

E-HEADLINER

WORSHIP SURVEY OF DISTRICT CONGREGATIONS

We recently reached out to pastors and contact persons from our 93 worshipping communities inquiring about the current methods of maintaining regular worship services. 62 congregations responded. Of these 62, 39 are currently having “in house” worship services. Of these 39, only nine have no other attendance option (i.e., internet or parking lot).

39 congregations report that they use the internet for their worship services (most often Facebook Live, YouTube or Zoom). Eleven reported that this is their only option.

22 congregations are using FM transmitters for parking lot services. Three of these use this option only.

Four congregations offer all three methods.

Four congregations are not meeting at the current time.

Several congregations not currently meeting “in house” have intermittently been “in house” and had to subsequently use alternate methods after outbreaks of COVID-19.

VIRLINA YOUNG ADULTS SERVE ON INTERDISTRICT YOUTH CABINET

Ben Riddle from the Antioch Church and Mina Simmons of the Roanoke, First Church, both students at Bridgewater College, are serving on the Interdistrict Youth Cabinet (IYC). The IYC plans and sponsors the Roundtable at Bridgewater College (in 2021 at three locations in Virlina, Shenandoah and Mid-Atlantic Districts due to COVID-19). For more information go to <https://iycroundtable.wixsite.com/iycbc>

THE GLOBAL CHURCH – THE NEXT MODERATOR’S TOWN HALL – FEBRUARY 18, 2021

The next Moderator’s Town Hall will be on February 18, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. EST. The topic will be “The Global Church: Current Happenings, Future Possibilities.” Carol and Norm Waggy, Interim Directors of Global Mission for the Church of the Brethren, will be the featured resource persons. The Waggys will provide updates on current Church of the Brethren denominations; this will include an update on the persecution of Christians in Nigeria impacting EYN and other groups. They will also discuss future possibilities for expanding the vision of a global Church of the Brethren. Ample time will be provided for Town Hall participants to ask questions.

To register for the Town Hall, please access the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN-sEMPdk8RU6PKveVhVPmVg>. You are strongly encouraged to sign up early, as the event is limited to the first 500 registrants. You are invited to submit your questions for the Waggys during the Town Hall, or you can send them in advance. To send your questions prior to the Town Hall, please email: cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com. Though we cannot commit to answering every question, we’ll do our best to use what is submitted. Questions or issues related to registering for the Town Hall can be emailed to cobmoderatorstownhall@gmail.com.

DENOMINATION WIDE ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICE – FEBRUARY 27, 2021

The Program and Arrangements Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has announced a denomination-wide online worship gathering titled “Venturing Forth Boldly as a Faith Family,” scheduled for Saturday, February 27, at 8 p.m. (Eastern time). In a season of disruption and despair, the service will assure us of

what “God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9) and how we can faithfully respond.

The theme is taken from the proposed compelling vision for the Church of the Brethren, with its call for Brethren to “venture forth boldly as a faith family, expectant and innovative, serving others and the God who makes all things new.” The scripture theme is 1 Corinthians 2:9-10: “But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.”

Congregations are invited to consider using this for their own Sunday morning worship service on Feb. 28, or any later date. Links will be shared in February, including separate links for the service in English and in Spanish.

Featured speakers include preachers Kurt Borgmann, pastor of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind., and Audri Svay, Bethany Seminary student and co-pastor of Eel River Community Church of the Brethren in Silver Lake, Ind.; worship leaders Cindy and Ben Lattimer, co-pastors of Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa.; and an array of people from around the denomination who will offer additional expressions of worship leadership.

A children’s time will direct the theme to a younger audience.

A wide array of music will include selections by Leah Hileman and Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren.

A “behind the scenes” story from Nancy Faus Mullen will tell how the hymn “For We Are Strangers No More” was included in the 1992 Hymnal: A Worship Book published jointly by Brethren Press, Faith and Life Press, and the Mennonite Publishing House.

Moderator-elect David Sollenberger will explore by video what online worship means for Church of the Brethren congregations, which historically have thrived on person-to-person interaction. The report will examine stories of congregational faithfulness and innovation in Arizona, Colorado, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The worship gathering is being planned by the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: elected members Emily Shonk Edwards, Carol Elmore, and Jan King; the Conference officers, moderator Paul Munday, moderator-elect Dave Sollenberger, and secretary Jim Beckwith; and Conference director Chris Douglas as staff. Find out more about Annual Conference at www.brethren.org/ac.

