO ENCOURAGE, THEN GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT; IF IT IS GIVING, THEN GIVE GENEROUSLY; IF IT IS TO LEAD, DO IT DILIGENTLY; IF IT IS TO SHOW MERCY, DO IT CHEERFULLY. —Romans 12:6-8 NIV



to have adults around them who can be trusted and counted upon.

It has been a long learning curve for me. I have tried my best, and some days are definitely better than others. One of the smallest but most significant elements that has been added to my teaching ministry recently is to greet my students by name at the classroom door every day, and to shake their hands. This is part of a larger program in which many teachers in my district have been trained. For the last three years many of us have done this as our way to check on the students' well-being and simply greet them with respect.

On the last day of school one year, one of my students came to speak to me at the very end of the day. She had been at our school for only three or four months. I knew that the adjustment had not been easy for her. She specifically wanted to thank me. She told me that she struggled with coming to school every day. She would sit in her first class barely coping, but she told herself that she knew that if she could make it

through her first class, I would be there to greet her for her next class with a smile and a handshake. She told me that was how she got through every day.

So, Milton . . . no, I have never attended seminary, but I still believe I have followed God's call to ministry. 

Kim Boardman is a member of Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.

## A passing prayer

by Shawn Carothers

**R**ecently I had a student who performed poorly all semester and appeared to have failed the final exam. He was a senior and would not graduate without a passing grade.

I was quite distressed at our small group meeting that evening and asked for prayers for the student and for myself

**“I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT A GREAT TEACHER IS A GREAT ARTIST AND THAT THERE ARE AS FEW AS THERE ARE ANY OTHER GREAT ARTISTS. TEACHING MIGHT EVEN BE THE GREATEST OF THE ARTS SINCE THE MEDIUM IS THE HUMAN MIND AND SPIRIT.” —John Steinbeck**

as I went into the next day and the hard conversation I knew was ahead.

It turns out there was a mistake on the grading key, and the student indeed passed the final. He just needed a passing performance on one more assessment and to get some missing assignments completed. When he finished, I congratulated him and told him that I had a whole room full of people praying for him last night.

He said, “You really did that?” I said, “Yes.” Then I jokingly told this rather large football player that I needed a hug from him. To my shock, he obliged. It was one of the most powerful memories in my 34 years in public education. 

Shawn Carothers is a member of Circle of Peace Church of the Brethren, Peoria, Ariz.

## Kids make everything better

by Melanie Bair

**M**ajoring in psychology at Bridgewater College and learning child and brain development led me to want to become a teacher. I also loved working with kids. I was hired as a kindergarten teacher by John Wayland Elementary, just down the road from the college, and I’ve been there for 20 years.

I love that my job is different every day. No two days are the same, and kids make everything better.

I believe that God places each and every student in

my class. No matter how hard the obstacle—whether it’s behavior, circumstances, family life, etc.—God uses me to help make a difference in the lives of my students during the time that I have them.

I try to show my students compassion, care, and love, and to teach them how to be kind to others and to forgive. And God is using them to help me grow more understanding and compassionate, too. 

Melanie Bair is a member of Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

## Unexpected intersections

by Bobbie Oh

**I**saw my vocation as an educator intersect unexpectedly with my faith two years ago when I received a call out of the blue to interview for a first-grade teaching position at an urban charter school in Dayton, Ohio.

Feeling God’s nudge, I accepted the job. The past two years have been full of struggle, tears, and tremendous personal growth. Due to the trauma of parental incarceration, drug use, and poverty, many of my students have mental and physical needs that go beyond the scope of my college training.

I rely on God’s strength daily to help me meet these needs and provide a loving, safe classroom for my students to learn and grow. 

Bobbie Oh is a member of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in Kettering, Ohio.



# A God of second chances

by Diane Mason

**F**or over three decades I have tried to awaken in college students a love for math—or at least a tolerable appreciation! Yet most students enrolled in my classes reluctantly and came to our first session with a disgruntled attitude and a preconception of failure!

When “fighting an uphill battle” (can a pacifist use that phrase?), I found it helpful to keep Jonah in mind. Like my students, Jonah was reluctant; he had a disgruntled attitude; and he was also certain of failure in his mission to Nineveh. Here’s the lesson I learned from Jonah: “The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time” (Jonah 3:1).

Our God is a God of second chances! And if my God is that generous with a prophet who did not “make the grade,” then I should be generous with my students, too.

Rather than hurling the correct answers to them after a test, I began to allow students to learn from their mistakes. Those who chose to do so could return to the testing environment where they could rework problems they had missed. They would submit their revisions along with a written explanation of why their first work was in error and their new thinking was correct. Students could earn back half the points originally deducted.

My students’ learning increased by proofreading, analyzing, and self-examination when re-entering a period of testing. Moreover, they saw that a time of testing is not the end; it’s the next step into the future—as it was for Jonah and it is for us.

Throughout the years, I often felt more like a cheerleader than a professor, though my students may not have always recognized it. Jonah didn’t see it either. He took for granted the bush God provided to shade him while he sat sulking on the hillside above Nineveh (4:6-8). Similarly, God encourages and cheers for us, even when we don’t realize it.

Let’s refocus our attention away from the trials that surround us, and instead look with gratitude to our God of second chances. 

A retired college math teacher, Diane Mason is a member of the denomination’s Mission and Ministry Board and is on the pastoral team of Fairview Church of the Brethren in Northern Plains District.

# Who will tell the story?

by Lynnae Rodeffer

**F**or most of my life I have been a Sunday school teacher. It has been a significant work for me, and not because I am particularly gifted. As with many things, they needed someone to do it, and I couldn’t think of a good enough reason as to why I couldn’t!

I didn’t feel “called” by God to be a Sunday school teacher. But we need someone to tell our children this wonderful story. We need them to know it, so they can tell others.

In the beginning they had me teach high schoolers. I wasn’t particularly good at it. Then I was moved to junior high. I apologize to those early students of mine! After senior high and junior high I got moved to fourth and fifth



**“WHEN THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF A STUDENT MEETS THE LIBERATING ART OF A TEACHER, A MIRACLE UNFOLDS.”** —Mary Hatwood Futrell

grade, and finally I got assigned to kindergarten.

I never would have guessed that would be my niche, but for the past two decades, I have taught kindergarten Sunday school. I finally see it as a kind of calling, and I think I have become fairly effective at it.

When I started teaching kindergarteners, many of the children were familiar with the stories and would get excited to tell me how their parents or grandparents had told them that story. Many of the kids actually worked on their memory verses during the week, and I sensed that parents enjoyed working with them.

Over time, though, something has happened. People have gotten too busy. In our community, Wednesday nights used to be preserved as a courtesy for church activities. Soccer games didn't happen on Sundays. But as more and more wonderful activities and programs became available for youth, school sports practices and club meetings began to take place on Wednesday nights, soccer leagues were bursting at the seams, and games took place on both Saturdays and Sundays.

Exhausted parents started having down time on Sunday mornings, the only day of the week they had for relaxed family connections. They were still believers, but they were not attending church regularly.

Many Sunday school classes got smaller, and I find that fewer kids coming into my class know the stories. Very often, they don't get time to work on memory verses during the week, so we take extra time in class for that.

This cultural change has made me more committed to be more creative, find ways to connect with them, and help them know the important role they have to share the good news and all the things they know—because fewer of their friends knew these things.

They need to know there is enough hope to fill the world, and that they have important work as the hands and feet of Jesus and to work for peace. 

Lynnae Rodeffer, director of Employee Benefits for Brethren Benefit Trust, lives in Snohomish, Wash. This article is excerpted from remarks given at a chapel service at the Church of the Brethren General Offices.

## The park is her classroom

**L**aura Brown, a member of Happy Corner

Church of the Brethren in Dayton, Ohio, earned an undergraduate degree in teaching history for grades 7-12. She completed the required student teaching but never had her own classroom. Instead she works at Carillon Historical Park, a 65-acre open-air history museum, of which she says, “The park is my classroom.”

