

ANE Today



ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Volume 51 Issue 1

January/February 2020

Greetings ANE Brothers and Sisters, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Blessings to you as we step into a new year rich with all the spiritual blessings we have received in Christ.

Some of you are aware of a group from within the Church of the Brethren that began to meet this past July, which has developed into a potential new denomination called the Covenant Brethren Church. Included in this newsletter is the letter shared by the denominational Leadership Team in the November 21 Newsline addressing this development as well as some of the concerns which surround it.

Here in the Atlantic Northeast District, our vision statement says:

Guided by scripture, heritage and the Holy Spirit, we are committed to creating spiritually healthy New Testament congregations who covenant and network together to further the Kingdom of God.

As you know, we, the District Leadership, continue to work very intentionally at how we are called to fulfill this vision for us as the church. In April 2019, ministers from the District gathered together to share and pray together, church pastors and leaders gathered on May 23 to listen and share what a way forward might look like for the District, and we had excellent conversations around tables during District Conference. Following the May 23 meeting of church leaders, the District Board appointed a Way Forward Team who have been meeting since August to explore options for the District to move forward together amidst our differences in order to fulfill our purpose in Christ.

From all of these conversations, through you a strong



Photo Credit: Glenn Riegel

voice has emerged speaking to how deeply we value our relationships as Brothers and Sisters in Christ and our call to live out the Great Commandment and Great Commission. There is no doubt we are a diverse District in every way. Yes, at times that causes some friction as we

work to serve Christ together amidst those tensions.

(Continued on Page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

And yet, there exists what can be, and is, a great example to the world of what it means to unite in our love for Christ and one another for the purpose of showing all people what the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ truly is. Yes, it is about His Truth and Grace. It is about *each of us* repenting of our worldly ways and turning back toward God and His Way set out before us in Christ.

And so that we might receive that and truly live it out, I pray that:

“Our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”-Philippians 2:5-8

I pray that we live into our call as Ambassadors of Christ, who has given us the ministry of reconciliation. -2 Cor 5:18

As noted, some have chosen to leave the Church of the Brethren, and so that brings with it the pain of separation. But I am hopeful and encouraged by what we can do together, and I, along with all our District Leadership, welcome your questions, concerns, and ideas in all this.

And so I invite us to pray. Pray for all of us, for healing, for our hearts to be open and willing to receive God’s Holy Presence and will for us as His Church.

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” -Ephesians 3:20-21

~Pete Kontra, District Executive



Denominational Leadership Team issues response regarding the Covenant Brethren Church

The following is a statement from the Leadership Team of the Church of the Brethren, made up of the Annual Conference officers--moderator Paul Munday, moderator-elect David Sollenberger, and secretary James Beckwith--along with general secretary David Steele and Cindy Sanders representing the Council of District Executives:

The Compelling Vision process has provided the church an opportunity to gather together--not only in a multitude of district settings, but also at Annual Conference--to pray and worship, to reflect on scripture, our lives of faith and ministries, and to build relationships. Many appreciated gathering at an Annual Conference that was free from debate on issues that divide, and therefore better able to focus on worship, Bible study, conversation, discernment, and building up the Body of Christ. As we kept Jesus central to our conversations throughout the Compelling Vision conversations, we were reminded that despite our differences there is much we share in common in our mission and ministry both locally and denominationally. There is no doubt that there is a hopeful spirit within the life of the Church of the Brethren!

Yet even in the midst of this hopeful spirit, it is also important to acknowledge a second narrative that is emerging, one that is promoting separation. Its working name has been the Association

of Brethren Churches (ABC), recently renamed Covenant Brethren Church. This second narrative is one that claims an exploratory banner, yet by their actions, meetings, and recruitment communicates another intent.

We in no way want to diminish the very real concerns these individuals and others have with the Church of the Brethren; there is much work to do. The multiple issues (“elephants”) that were named at the 2019 Annual Conference remain. But planning and organizing a separation movement--fostering division--is not a path forward. Instead, we believe the way ahead is to continue our conversations, discerning together changes that may be needed, affirming that differences are best addressed together through the study and discernment of scripture, prayer, and trusting that the Holy Spirit will reveal God’s truth.