NORTHERN AREA MINISTERS MEETING – MARCH 1, 2021

The Northern Area Ministers Association of the Virilina District will be meeting on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 7 p.m. The program will be by Barry S. LeNoir, Camp Bethel Director. The video conference link is available from Tom Powers at tom.powers.cob@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN GROWTH INSTITUTE—SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT RETREAT – MARCH 6, 2021

The next Spiritual Formation Retreat will be March 6 via Zoom. Josh Brockway will be the presenter. Video lectures will be provided prior to March 6 to be viewed prior to the retreat. There will be a 4-hour podcast/audio recording of Rowan Williams on prayer included. Saturday, March 6 will be for discussion and group work. All participants are required to complete watching all videos and read several primary texts beforehand that will be provided.

Tuition for the class will be \$100.00. For more information or to obtain a registration form please contact Donna Hornsby, CGI Coordinator, (540) 266-0733; email: dshornsby76@cox.net. Make checks payable to VIRILINA DISTRICT and mail with the registration form to arrive by April 1, 2021 to Donna Hornsby, 420 Bluebell Lane, Apt. 304, Roanoke, VA 24012. CEU credit is available for ordained ministers taking the class.

THE REWARD OF RISK – A VIRTUAL NEW AND RENEW EVENT – MAY 13-15, 2021

“The Reward of Risk” is a virtual NEW AND RENEW EVENT sponsored by Discipleship Ministries of the Church of the Brethren. This online event will provide a space to explore new forms of mission, church planting, church renewal and shaping community. This year, the keynote speakers will be Christiana Rice and José Humphreys. Of-

-ferred in at least three languages, we will be providing opportunities to network with others as we learn and grow. An interpretive document is available – in Spanish, Haitian Creole and English. If you want a copy, please contact us at nuchurch@aol.com

Registration opened February 1, 2021. Virgina District persons who would like financial assistance from the New Church Development Committee may advise us at nuchurch@aol.com. We will register those individuals. The website link for all things related to the 2021 NEW AND RENEW EVENT is found at <https://www.brethren.org/discipleshipmin/newandrenew/>

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION BEGINS MARCH 2, 2021

Registration for both delegates and non-delegates for the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will open at 12:00 Noon Central Time on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. The delegate registration fee is \$305 per delegate. Registration will stay open through the end of conference.

Delegate registration fees provide each delegate with a Conference booklet and the business materials packet. Each congregation registering a delegate will also receive a copy of the 2021 Annual Conference minutes.

Please note: Unique to this year's ONLINE Annual Conference, each delegate **MUST HAVE THEIR OWN PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS, A COMPUTER OR TABLET, AS WELL AS ADEQUATE WIFI SERVICE IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN CONFERENCE.** Please ensure that your selected delegate meets these requirements to participate so that your congregation can be fully represented at Annual Conference.

We are aware that some congregations do not have much access to the Internet and we hope delegates from those congregations will be able to participate. Perhaps your district office will have counsel as to how you can obtain individual Internet connections for each of your delegates.

One online site will be used for all business, insight sessions, networking groups, concerts, Bible studies and more. A link and password for access to the site will be emailed to each registrant in the days prior to the start of Conference. Training sessions will be provided in the weeks before Conference begins for those wanting to learn how to navigate the site. The many details of the event will be frequently updated on www.brethren.org/ac. Please check back often! Also watch for weekly emails sharing information about all that Annual Conference will have to offer online.

Registering a Delegate

Beginning Tuesday, March 2, at 12:00 noon Central Time, congregations may register their delegates online at www.brethren.org/ac. Click the "Registration" button and then choose "Delegate Registration." Payment options include paying by credit card or sending a check. Each delegate's complete name, address, email, and phone contact are required. Please use the delegate's own email address, not the church email! If you need assistance, call the Annual Conference Office at 800-323-8039 ext. 366, or 847-429-4366.

Delegate Eligibility and Allotment

Delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The number of delegates for each congregation is based on the membership statistics as reported in the 2020 Church of the Brethren Yearbook. The number allowed is as follows:

Up to 200 Members	1 delegate
201-400 Members	2 delegates
401-600 Members	3 delegates
601-800 Members	4 delegates

Non-Delegate Registrations

Non-delegate registration opens the same day as delegate registration. When registering anyone other than a delegate, click on the "Non-Delegate Registration" button. This year's reduced price of \$99 for non-delegates provides access to the business sessions, insight sessions, networking groups, concerts, Bible studies and more.

New Delegates

Please encourage delegates who have never been or have not recently been to Annual Conference to attend the New Attendee Orientation session, online at 3:30 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday afternoon, June 29.