Brown attended private Christian schools from kindergarten through university, so being around non-Christians is new to her. She appreciates the opportunity to “love on people” and be a witness to them.

Part of the park tells the story of the Wright brothers, whose father was United Brethren. A co-worker asked whether that was the same as the Church of the Brethren, “so I got to explain to him who we are,” Brown said.

“It's a lot of silently witnessing to people, which is really cool,” she said. “It's cool to be able to have influence there.” 

Laura Brown, of Happy Corner Church of the Brethren in Dayton, Ohio, was interviewed by Jan Fischer Bachman.



## Taking a hard look at

# History

### The Church of the Brethren and Native American boarding schools

by Monica McFadden

**I**t's cheaper to educate Indians than to kill them." These were the words of Indian Commissioner Thomas Morgan when he spoke at the establishment of the Phoenix Indian School in 1891. The Phoenix Indian School in Arizona was one of many Native American boarding schools born out of a federal policy of assimilation, and the Church of the Brethren has a surprising, little-known history with the school.

Boarding schools were operated by the US government—and churches working with the government—from about 1860 to 1978. Tribes had already been violently removed to reservations that were a fraction of their homelands, and now Native American children were forcibly removed from their homes once more. They were taken from their families and placed in schools far from their tribes, far from their culture, far from everything they knew.

Fast forward over 50 years from the time those chilling words were spoken, and Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) workers were being sent to serve at that very school in Phoenix and at Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah. How did we end up contributing a piece, albeit small, to this messy history that makes up our relationship with the people indigenous to this land? How do we grapple with that past?

It's a complex story, but it's well worth reckoning with if we ever hope to live in right relationship with those who our country has done so much to harm.

“Home’s the place we head for in our sleep,” writes Louise Erdrich in her poem “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways.” “Boxcars stumbling north in dreams /



don't wait for us. We catch them on the run." Erdrich tells the common story of painful homesickness felt by many children at the schools, prompting kids to run away, again and again, seeking to make it back to their homes. "We know the sheriff's waiting at midrun / to take us back. His car is dumb and warm. / The highway doesn't rock, it only hums / like a wing of long insults. The worn-down welts / of ancient punishments lead back and forth."

This is the experience of so many children for decades, aching for home, and, all the while, slowly losing parts of themselves that tied them to the very places they missed. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, boarding schools were barely even educating Native children. Many were industrial schools, which taught a trade, forced students to work for cheap labor, and kept a strict militarized environment.

In the 1930s, following the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, boarding schools slowly moved toward a greater focus on education. However, as Arizona Central's podcast *Valley 101* notes, the goal was the same—remove all Native identity for generations of tribal members and therefore remove everything that gives them claim to their land in the first place. It was both a social tool steeped in racism and an economic tool to access land.

This is where churches come in. Many boarding schools were begun by historically white church denominations seeking to civilize and convert Native peoples. Despite the fact that tribes, for hundreds of years, had lived in cities, developed complex agricultural systems, and possessed rich religious lives, the story since European colonization said that tribes were backwards, savage, and uncivilized. These diverse Native nations didn't fit into a European understanding of "civilization," so the depth and intricacy of the cultures were lost on American society for generations.

Churches were acting based on these same incorrect ideas about Native peoples, which meant that students at boarding schools were taught that their indigenous cultures and religions made them heathens, and that they must reject their sacred practices in order to be viewed

as equivalent to white people. Their hair (a deeply sacred symbol in many tribes) was cut, their clothing was replaced, and they were banned from speaking their native languages and practicing their cultures. In the earlier years, punishment for breaking these rules was harsh and physical. Many Native scholars and activists define this as a *cultural genocide*—in other words, these were efforts to obliterate tribal cultures in order to wipe out Indigenous communities from the US.

As the years continued, schools generally had fewer harsh punishments and cruel instructors. The removal of culture continued, but was masked by good intentions and a true desire to move members of tribes into the American cultural mainstream, regardless of whether they wanted to. The 1960s saw another shift—the establishment of Native-run schools within tribes. Throughout the decades following, government- and church-run boarding schools began to close, transfer to tribal ownership, or be repurposed.



The Church of the Brethren did not have any boarding schools of its own, but the historical record shows that this was likely not due to discomfort with the practice of assimilation. Regardless, the church, out of genuine concern in response to stories of poverty-stricken tribes, sought to work with Native Americans through connections with the National Council of Churches. The Church of the Brethren placed BVSers at Native American boarding schools and community centers, beginning with the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah, and later including the Phoenix Indian School in Arizona. BVSers taught students in courses dedicated to religious education.

Two members of the Hopi nation who graduated from Phoenix Indian School in 1959 recounted their experience in the *Valley 101* podcast episode. Leon and Evangeline mostly recall positive experiences from attending school

**WE CAN, AT ONCE, RECOGNIZE THAT WE AS BRETHERN WERE DOING EXACTLY WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS BEST AND ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT WE PARTICIPATED IN A BROADER, DEEPLY TROUBLING PART OF AMERICAN HISTORY.**

in the 1950s, closer to the end of the boarding school era and after the tactics of the schools had shifted somewhat. Overall, the two remember their instructors being caring and kind, and there is a high chance that BVsers who assisted with religious education classes were some of those very instructors.

However, as Evangeline tells her story, she remembers attempting to run away, so overcome by homesickness from missing their ceremonies that she risked the punishment in return. Through tears, she also tells of the trauma of being at school in times of grief: “I lost my grandma when I was a senior in high school, and nobody told me.”

In 1957, one of the BVsers at the Phoenix Indian School wrote in the *Gospel Messenger* about her work:

“Many of the students have had little or no religious instruction before attending school. Some tribal religions are strange and hard to penetrate. Sue Begay and Johnny Blueeyes will need much religious instruction to stick with them whether they choose to return to the reservation after school or go to the white working world following graduation. Here we have this opportunity, because at school we can place Christianity and religious instruction into their curriculum. The adjustments they must make are many. Usually they change quickly from bright beads, feathers, and tribal dress to the typical ‘paleface’ attire, or from long stringy hair to crew cuts and well-curled shiny black hair, or from fried bread and beans to meat and potatoes, from hogans, tepees, and cliff dwellings to dormitories.”

This dismissiveness of the students’ own religious beliefs and their culture—clothing, hair, food—is a window into white America’s understanding of Native cultures at the time and, for many, still the understanding today.

Edna Phillips Sutton—the passionate woman who seemingly almost singlehandedly pushed the Church of the Brethren into working with Native peoples, giving land to the denomination for Lybrook Mission in Navajo Nation—wrote a number of articles in the *Gospel Messenger* in 1952 on the subject of Native Americans. One article, “The

American Indian Today,” includes lines that call out how white Brethren have benefited from injustice: “We have lived and grown rich on the lands which our forefathers wrested from the Indians.” Yet, in another article, “Slums in the Desert,” she diminishes the sacred religions of those same people, saying, “Above all, they need to be freed from the fears and superstitions that torment and sadden their lives. They need Christianity.” Though this was rooted in true Christian desire to share the good news of our faith, this was also the very ideology used to create the trauma of boarding schools.

This is the dichotomy at the heart of the Brethren work with Native peoples in the mid-20th century: Brethren, ever eager to serve populations in need, stepped up to the challenge of addressing issues of poverty and injustice for oppressed peoples; at the same time, Brethren internalized many of the stereotypes and assumptions suggesting that white culture was inherently more evolved than the cultures of tribes and, through their work, perpetuated and spread those ideas.

We can, at once, recognize that we as Brethren were doing exactly what we thought was best and also recognize that we participated in a broader, deeply troubling part of American history.



Sometimes, unearthing pieces of our history means taking a hard look at our narratives, made fresh by brave people telling stories in recent years. The remarkable thing is that, despite a government-run project of cultural genocide, hundreds and hundreds of tribes in the US still retain many of their cultural practices and religions today and have rich revitalization efforts at work. This is a story of pain, heartache, and abuse, but it is also a story of resilience and hope.

It is a sacred thing to look back at such a history and speak truth. This is our task today and every day. 