Of particular concern to the Leadership Team is that some Church of the Brethren ministers, district leaders, and Standing Committee delegates are leading, participating, and recruiting in this separation movement while continuing to serve in current Church of the Brethren positions of leadership. It is our conviction that any initiative or action by Church of the Brethren leaders planning and promoting division in the church calls into question the ministerial conduct of those credentialed leaders. We encourage any leadership participating in these separation efforts to be in communication with their respective district executives.

(continued on page 3)



The ANE Gifts Discernment Team met for the first time in November to start the process of filling the 2020 Slate which will be voted on at the next District Conference on October 3. The following ANE District leadership positions are currently open for the 2020 Slate.

Moderator Elect: This person would serve as an ex-officio member of the District Board and Executive Committee, and is also a member of the Gifts Discernment Team and Program & Arrangements Committee. They would serve one year as Moderator-Elect, and one year as Moderator.

Program & Arrangements Committee (from a Lancaster South congregation): This person would assist in planning the District Conference program and logistics. They would also assist with registration on the day of District Conference. This position is a 3 year term.

Sanding Committee Delegate (from a Lancaster South congregation): This person would serve on the Annual Conference Standing Committee (expenses paid), and is an Ex-officio member of the District Board. They would also serve on a committee to plan the Annual Conference Delegate Briefing. This position is a three year term, plus one year as an alternate delegate.

District Board Vice Chair: This person would serve as the Vice Chair of the District Board and in the absence of the Chair, perform the duties of the Chair, and serve as Vice Chair of the Executive Committee. They also would be the primary contact of the support network of caring an accountability for District Staff which fosters personal care, healthy working styles and relationships. This position is a 3 year term.

Commission on Nurture: This person would serve on the Nurture Commission and would assist congregations in spiritual growth and renewal of church members, facilitate, support and advocate for the spiritual, emotional physical, and relational health and vitality of the District's congregations. This position is a 3 year term.

Commission on Stewardship: This person would serve on the Stewardship Commission as challenge good stewardship of God's resources and provides Stewardship educational opportunities. They would also supervise the financial interests of the District and program interpretation. This position is a 3 year term.

As you go through the process of discernment, carefully consider whom among your congregation has a passion for the Church or a particular ministry. Do you know anyone that is enthusiastic and feels compelled to make a difference? These individuals will hold a leadership position and make improvements within our District. If



you know of someone that might be interested, please reach out to them. Explain that you've recognized their talents and encourage them to share their gifts, while making a difference within our District.

Starting in January, more information will be available on our website, and letters with recommendation forms will be mailed out to each congregation's pastors. Should you feel led to use your gifts or recommend another's please speak to your pastor, or a member of the Gifts Discernment Team and complete a form. Forms are also available on our website. Forms are due back to the District Office February 15.

Your 2020 Gifts Discernment Team:

Sandy Brubaker, Paul Brubaker, Nancy Elliot Carter, Audrey Estep, Nancy Fittery, Karen Hackett— Moderator, Jason Haldeman, Bethany Hoffer, Joan Huston— Chair, Bob Kettering, Pete Kontra— District Executive, Heather Landram, Megan Lester, Judy Menszak, Angie Mountain, Scott Moyer— Moderator Elect, Douglas Nyce— District Conference Clerk.

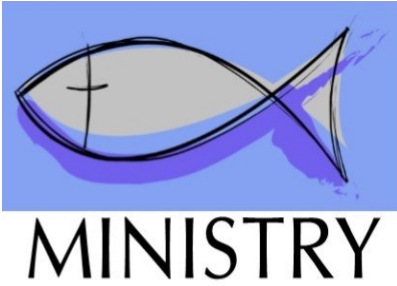
For a current list of the District's Leadership, please visit our website: www.ane-cob.org. In the Menu click on About Us, and then ANE Board of Directors.

(continued from page 2)

The Leadership Team will be working with district executives as we consider the participation of Standing Committee delegates and district leadership.

Amid this uncertainty and discernment, the Leadership Team is committed to unity and encourages the church to remain focused on the mission of Jesus Christ, our Lord. To that end, we are anticipating very soon a proposed Compelling Vision document, which will guide us forward as a denomination committed to following Jesus together.

"Newsline", Nov. 21, 2019



Licensing Service Performed at WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital

Cyndy Wright cried twice in 24 hours and, she says firmly, "I'm not a crier."