Online Information

Please check out our webpage at www.brethren.org/ac2021 for more information about Annual Conference, including leadership, themes, schedule, concerts and much more. New information is added regularly so check back often.

TWO MINISTRY SKILL COURSES FROM BAML FOR SPRING 2021

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership is offering two ministry skills courses this spring.

Defining Set-Apart Ministry Within the Multivocational Reality is online from April 7 - June 1. Participants will receive one credit in Ministry Skills upon completion. The instructor for this online course will be Sandra Jenkins.

Multivocational ministry is a reality in many denominations. It is not only a calling but a necessity; part-time ministry placements often outnumber full-time placements. This class will explore the set-apart ministry within the multivocational context, including the rewards and challenges for both pastor and congregation. The deadline to register is March 3.

Doing Church Differently: Ministry in Times of Crisis is online from May 5 - June 29. Participants will receive one credit in Ministry Skills upon completion. The instructor for this online course will be Debbie Eisenbise.

This course examines how pastors are called to lead and assist congregations in adapting to maintain organizational integrity, pastoral viability, and foster spiritual growth in the midst of corporate/community crises (natural disasters, active shooter incidents, pandemics, climate crises, etc.). The deadline to register for this course is March 31.

Online TRIM classes are particularly accessible for busy pastors. These online classes "meet" for 8 weeks in Moodle, a virtual classroom platform. The Brethren Academy will provide students with Moodle access before the course starts. The office will also provide a Moodle tutorial if one is needed. Pastors taking this course will earn 2 continuing education units or persons may take it for personal enrichment.

New lessons are posted once a week, once the course begins, and students are given a week to complete their assignments. Students can log on at any time, day or night, to read lectures, watch videos, work on group projects and/or engage in forums (email-style conversations) with their classmates. In this way, online courses are fairly flexible.

Persons interested in taking an Academy course for continuing education credits (CEU) or personal enrichment (PE) may enroll as a student and select their category (CEU or PE) upon registration.

Successful completion of the course requires
Meeting the attendance requirement set by the instructor,
Completion of the assigned reading,
Engagement in the course through participation,
Complete reduced assignments as outlined in the syllabus.

A WORD FROM OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE MODERATOR PAUL MUNDEY

Traditionally the moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference calls the church to Bible study and prayer as we anticipate Annual Conference. This year is no exception, but with an added plus: the availability in mid-February of 13 Bible studies focused on the themes of the proposed compelling vision for the Church of the

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*Continuing the work of Jesus.
Peacefully.
Simply.
Together.*



Brethren. These can be found at www.brethren.org/ac/compelling-vision.

Available now are two sample lessons from the Bible studies, in both English and Spanish, at www.brethren.org/ac/compelling-vision/bible-studies.

This year's Annual Conference will be an empowering resourcing event. At its heart will be intentional, prayerful engagement with the proposed compelling vision as we seek the mind of Christ, living into the Conference theme "God's Adventurous Future." Excellent preparation for this spiritual engagement will be participation by your congregation in the 13 compelling vision Bible studies.

We live in a season of pandemic and polarization; people are experiencing much unrest and confusion in their context. However, an emphasis on "Jesus in the Neighborhood," our compelling vision banner theme, will help resource and center, contributing to a renewed perspective on God and hope.

Recently, I rediscovered 2 Chronicles 20:12: "[O God] we [feel] powerless against this great multitude [of realities] coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." The speaker is King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and the great multitude in his case was the powerful threesome of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. Up against such forces, Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and gathered the people together—great and small, male and female—to seek the Lord. As they did so, their eyes were indeed on God. Just then, Jahaziel, son of Zechariah, heard from God and prophesied. He said a lot, but the gist is found in 2 Chronicles 20:15: "Do not fear or be dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's." In turn, Jehoshaphat and the people took courage, praised and magnified God, and went forth to meet the challenge before them.

For me, Bible study and prayer are prime tools to assist as I strive to keep my eyes on God and God's accompaniment, when a multitude is before me. Thus, I am excited that Annual Conference delegates, participants, and other people from our congregations will soon have access to a new Bible study resource for the Church of the Brethren.

As we anticipate the 2021 Annual Conference, a great multitude of challenges are indeed before us—not Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, but schism, political unrest, and racism, among others. Given such challenges, we need to "eye" something that will lead us forward. I am confident that the compelling vision Bible studies will do just that as they point us to God in Christ, and the challenge of the proposed vision to "develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless."

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE E-HEADLINER IS PROJECTED FOR FEBRUARY 27, 2021

A PRINTABLE COLOR VERSION OF THE E-HEADLINER WILL BE AVAILABLE AT www.virlina.org