Monica McFadden recently served as racial justice associate in the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy. A year ago, she led a month-long Native American Challenge for the Church of the Brethren.

# A remarkable collaboration for peace and religious freedom

by Victoria Bateman

**T**he Church of the Brethren recognizes that a peace witness means a lot more than just not going to war, but non-participation in war is still a key part of our identity. Brethren have done alternative service, resisted the draft, and registered as conscientious objectors throughout a seemingly endless lineup of US wars.

This history is why, when the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service began holding hearings in relation to the draft, the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy paid attention. The commission originally was tasked by Congress with making a recommendation on whether or not women should be required to register with Selective Service. The commission's focus eventually expanded into questions around military recruitment, civil service, and volunteer work.

The Church of the Brethren has

a lot of concerns around expanding Selective Service registration to include women because we don't think anyone should be forced to participate in systems of war, regardless of gender. We also brought concerns around religious freedom, the harms of militaristic attitudes, and the disproportionate impact of the draft on communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

Concerns over the draft and Selective Service are relevant for other Anabaptist traditions as well, including the Mennonites, Amish, the Brethren Church, and others. In order to stand together in opposition to expansion of the draft, several denominations met in June of this year to write a joint letter to the commission.

The gathering was truly remarkable. While our groups came to the table with differing theologies and

perspectives, the sense of kinship and desire to collaborate on these important issues of peace and religious freedom were strong. The resulting letter, printed here, was made possible by centuries of theology, decades of policy, and one day of community with other Anabaptists.

Faith traditions like ours, with a long history of peace witness, must speak out against the systems that make going to war the convenient choice—including the draft. While we know there is a long road ahead, we sent this letter in hopes that someday it won't be the draft that has been done away with, but war itself. 

Victoria Bateman recently completed a term as associate in the Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, serving through Brethren Volunteer Service. She and Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford represented the Church of the Brethren at the June 4 meeting of Anabaptist church bodies responding to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service.

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

*Speakers at the Anabaptist Consultation in June 2019: (from left) J. Ron Byler, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee US; Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, director of the MCC US Washington Office; Donald Kraybill, senior fellow emeritus, the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.*

September 13, 2019

**To the members of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service:**

Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

It is with deep gratitude that we have the freedom and privilege to express our firmly held Christian beliefs to our government. As Anabaptist Christians, we have often experienced our relationship with the U.S. government as a blessing in that we have been granted freedom to follow Christ according to our consciences. We are grateful that you have invited conversation around the question of national service.

We are writing to share with you our strongly held Christian beliefs regarding the proposed recommendations of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service.

Following the teaching in Matthew 5 and in accordance with Jesus' example, we are called to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who persecute us, refuse to violently resist the evildoer, and forgive as we have been forgiven. As conscientious objectors, we believe Jesus commands reverence for each human life since every person is made in the image of God. In following Jesus, we serve in ways that build up, nurture, and encourage rather than destroy. Our opposition to war is not cowardice but an expression of Christ's forgiving love as shown on the cross. We see ourselves as ambassadors of peace.

As churches in the Anabaptist tradition we stand firmly with those Christians throughout history who by conscience were not able to participate in the military. One of the important reasons our spiritual ancestors migrated from Europe to America was for religious freedom, which included not participating in military service. They believed that the state should not coerce in matters of religious conviction. They understood Jesus' teaching to mean that his followers would not join or support armed resistance but would overcome evil with good. To that end, serving others is a core value of who we are as Anabaptist Christians. We encourage church members of all ages and abilities to find ways to bless others both within and outside the church.

In particular, we would like to respond to some of the Commission's interim recommendations:

- We are requesting that no law be enacted that would require universal obligation for men or women to serve in the military.
- As long as a government Selective Service System exists, we request that it continue to be civilian-led.
- We request that protections and alternative service programs be maintained for those who conscientiously object to military service.
- We respectfully request the inclusion of a provision to identify as a conscientious objector at the time of Selective Service registration.
- We ask that the government, at both federal and state levels, not penalize people who do not register for Selective Service as a matter of conscience.
- We recommend that women not be required to register for Selective Service. (For some of us, this grows out of our conviction that no one—man or woman—should be required to register for military service. For others of us, this grows out of our traditional understanding of women's roles.)
- We strongly value service but are concerned by the Commission's conflation of service to the community with military service.
- We do not support sharing information and cross-recruitment of volunteers in our Christian service programs with the military.
- We are concerned by the influence the military has on schools, including efforts to increase military recruitment within schools as well as to incorporate military elements into school curricula. We are also concerned by the disproportionate focus by military recruiters on low-income communities and communities of color.

We express thanks that in the United States our Christian convictions are respected. We are grateful for the Commission's work and commit to praying regularly for our government officials.

Thank you for hearing our views.

Sincerely,

**Beachy Amish  
The Brethren Church  
Brethren in Christ U.S.  
Bruderhof  
Church of the Brethren**

**Conservative Mennonite  
Conference (CMC)  
Evana Network  
LMC (Lancaster Mennonite  
Conference)**

**Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Mennonite Church USA  
Mennonite Mission Network  
Old Order Amish Church  
Old Order Mennonites**



# Don't pray for patience?

by Tim Harvey

**T**hroughout 20 years of pastoral ministry, I've heard a number of people say something to this effect: "Don't pray for patience. If you do, God will give you a difficult experience to teach you."

I've always found this to be an odd comment to make. One problem is that this attitude reveals a terrible image of a God who would essentially punish us for taking our faith more seriously. Another problem is that patience is a fruit of the Spirit described by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23, and I've never heard people talk about the other qualities in that list (love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) in the same way.

What is it about patience that makes something God intends for good seem so bad?

A quick search of the Bible reveals 15-30 occurrences of the word "patience" (depending on the translation) and these primarily fall into two broad categories: God's patience so that persons might be saved, and patience as our response to difficulty or suffering. This article focuses on the second category, using Colossians 1:9-14 for our study.

## "Give me patience, and give it to me now!"

Part of our reluctance to desire patience could be that our attitude toward it is overly shaped by the nuisances of life that are simply common to us all. It is difficult to see any spiritual benefit emerging from being stuck in traffic, or

dealing with an underachieving child, or trying to hold our tongue when someone is being rude. As frustrating as these situations can be, however, they might be better seen as requiring self-control—a related, but not identical, Christian virtue.

Other discussions of patience tend to focus on things like uncertain job situations or challenging medical diagnoses. If, for instance, we lost our job and weren't sure how we would provide for our family, would we compromise our faith in order to obtain some money? If we or someone we loved were to experience a debilitating injury or illness, would we maintain our faith in God? Or is our faith dependent on life basically working out for us?

Circumstances like these that tempt us to compromise or abandon our faith get closer to what Paul has in mind in our passage from Colossians. It is clear from the opening verses of the epistle that the Christians in this congregation are doing well. Paul reports with great enthusiasm that he has "heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints" (v. 4), and assures the Colossians that they have been "transferred . . . into the kingdom of his beloved Son" (v. 14). Their faith is both strong and growing, and this is evident to all who know them.

But their faith was not lived in isolation from the demands Roman culture placed upon them, especially when it came to pledging loyalty to the empire. Being a



PATIENCE IS NOT ONLY A PASSIVE QUALITY THAT ENABLES US TO QUIETLY ENDURE ANNOYING OR DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES; IT IS A MEANS BY WHICH WE GIVE ACTIVE WITNESS TO ANOTHER WAY OF LIVING.

Christian in the New Testament era was not without risk, and so part of Paul's prayer is that they will "endure everything with patience" (v. 11). What might "everything" refer to? Quite possibly situations like those already mentioned. But it could also refer to situations where Roman culture demanded an allegiance from them that their Christian faith would not allow—like confessing Caesar as Lord or accepting required military service.

The "kingdom" of Rome remained on display all around them, and its presence raised a serious question: If life in Christ became risky, which kingdom would they trust more—the kingdom of Rome or the kingdom of God? How would they patiently endure suffering that might come for remaining loyal to Christ and the church?