The first time she cried was when she learned that an unexpected stay at WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital would mean she would have to postpone a long-awaited licensing ceremony that is part of her journey to become a minister.



The second time she cried was when Ephrata nursing supervisor Bonnie Dueck told her, "We will hold the ceremony right here. I'll take care of everything." And then she did. That's how 60 people ended up gathered in a WellSpan Ephrata Health Pavilion conference room on a sunny fall Sunday afternoon, to witness Wright's licensing ceremony. Present were grandchildren, her daughter, her son who had traveled all the way from California, her friends and her fellow members from the East Cocalico Church of the Brethren. Also present was Dueck and fellow hospital personnel from departments including security, patient transport, volunteer services and case management. Food service provided cookies and coffee for the gathering. WellSpan Hospitalist Kunal Patel, D.O., also stopped in to congratulate his patient.

In the midst of the happy throng was Wright, who could not stop smiling. The 67-year-old Terre Hill resident plans to finish her pastoral studies in the next two years, with the goal of becoming a chaplain. Her joyful moment began Wright's nurse, Mike Baker, happened to overhear about Wright's plight, and reached out to Dueck on his patient's behalf. Dueck, in turn, reached out to others on the hospital team, setting in motion of cascade of caring.

"The hospital made this happen," Wright said. "It would not have happened without them. The collaboration between the hospital and the church was wonderful. Bonnie was a dear. Right from the beginning, she said, 'We're going to make this happen.' Everyone was excited about it and that was contagious." Dueck said, "This was really important to her. That's why we were so excited about it."

Pete Kontra, a Church of the Brethren district executive who oversaw

[Placement News]

Geiger Memorial: Open

Lancaster: Called Misty Wintsch as Lead Pastor and Don Fitzkee as Pastor of Worship effective January 2020

Lititz: Searching for Director of Youth Ministries

Mount Wilson: Donna Lefever-Hoover serves as Interim Pastor; Search Committee formed.

Paxton: Mary Etta Reinhart serves as Interim Pastor; search committee formed.

Richland: In negotiations. Levi Ziegler and Chris Dubble serve in interim.

Schuykill: Pastor Richard Hoffman resigned. Search Committee forming.

Licensing, Ordinations, and Installations:

Cyndy Wright's (East Cocalico) Licensing service was held on October 27. Pete Kontra, District Executive officiated the service. See article on this page.

Lynne Allebach's (Hatfield) Ordination and installation service was held on November 3 and officiated by Karen Hackett, member of the ANE Ministry Commission, and current Moderator.

Leonor Ochoa was installed as pastor of Ebenezer (Project) on December 1 by Pete Kontra. Ebenezer is currently worshipping at Lampeter CoB.

Laura Hamilton's (Steven's Hill) Licensing service was held on December 8. Pete Kontra officiated the service.



Wright's licensing, said it was the first time he ever conducted such a ceremony in a hospital.

"It's awesome!" he said. "It's awesome to see people here to support her and love her in this way."

(Article submitted by Cindy Stauffer, Senior Media Relations & Communications Specialist, WellSpan Health)



ANE District Prayer Calendar Requests:

January 5: ANE District Youth Advisors & Youth Cabinet

January 12: Gifts Discernment Team during their process of calling new District Leadership

January 19: Churches seeking pastors and staff

January 26: ANE District Board

February 2: BDM Volunteers

February 9: Denominational Leadership

February 16: Program & Arrangements Committee as they plan our 2020 District Conference

February 23: Women's Fellowship

It is hard to imagine, but it has been over a year and a half that we have been praying for each other using our Prayer Calendars. Much of the feedback regarding this program has been extremely positive, so back by popular demand, our District wide prayer calendars will be ready for distribution by January. They will be emailed to your congregation, and they will also be available online on our website. Should you have any questions, please let the office know.

Merkey Meetinghouse

Along route 501 in Bethel, PA, sits a beautiful historic Meetinghouse that was erected on the farm of John Merkey. That same farm was the site of the 1871 Annual Meeting of the Church of the Brethren. The stone Merkey Meetinghouse was one of several meetinghouses associated with the Little Swatara congregation; the others were Frystown, Schubert and Zieglers.