### Pray for patience anyway

If we have determined to allow our faith in Jesus to dictate the manner of our living, patience might become as difficult a virtue as those who view it with skepticism suspect, but for different reasons. Patience isn't undesirable because God will cause something bad to happen to us as a lesson; patience is how we will encounter the faith-challenging experiences of life with the values of the kingdom of God.

Like the Colossians, we too live in the kingdom of God even as our physical residence is in the "kingdom" of America. One way we encounter a tension between these kingdoms is in our attitude toward violence. The values of our day teach us that there are only two ways to respond to violence: fight or flight. But Brethren have come to understand a third way, a way described by Catholic peacemaker John Dear as "meticulous nonviolence toward all others" (*The Nonviolent Life*, p. 66).

So when, for instance, we are faced with how to respond to enemies, we could attack others with harmful words, or defend ourselves with a gun we've chosen to carry, or assume the military offers the only means of protecting our nation. But the third way of living in God's kingdom involves "consciously cultivating an attitude of nonviolence toward everyone on the planet" (p. 67). This requires patience, because the nonviolence of God's kingdom is hard and slow. As Stuart Murray writes,

[As] followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we choose to believe that his way of nonviolent love is ultimately more realistic than embracing violence. Whether or not nonviolent alternatives are more effective in the short term, or even the medium term, peace churches are signs of the coming kingdom of God. We choose to align ourselves with the future to which God is leading history (*The Naked Anabaptist*, p. 129).

Patience is not only a passive quality that enables us to quietly endure annoying or difficult circumstances; it is a means by which we give active witness to another way of living. Patience shapes us for living in the kingdom of God even as the values of the kingdoms of this world compete for our allegiance, and even when these other options seem to offer more compelling solutions to the challenges of living. Patience allows us to work with people and circumstances over the long haul, trusting that "the future to which God is leading history" is worth investing in today.

So go ahead, pray for patience. 

Tim Harvey is pastor of Oak Grove Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Va.

### For further reading

*The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith*, by Stuart Murray. A challenging and helpful analysis of core anabaptist beliefs, including how peacemaking is a vital faith practice of today's church.

*The Nonviolent Life*. More than just another book on peacemaking, this book by John Dear challenges us to be transformed persons who practice nonviolence toward all people, all creatures, and all creation.

# THEN YOUR LIGHT WILL RISE IN THE DARKNESS



The Anointing of Christ by Julia Stanikova (www.julianstankova.com)

by Tyler Roebuck

**E**very time I leave my house, I pass by a trailer park that has a reputation for some ill-mannered behaviors and habits from its residents. The police are there more often than not, or so it seems, and drug busts are almost a weekly occurrence. A few years ago, a 14-year-old girl overdosed, a man was arrested and charged with domestic assault, and several dealers were taken out of society.

In the last year the park has come into new management and has been cleaned up a lot, but the reputation still taints my mind that everyone there is a deplorable human being. Some thoughts die hard.

One day I was on my way home from work. It was a sunny, 80-degree, beautiful August day, and I had all the windows down in my car. As I rounded the corner by the trailer park, I

# THE WOMAN WHO ANOINTED JESUS' FEET

(Luke 7:36-50)

by Ken Gibble

The conversations stopped when I walked in.  
I was not surprised, hoped only not  
to be grabbed, pitched out the door like trash.  
Which is what they called me under their  
breaths when they passed me on the street.

He did not, which is why I came.  
We had not spoken. He had simply looked at me  
the day before. What I saw in that glance  
was not disgust or pity or desire.  
What I saw was . . . I could not, cannot name it.  
All I know is that it blessed me.  
Me!

I'd planned to hand him my gift, mutter  
a curse or two at the rest of them and  
leave with as much dignity as I could manage.

Then he looked at me again.  
I crumpled, fell to my knees.  
I wept.

I do not remember the rest,  
know only that he did not push me away  
and that he spoke to the men in the room.  
I cannot tell you what he said to them.  
But what he said to me I will not forget.

I walked out the door not just blessed  
but changed. No, more than that . . . reborn. 

Ken Gibble, a retired Church of the Brethren pastor, lives in Camp Hill, Pa.

heard a father yelling. I couldn't hear words, just an angry-sounding male voice. I looked over and saw a young boy, not even five years old, half-running from the vociferous man.

"Oh gosh," I thought, "please don't let me see you hit him."

Immediately after this thought slipped through my mind, I was stricken with guilt. Why on earth would I think that this man, whom I do not know, whose story I have never

heard, was going to hit his son? What made me assume that he did not love his child?

The thought disturbed me as I forced myself to challenge my biases. I had assumed that because the pair were in a poor neighborhood and the man was yelling, he was therefore violent and abusive.

Living in the United States, it can be tricky to follow

THE DISCIPLES BECAME COMFORTABLE IN THEIR ASSUMPTIONS, COMFORTABLE THAT JESUS WOULD BE FINE WITH THEIR BEHAVIOR, COMFORTABLE IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEEDS NEEDED TO SURVIVE, COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WOMAN'S CONDUCT.

Jesus' teachings when in many ways our culture defies them. Wealth equates to power, and in the US the thought is that wealth comes to those who deserve it. Too often we associate financial success with moral and ethical righteousness, and we assume the inverse to be true: If you're poor, it's because you are a bad person and you brought it upon yourself.

As Christians, we have many scriptural lessons that illustrate a different story.

All four Gospel writers share the story of a woman anointing Jesus with expensive oil in the city of Bethany. Jesus was dining with Pharisees or with Simon the Leper, depending on the writer, and was anointed by a woman with expensive perfume from an alabaster jar. In each story, the bystanders criticized the woman for her "waste" of oil that could be sold for great sums of money. According to some analyses, the disciples, who were often indignant, were middle-class citizens of their society.

I consider myself middle to upper middle class and, having been raised in a money-conscious family, I can understand and relate to the disciples. When the recession hit in 2008, I was 13 and old enough to have a basic understanding that money was tight and was going to be for a while, so frugality and smart financial decisions were important. Poor decision-making had the potential to leave our family scraping by, as it did with many at the time. While my family survived, it was due in large part to my parents' careful management of our finances.

The disciples lived in a world not too different from this, where wastefulness could lead to starvation, carelessness could lead to death. They assumed that the woman was being frivolous and careless. Some analysts think the cost of the perfume would have roughly equated to a year's earnings. Perhaps because she was a woman, perhaps because she was poor, and—according to Luke—a "sinner," the disciples assumed she was being ignorant.

But then Jesus stepped in. As he said in Luke,

Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my

feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little (Luke 7:44-47, NIV).

Jesus reminded us what is really important: love. The disciples could afford to anoint Jesus, but were stingy with their money and chose not to. Not only did they neglect this honor, but also the other pleasantries due in that day. The woman showed great love and would receive great reward; the disciples were made the fools.

The disciples became comfortable in their assumptions, comfortable that Jesus would be fine with their behavior, comfortable in their knowledge of the deeds needed to survive, comfortable with their understanding of the woman's conduct.

Jesus invited them, in no soft words, to challenge their assumptions and stretch their comfort zones. Jesus also invites us to challenge our assumptions and "Do unto others as you would have them do to you."

Like the disciples, I was quick to take aim at that man in the trailer park. What would he have thought of me? Would he see me as a kind, thoughtful, and caring man, or a well-to-do Pharisee with my nose in the air, thinking I'm better than him?

**W**hile we cannot change the entire culture around us or drop our implicit biases overnight, we can start by recognizing them. Spotting our assumptions and challenging them brings us closer to one another, and into a better relationship with Christ.

It is not a fix-all, but it is the least we can do to live a Christian life in a conflicted society. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday" (Isaiah 58:9-10, NIV).

I never went back and spoke with that father. I don't know if he and his son still live there, and I still don't know their story. But every time I pass that park, I think of that incident and challenge myself to think deeply about how I perceive others. 

Tyler Roebuck, a member of Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, is a student at Bethany Theological Seminary.

## Children's Disaster Services sends teams to Texas, NC

**Children's Disaster Services (CDS) deployed a team** to Beaumont and Silsbee, Texas, in response to the flooding from Tropical Depression Imelda. The team arrived Sept. 22 and during its first three days made 42 child contacts. The assignment ended Sept. 29.



In early September, in advance of Hurricane Dorian, CDS deployed volunteers to evacuation centers in North Carolina.

## Clergywomen's retreat planned for January

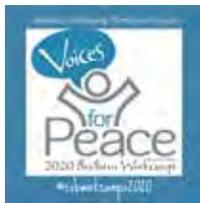
**The Office of Ministry invites women** who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned to a Clergy Women's Retreat Jan. 6-9, 2020, in Scottsdale, Ariz. The theme is "Treasure in Clay Pots" (2 Corinthians 4).



Keynote presenter Mandy Smith pastors University Christian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, and is a regular contributor to *Christianity Today*. She is the author of *The Vulnerable Pastor: How Human Limitations Empower Our Ministry*. See [www.brethren.org/ministryoffice](http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice).

## 'Voices for Peace' to be 2020 workcamp theme

**The Workcamp Ministry** has chosen a theme and scripture for the 2020 summer season: "Voices for Peace" (Romans 15:1-6). Registration opens Jan. 16, 2020, at 7 p.m. (central time) at [www.brethren.org/workcamps](http://www.brethren.org/workcamps).



Senior high youth and advisors also are invited to next year's Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS) April 25-30, 2020. The theme is "Economic Justice" (Luke 1:51-53). See [www.brethren.org/yya/ccs](http://www.brethren.org/yya/ccs).

## Emergency Disaster Fund grants go to hurricane relief in Bahamas

**Three organizations doing disaster relief** in the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian have received grants from the Emergency Disaster Fund. The \$10,000 grants went to Church World Service (CWS) Development and Humanitarian Assistance, Feed the Children, and Mercy Chefs.

The Brethren Disaster Ministries response plan for the Bahamas focuses on supporting partners providing immediate response and then working toward a long-term recovery in coming months.

The CWS grant supports the work of a rapid assessment team developing a long-term strategy.

The grants to Feed the Children and Mercy Chefs represent the first time Brethren Disaster Ministries has partnered with the organizations. Mercy Chefs is a faith-based, nonprofit serving professionally prepared meals for disaster victims, volunteers, and first responders. Feed the Children is coordinating a large-scale relief program providing thousands of meals a day, shipping food and supplies from the US.



## Brethren Volunteer Service Units 322 and 323

**BVS Unit 322:** (standing from left) **Felix Naegler** of Wiesbaden, Germany, assigned to Project PLASE, Baltimore, Md.; **Alex McBride** of Union Center Church of the Brethren, to SnowCap Food Pantry, Portland, Ore.; **Jamie McBride** of Union Center Church of the Brethren, to the Palms of Sebring, Fla.; **Maddy Minehart** of Butler, Ind., to Lebanon Lancaster (Pa.) Habitat for Humanity Restore; **Susu Lassa** of Jos, Nigeria, to the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, Washington, D.C.; (middle) **Janine Dietle** of Essen, Germany, to Abode Services, Fremont, Calif.; **Luca Wolter** of Neuwied, Germany, to Project PLASE; **Elli Roeckemann** of Unna, Germany, to Project PLASE; **Lea Kroener** of Bochum, Germany, to SnowCap; (front) **Cara Hudson** of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren, to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; **Maria Murphy** of Hollidaysburg Church of the Brethren, to Bernardo Kohler Center, Austin, Texas; **Jacey Myers** of First Church of the Brethren in Roaring Spring, Pa., to Camp Stevens, Julian, Calif.; **Judy Carl** of Pomona (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, to the Asian Rural Institute, Tochigi-ken, Japan.

**BVS/BRF Unit 323:** (from left) **Victoria Derosier** of Lewiston (Maine) Church of the Brethren, to the Root Cellar in Lewiston; Brethren Revival Fellowship orientation leaders **Peggy and Walter Heisey** of Newmanstown, Pa.

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## Brethren Faith in Action Fund gives grants to churches

The **Brethren Faith in Action Fund** has given grants to outreach ministry projects of eight congregations since the first of the year:

**Altoona (Pa.) 28th Street Church of the Brethren** received \$5,000 to purchase a walk-in freezer for food outreach ministries.

**Bayamon (P.R.) Church of the Brethren** received \$4,989.57 to increase its capacity to feed and serve people through its House of Bread ministry.

**Brook Park (Ohio) Community Church of the Brethren** received \$5,000 to expand its food bank.

**Central Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.**, received \$2,356.20 to purchase additional nutritional food for weekend snack bags for Highland Park Elementary School students.

**Grace Way Church of the Brethren, Dundalk, Md.**, received \$5,000 for a Coffee House Ministry.

**Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren** received \$4,300 to expand, revitalize, and promote community outreach ministries in the South Allison Hill neighborhood.

**Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Va.**, received \$5,000 for supplies and equipment for a youth and adult outreach ministry targeting educational equity in Fairfax County.

**Warrensburg (Mo.) Church of the Brethren** received \$711 to help members attend a Youth Action Project Conference and a White Privilege Conference.



**Bethany Seminary's fall semester began** with the largest group of new students in a number of years: 16 are beginning studies at Bethany and 4 alumni with graduate certificates are returning for a degree. Program enrollment includes 5 in the master of divinity program, 3 in the master of arts program, 7 in certificate programs, 5 in the new MA in Theopoetics and Writing, and 2 occasional students. The group includes 5 Nigerians through an educational partnership in distance learning with EYN. Pictured here are participants at a new student orientation: (from left) Tyler Roebuck of Middlebury, Ind.; Julia Wheeler, Pomona, Calif.; Zachary Mayes, Saint Petersburg, Fla.; Phil and Kayla Collins, Elgin, Ill.; and Julia Baker, Fresno, Calif.

## Peace church seminaries form new partnership

**B**ethany Theological Seminary, Earlham School of Religion, and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary have entered into an open cross-registration agreement. This is the first collaborative effort of its kind among seminaries of the historic peace churches (Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Society of Friends or Quakers).

The agreement allows eligible students at the Indiana-based seminaries to enroll in most courses offered by the three schools without tuition adjustments. Online courses and synchronous video technology are making an increasing number of courses widely accessible.

## Personnel notes

**Michelle Kilbourne** began Oct. 1 as director of human resources and administrative services for Brethren Benefit Trust, at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Most recently she was Business Programs chair at Judson University in Elgin, where she has been adjunct professor and associate director for Cultivation Ministries. She holds a bachelor's of science in finance and a master's in business administration in human resources from Illinois State University, and a doctorate in organizational leadership from Regent

University in Virginia.

**Todd Knight** resigned Sept. 28 as administrative assistant for institutional advancement at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., where he has worked since March 2017.

**Nyampa Kwabe** is international scholar in residence at Bethany Seminary for the fall semester. An Old Testament scholar, he is acting head of the Department of Biblical Studies at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). He holds a master's degree from the International Christian

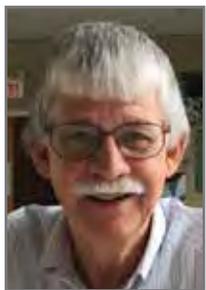
College in Glasgow, Scotland; a doctorate from the University of Leeds, England; and master's and bachelor's degrees from TCNN. He is ordained in Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria and has taught at EYN's Kulp Theological Seminary.

**Tony Price** of New Madison, Ohio, began Sept. 5 as office manager for the *Brethren Life & Thought* publication of the Brethren Journal Association. He continues as pastor of Cedar Grove Church of the Brethren, New Paris, Ohio.

# The Hollinger family

## A Brethren memoir

**F**our decades after the premier American historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared the end of the frontier, Brethren intrepidly, or perhaps foolishly, persisted in attempts to farm increasingly harsh and unforgiving land on the northern fringes of the North American settlement. Memorialized in the moving fiction of Wallace Stegner, Norman McLean, Joan Didion, and Ole Rølvaag, this unromantic phase of the settlement process is poignantly described in a remarkable memoir, *When This Mask of Flesh Is Broken: The Story of an American Protestant Family*, by the distinguished historian David A. Hollinger.



WILLIAM KOSTLEVY

In this short, compellingly written book, Hollinger tells of the 1921 decision of Brethren elder Albert Hollinger Sr. to uproot his family from a prosperous Pennsylvania farm to move to, in Hollinger’s words, “a bleak and arid” spot on the Saskatchewan prairie. There the respected Brethren elder led a merged congregation of Brethren in Christ and Church of the Brethren farmers attempting to establish prosperous farms amid environmental disasters and falling commodity prices.

However daunting the challenges of farming the prairie were, they were often the least of the Hollinger family’s troubles. In spring 1915, family matriarch Annie Dearnorff Hollinger suddenly stopped communicating with the outside world. A decade later the favored son, college graduate, and ordained minister Archie Hollinger, who had held a series of short teaching stints that ended in somewhat mysterious circumstances, was permanently institutionalized for mental illness. In part as a result of these events and the fear that mental illness might be hereditary, only two children were born to the next generation of Hollingers, in the end leaving only David to tell their story.

David Hollinger’s portrayal of his father Albert Hollinger, Jr. (known as Junior) is richly textured and deeply moving. Lacking a high school diploma, Junior worked his way through the training school at Bethany Biblical Seminary, earned a degree from La Verne College, and returned to Bethany for a master of divinity degree. His first pastorate at Fruitland (Idaho) Church of the Brethren was highly suc-

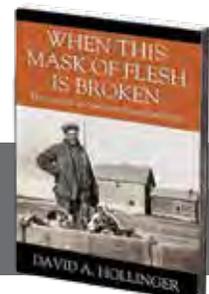
cessful and led to a call to the more prestigious Olympia, Wash., church. A highly sought after speaker, Junior became moderator of Oregon and Washington District. In 1951, his promising career ended suddenly when he inexplicably resigned his pastorate, returned to La Verne, and became a house painter while he continued to hold ministerial credentials, speak in southern California Church of the Brethren congregations, and teach a Sunday school class at the La Verne church.

Fittingly, Junior’s son, the author, graduated from La Verne College where the influence of professors Vernard Eller, a theologian, and Herbert Hogan, a historian, set him on an intellectual trajectory that is in its own way as remarkable as his father’s. A student of the distinguished historian of American religion Henry May at the University of California, Berkeley, he eventually succeeded May and became one of the most influential interpreters of the American intellectual, cultural, and religious experience.

For Brethren, an intriguing feature of this book is the distinction the author draws between “a church-centered” and “a faith-centered” Christianity. In an ode to the older Protestant liberalism of the mid-20th century, Hollinger harks back to a Brethren, and implicitly liberal, Christianity that was reticent in its use of religious language, respectful of other faith traditions, and suspicious of claiming a direct pipeline to heaven. As Hollinger has written elsewhere, one of the most articulate critics of this brand of Christianity was none other than his mentor Vernard Eller, who celebrated a sectarian faith drawing inspiration from Søren Kierkegaard with nods to radical Pietism and Anabaptism.

Regardless of the limitations of the older liberalism—and Junior’s premature exit from the ministry points to some of them—this is a timely book for both evangelical and radically inclined Brethren who, unlike the self-described atheist David Hollinger, have forgotten, or never known, the attractiveness of the Protestant ecumenical vision. It is a potent reminder that perhaps it is easier for a Dunker to leave the faith than it is for the faith to leave the Dunker. **W**

William Kostlevy is director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.



### ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: *When this Mask of Flesh is Broken: The Story of an American Protestant Family*.

Author: David A. Hollinger. Publisher: Outskirts Press, 2019. Available from Brethren Press.

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## This is us

“Speak, O Lord” was one of the five anthems that we sang at the recent Virginia District Choir Festival. When I was asked to introduce this anthem for the festival worship service I learned that it was commissioned for our church’s 300th anniversary.

Each time that I rehearsed this anthem, and especially as we performed it, my heart was warmed. This is us. This is the Church of the Brethren. This is our compelling vision!

*“Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built  
And the earth is filled with Your glory.”*

**Gary Bauer**  
Hillsborough, N.C.

[Editors’ note: The committee that planned the 2008 celebration of the Church of the Brethren’s 300th anniversary contracted with John Ferguson to compose an anthem. Ferguson responded by creating a new arrangement of “Speak, O Lord,” using the lyrics by Keith Getty and the tune by Stuart Townend.]

## Impressed with the website

I just came across the MESSENGER website and wanted to tell someone how impressed I am with the new format!

At the age of 93, having been a member of the Church of the Brethren since the age of 9, growing up in Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren during the years when we had an active and vital congregation and youth group, and having been a MESSENGER subscriber for a long time, the manner in which MESSENGER is being adapted to the latest technology is very impressive. This really enables innovative and easy access to Brethren thought and insights. Thank you so much!

**Mary Varner Rosborough**  
Boonsboro, Md.

## Concerned for the church

This summer I had experiences that left me concerned for the future of the Church of the Brethren. The first was Annual Conference. Although the discussions at the tables were largely nonconfrontational there remain great divisions in the church body, and I observed that the Church of the Brethren is largely elderly and white. In the

near future in our country whites will be the minority, yet we have not reached out as individual congregations to include ethnically diverse members.

I also visited the Church of the Brethren I attended for the first 22 years of my life. We had a very active youth group and lots of children when I was a member there. On the Sunday I visited there were only two children present. Once again, the people attending were elderly and white.

I believe the denomination will survive only if it becomes more open to diversity, only as we are willing to change our worship and the “way we have always done things,” only if we are willing to move outside our church walls and our comfort zones and embrace new ideas. It will survive as we let God be the judge as we accept all people regardless of gender identity or ethnicity. It will survive as we go into the world and preach the gospel to all who will listen.

**Waneta Benson**  
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

### Loving Heifer's history

Oh, I loved reading the MESSENGER lifting up Heifer's 75 years of history, how it happened, the amazing woman behind the visionary.

I read the Brethren stories first, reading back to front in order to grasp a “feel” for where we are as Brethren. Then I read the “Woman Behind the Man Behind Heifer Project” by Peggy Reiff Miller. Ah, the photos, the story, Dad's letter. It brought me back to long ago and tears were in my eyes. Then I

read the publisher's column by Wendy McFadden and I wiped my tears of remembering and laughed out loud about how “Jan Schrock spilled the beans” at Annual Conference in 2006.

McFadden is an amazing publisher who has her hands squarely in the Brethren pie, bringing understanding, sometimes tears, and always keen

insight into what really makes us tick! Thank you!

**Jan West Shrock**  
Yarmouth, Maine

### Local action is needed

As a climate crisis activist I'd add a thought to Sharon Yohn's first point for

## Christian Citizenship Seminar 2020

# Economic Justice

## April 25 – 30, 2020

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

—Luke 1: 51-53

Registration opens December 2, 2019  
[www.brethren.org/ccs](http://www.brethren.org/ccs)

Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS) provides youth in high school and the first year of college (or age equivalent) the chance to explore the relationship between faith and a particular political issue, and then act from a faith perspective regarding that issue.



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taking action to address the climate over which we are stewards. Yes, it will take national action, yet significant work also must be done at the local level.

We have put pressure on Denver to request our electric power provider to change to 100 percent renewable by 2030. We were informed by the National Renewable Energy Lab that 80 percent renewable is achievable given proven and already deployed technology, and the last 20 percent is a plausible aspiration given technological trajectories. In 2018 our mayor proclaimed the city's goal to be 100 percent renewable by 2030, and Xcel Energy responded that it would be 80 percent renewable by 2030.

Working locally can create examples for others to follow at larger, even world wide scales. It also has the advantage of creating new energy economy solutions that are more equitable, healing some of our economic divides.

**Jeff Neuman-Lee**  
Denver, Colo.

## Putting words to it

I thought the whole September issue of MESSENGER was good but I particularly appreciated the Potluck essay "No Room for Denial." It described precisely how I feel about this hard situation that is right upon us. Thank you for putting words to all of it. It helps me put words to it too.

**Marty Barlow**  
Harrisonburg, Va.

## We look silly

"A million species of plants and animals will be extinct by the turn of the century. Dr. Musafa Tolba, director general of the United Nations Environment Program, says that the destruction of genetic material and environment has reached such a pitch that 'we face, by the turn of the century, an environmental catastrophe as complete, as irreversible as any nuclear holocaust.' These figures, combined with what we expe-

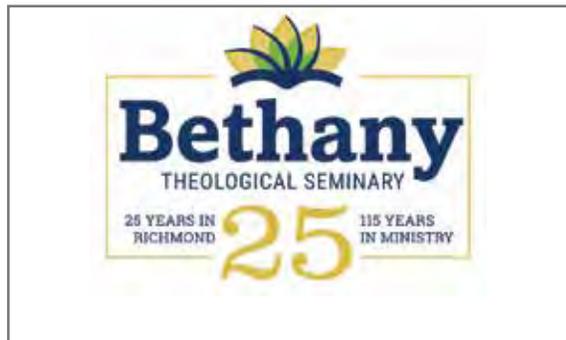
rience daily, are both mind boggling and numbing."

These predictions of climate doom were published in the 1991 Church of the Brethren statement, "Creation: Called to Care." Of course, neither of these predictions proved true and, in my opinion, we look silly. We continue to pontificate and quote unnamed scientists who predict doom and gloom.

In the article by Wendy McFadden in the September MESSENGER we read, "Now scientists tell us there are only a dozen years before irreversible damage is done" and "right now at least one million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction." Wait, are those the same million that were already extinct 19 years ago according to our 1991 paper?

May we please focus on spreading the gospel of Jesus instead of spreading words that have proven to be false?

**Eric Reamer**  
Mifflinburg, Pa.



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## Centenarians

**Aschliman**, John, 104, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 15  
**Coffman**, Flora, 103, Maurertown, Va., Aug. 5  
**Kindy**, Glenna, 100, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 23

## New members

**Brownsville**, Knoxville, Md.: Sarah Mohler  
**Chambersburg**, Pa.: Marsha Stouffer Smith  
**Constance**, Hebron, Ky.: Ellen Watkins  
**Donnels Creek**, Springfield, Ohio: Diana Gordon, Pam Thoenke  
**Freeport**, Ill.: Meghan Frye, Jackie Watson, Jerry Watson  
**Gortner Union**, Oakland, Md.: John Martin  
**Henry Fork**, Rocky Mount, Va.: Heather Renee Adkins, Amber Marie Collier, Elizabeth Ann Hodges, Gregory Dean Hodges, Oscar Wayne Hodges, Katrina Jeanene Ryes-Andrews  
**Mill Creek**, Port Republic, Va.: Kyra Boyers, Alex Cline, Bryden Kite  
**Mountain View**, McGaheysville, Va.: Samuel Carter, Eli Harlow, Derek Mickelson, Louy Miller, Tahjanae Miller, Daniel Osinkosky, Haley Osinkosky  
**Polo**, Ill.: Kaiyle Horton, Doug Reina-Cole, Vianise Villareal  
**Skyridge**, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Barry Burnside, Esther Burnside, Dan Joseph, Eric Joseph, Marlene Joseph  
**Sunrise**, Harrisonburg, Va.: Cheryl Leighton  
**West Goshen**, Goshen, Ind.: Kayleigh Close, Matt Wagner  
**Woodland**, Astoria, Ill.: Ethan Mikulich

## Wedding anniversaries

**Alexander**, David and Lana, Plymouth, Ind., 55

**Beam**, Gerry and Carolyn, Mount Crawford, Va., 50  
**Brown**, Maurice and Jane Phyllis, Glen Arm, Md., 68  
**Dixon**, James and Patricia, Boonsboro, Md., 60  
**Eyler**, Larry and Linda, New Windsor, Md., 50  
**Fields**, Ron and Connie, Syracuse, Ind., 60  
**Garst**, Denton and Peggy, Frederick, Md., 66  
**Gottshall**, J. Richard and Doris H., Roanoke, Va., 74  
**Gross**, Donald and Carol, Springfield, Ohio, 67  
**Heffner**, Lawrence and Oneida, Knoxville, Md., 67  
**Kisamore**, Kenneth and Joyce, Terra Alta, W.Va., 55  
**Kover**, Virgil and Floy, Lititz, Pa., 70  
**Martin**, Harold and Priscilla, Ephrata, Pa., 69  
**Metzger**, Gene and Barbara, Lafayette, Ind., 72  
**Parker**, Jack and Gail, Kingsport, Tenn., 60  
**Patrick**, Evan and Rosemary, Lafayette, Ind., 65  
**Ritchie**, Jon and Sara, Mount Crawford, Va., 50  
**Theen**, Rolf and Norma, Sarasota, Fla., 60  
**Urban**, David and Phyllis, Springfield, Ohio, 60

## Deaths

**Blankenship**, Carlene Thomason, 85, Martinsville, Va., Aug. 17  
**Blough**, David A., 58, Polo, Ill., April 25  
**Chris**, Marjorie M. Knorr, 86, Freeport, Ill., Sept. 5  
**Culver**, Phyllis, 102, Fort Pierce, Fla., Aug. 2018  
**Davis**, Mildred M. Rice, 90, Frederick, Md., Sept. 9  
**Dodson**, Gladys A. Beck, 100, Roaring Spring, Pa., Aug. 1  
**Dolack**, Tony Frank, 79, Phoenix, Ariz., Aug. 17  
**Good**, Ada Ziegler, 95, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 31  
**Gregg**, Alice Catherine Fraley, 84, Woodstock, Va., Aug. 16  
**Hershberger**, Betty J. Bickel, 86, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 8  
**Hollis**, Pat Woolman, 97, Waterloo, Iowa, Aug. 9  
**Hunter**, Doris Lee, 92, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 11  
**Kessler**, Phillip G., 87, League City, Tex., Aug. 10  
**Kimmel**, Jo, 88, Flagstaff, Ariz., Sept. 7

**Kulp**, Helen Christina, 64, Waynesboro, Pa., July 8  
**Lehman**, Dallas D., 81, Wellsville, Pa., Sept. 6  
**Margetan**, Kathy L., 65, Johnstown, Pa., Sept. 12  
**McCloskey**, Helen M. Sell, 88, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 14  
**Moore**, Maurice, 91, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Aug. 25  
**Moser**, Shirley, 84, Middletown, Md., March 12  
**Myers**, Esther Lynn Jones, 65, McGaheysville, Va., Sept. 2  
**Myers**, Rachel Bowman, 98, Harrisonburg, Va., June 3  
**Ridenour**, Lillian Grace, 100, Waynesboro, Pa., Aug. 22  
**Schlosnagle**, John Junior, 95, Accident, Md., July 9  
**Smith**, Dianne J. Hunter, 77, Plymouth, Ind., Aug. 11  
**Strycker**, Wallace G., 85, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 19  
**Thompson**, John Michael, 75, Springfield, Ore., Aug. 6  
**Vore**, Marabelle Locker, 90, Plymouth, Ind., July 28  
**Wagner**, Pauline G. Crawford, 82, Hummelstown, Pa., Aug. 19  
**Warfield**, Dorothy Jean Diehl, 83, McGaheysville, Va., July 10  
**Weise**, Carol Jane Hood, 79, Lafayette, Ind., June 28  
**Wheeler**, Bette Irene, 91, Ankeny, Iowa, Aug. 7  
**Winters**, Bonnie Jean Miller, 92, Eglon, W.Va., July 16

## Ordained

**Arbogast**, Daniel, II, Shen. Dist. (Durbin, W.Va.), Aug. 18  
**Ellifritz**, John, W. Marva Dist. (Harness Run, Burlington, W.Va.), Sept. 15  
**Mouser**, Todd, W. Marva Dist. (Shiloh, Moatsville, W.Va.), Aug. 25  
**Stover-Brown**, Chris, W. Plains Dist. (Wichita, Kan.), Sept. 15

## Licensed

**Brady**, Paul, III, W. Marva Dist. (Elkins, W.Va.), Aug. 4  
**Greblien**, Seth, S. Pa. Dist. (Lake View Christian Fellowship, East Berlin, Pa.), Sept. 8  
**Manalo**, Heather, S. Ohio & Ky. Dist. (Oakland, Bradford, Ohio), Aug. 11

**Reece**, Michael, Southeastern Dist. (Sunnybrook, Bristol, Tenn.), Aug. 25

## Placements

**Crumrine**, Duane, co-pastor, Clover Creek, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 1  
**Elsea**, Henry, from interim pastor to co-pastor, Barren Ridge, Staunton, Va., Sept. 1  
**Elsea**, Janet, co-pastor, Barren Ridge, Staunton, Va., Sept. 1  
**Fether**, Eric, from interim pastor, Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa., to interim pastor, Tyrone, Pa., Sept. 15  
**Gandy**, Craig, interim pastor, Lewistown, Pa., Sept. 1  
**Glick**, John David, interim pastor, Sunrise, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 1  
**Godfrey**, Mark, from pastor, Lanark, Ill., to pastor, Panther Creek, Adel, Iowa, June 1  
**Greblien**, Seth, pastor, Lake View Christian Fellowship, East Berlin, Pa., Sept. 8  
**Gross**, Anna Lisa, interim pastor, Crest Manor, South Bend, Ind., Aug. 1  
**Hammond**, Barbara, from interim pastor to co-pastor, Clover Creek, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 1  
**Hollenberg-Duffey**, Audrey, from co-pastor, Hagerstown, Md., to co-pastor, Oakton, Vienna, Va., Aug. 12  
**Hollenberg-Duffey**, Timothy, from co-pastor, Hagerstown, Md., to co-pastor, Oakton, Vienna, Va., Aug. 12  
**Klayton**, Daniel, pastor, Whitestone, Tonasket, Wash., May 5  
**Knoll**, John, pastor, Middle-creek, Friedens, Pa., July 1  
**Linton**, Britnee, pastor, Union Bridge, Md., Sept. 3  
**Miles**, Jesse, interim pastor, Greencastle, Pa., May 20  
**Miller**, Robert, pastor, Moler Avenue, Martinsburg, W.Va., July 1  
**Morales**, Arlyn, pastor, Lirio de los Valles, Lebanon, Pa., May 28  
**Ochoa**, Leonor, from pastor, Lirio de los Valles, Lebanon, Pa., to pastor, Ebenezer, Lancaster, Pa., May 28  
**Parfitt**, Stephen, pastor, Greensburg, Pa., July 1  
**Reinhart**, Mary Etta, interim pastor, Paxton, Harrisburg, Pa., Aug. 26  
**Reynolds**, Phil, pastor, Painter Creek, Arcanum, Ohio, June 1  
**Ritchie**, Amy Gall, pastor, Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind., July 11  
**Robbins**, Edward, from pastor, West Shore Fellowship, Enola, Pa., to interim pastor, Gettysburg, Pa., Sept. 1  
**Rowe**, Twyla, interim pastor, Hagerstown, Md., Aug. 19  
**Royal**, Harold, pastor, Trinity, Blountville, Tenn., July 21  
**Sampson**, Andrew, pastor, Modesto, Calif., June 1  
**Sherlock**, Douglas, Jr., from pastor, Lewistown, Pa., to pastor, Rockhill, Rockhill Furnace, Pa., July 14  
**Simmons**, Keith, pastor, Leake's Chapel, Stanley, Va., to pastor, Plumcreek, Shelocta, Pa., May 26  
**Spaid**, Robert, team minister, Maple Spring, Eglon, W.Va., May 26  
**Teets**, Lindsey, team minister, Maple Spring, Eglon, W.Va., May 26  
**Therrien**, Jim, from team pastor, Tokahookaadi, Cuba, N.M., to team pastor, Osage, McCune, Kan., Aug. 1  
**Therrien**, Kim, from team pastor, Tokahookaadi, Cuba, N.M. to team pastor, Osage, McCune, Kan., Aug. 1  
**Thompson**, Johnny, interim pastor to pastor, Peters Creek, Roanoke, Va., June 1  
**Troxell**, Phillip, pastor, Peru, Ind., June 9  
**Tyner**, Larry, interim pastor, Beech Grove, Hollansburg, Ohio, Sept. 1  
**Underkoffler**, Jerry, interim pastor, Carlisle, Pa., May 20  
**Veal**, Doug, from interim pastor, Prince of Peace, Kettering, Ohio, to pastor, Wabash, Ind., July 1  
**Washington**, James, pastor, Elm Street, Lima, Ohio, July 8  
**Worline**, James, interim pastor, Jeters Chapel, Vinton, Va., June 1  
**Ziler**, David, from associate pastor, Danville, Rawlings, Md., to pastor, Household, Lonaconing, Md., April 7



# Moving toward gratitude

**A**hhhh, November. That glorious time of year when I am overwhelmed by everything “pumpkin spice” and bombarded by social media “gratitude challenges.”

To be fair, I see a lot of benefit in keeping some sort of personal gratitude journal. Daily reflection on the blessings we’ve received is a great first step to developing the spiritual discipline of gratitude. We’re instructed in song, after all, to “count your many blessings, see what God has done.”

But sometimes social media reflections on gratitude seem to turn into brag-fests or competitions. Even as we reflect on those things we’re grateful for, dissatisfaction creeps in as we subconsciously compare our list of blessings to our friends’ lists. Or worse yet, our blessings become a source of personal pride.



ANGELA FINET

In 2 Corinthians 9:9-11 we read, “As it is written: ‘They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.’ Now

he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us *your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God*” (NIV).

I was pondering that passage earlier this year—not in preparation for Thanksgiving, but in anticipation of Easter. During that special season of Lent, some Christians make a

point of giving something up. I felt called to encourage my congregation to give something away instead. Our focus was to give away our gratitude—to share our grace, a word that shares the same root.

We live in a culture where there is a gratitude gap. This gap is defined as the difference between what we believe and what we practice. Meditating on the things for which we are thankful may build up feelings of gratitude and contentment within us, but does it move the community and the society in which we live toward gratitude?

In her book *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*, Diana Butler Bass suggests that society benefits from our acts and expressions of gratitude. She proclaims that we live in a society overwhelmed with the fear of scarcity. Many are anxious that there simply isn’t enough go around. We worry that someone else will get what we deserve, leaving us unfairly lacking. Those feelings make us prisoners of dissatisfaction.

Her recommendation really resonates with me. She says that when we recognize and act out of our abundance—and quite frankly, by the world’s standards, we all live with abundance—our community becomes a safer and happier place.

And when our generosity is offered in the name of Christ, it results in thanksgiving to God.

Join me this fall in closing the gap. Move beyond naming your blessings. Gratitude grows when we care enough to contribute. Our community flourishes. And our God is glorified. 

Angela Finet pastors Nokesville (Va.) Church of the Brethren.

WHEN WE RECOGNIZE AND ACT OUT OF OUR ABUNDANCE—AND QUITE FRANKLY, BY THE WORLD’S STANDARDS, WE ALL LIVE WITH ABUNDANCE—OUR COMMUNITY BECOMES A SAFER AND HAPPIER PLACE.

*Bless the Lord God, the God of Israel—  
the only one who does wondrous things!  
Bless God's glorious name forever;  
let his glory fill all the earth!*

~Psalm 72:18-19, CEB



*Photos by Brethren Volunteer Service staff,  
Marcia Young, and courtesy of Sammy Deacon*



God has done wondrous things among us through the ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Celebrate Giving Tuesday on December 3.

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



Church of the Brethren

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*Your gifts do great things!*

# SERVING TOGETHER WITH A COMMON PURPOSE

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* –1 Peter 4:10



**WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?** Volunteer. Support. Pray. Encourage.



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