Built in 1848, it served the congregation well into the 20th century. It's demise as a meetinghouse came when the modern Little Swatara church facility was built in 1963. After being sold, it was for a time a private residence, then was vacant. In



Merkey Meetinghouse today

the past two years, it has undergone renovation and enlargement to become facilities for the Yahweh's Free Brethren Church. Pastor Jake Meyer commented that many current members have ancestral ties to the Merkey Meetinghouse churchgoers.

Across the street from the Merkey Meetinghouse is the Merkey Cemetery. Buried there are many Merkey's, Browns, Shermans, and Klines from the 19th and 20th centuries.

~David Fuchs, Historical Committee



Merkey Meetinghouse 1950



WOMEN'S SPRING FELLOWSHIP

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

unburden SOUL strength
release overcome move on PURE change
intention freedom TRUTH merciful
LOVE unconditional courage GRACE
forgive compassion responsibility
attitude KIND tenderness
HEALING progress forwards genuine
sincere let go future PEACE

THEME: FORGIVENESS & GRACE

Mountville Church of the Brethren

Registration begins at 8:45am

Morning Speaker:

Marie Monville

Author of the book "One Light Still Shines" and the former wife of the Amish Schoolhouse Shooter. She is an author and speaker and shares her story of forgiveness, healing and the restoration God has done in her life.

Afternoon Speaker:

Don Kraybill

"The Habit of Forgiveness"; Don Kraybill is an author and educator on Anabaptist faiths and living. He is widely recognized for his studies on Anabaptist groups and the foremost living expert on the Old Order Amish.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE THE ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT'S WEBSITE, OR YOUR CONGREGATION'S REPRESENTATIVE. COST OF THE EVENT IS YET TO BE DETERMINED.

ANE DISTRICT— NEW MEMBERS

Wyomissing — Reaffirmation: Dana Ramsey, John Steffy, Kelly Steffy.



YOUTH LEADER RETREAT

FEBRUARY 28-29, 2020

To Get Away, Get Together & Get Inspired

"It's Challenging"

More information at:

www.ane-cob-org/youth



55 PLUS SPRING BANQUET

SAVE THE DATE!

March 25, 2020 12:00 PM
Middle Creek CoB

Details to follow.

Save the date!
Stewardship University 2020



SATURDAY MARCH 7, 2020
Visit our website under events
for more information!

Looking for a few willing persons from one or more ANE congregations who can lend a helping hand to the church family at Harrisburg First.



Harrisburg First has an outreach ministry called bcmPEACE which owns an apartment building where they rent out apartments to folks with financial challenges. (Note: this is a totally separate ministry from Brethren Housing Association). They are looking for persons with some skills in home remodeling to help them with repairs to some of these apartments. Help is needed in the next few weeks if possible.

Church 2 Church is a "community building" ministry outreach opportunity that allows churches with needs to partner with churches who are interested in a service project.



Interested persons may contact:

*Atlantic Northeast District Office
(717-367-4730),*

or the ANE District Director of Witness and Outreach (mreinhardt@ane-cob.org)

**ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
500 East Cedar Street
Elizabethtown, PA 17022**

**Non-Profit Organization
AUTOMATION
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Elizabethtown, PA
Permit No. 53**



OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

STAFF

Pete Kontra, **District Executive**

Don Mitchell, **Director of Church Development & Evangelism**

Donna Lefever-Hoover, **Volunteer Interim Director of Nurture**

Mary Etta Reinhart, **Director of Witness & Outreach**

Kay M. Weaver, **Director of Stewardship**

Krista Dickson, **Office Administrator**

Kelly Bernstein, **Communications Manager &
District Conference Coordinator**

Phone Number: 717- 367- 4730

FAX Number: 717- 367- 8737

Website: www.ane-cob.org



AtlanticNortheastDistrict



**Atlantic Northeast District Church of
the Brethren**

Deadline for the Mar/April issue of
ANE Today is February 10.
kbernstein@ane-cob.org.

Our Mission:

*Guided by scripture, heritage and the
Holy Spirit, we are creating spiritually
healthy New Testament congregations
who covenant and network
together to further the Kingdom of God.*

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| MESSAGE FROM PETE | 1-2 |
| DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP LETTER | 2-3 |
| DISTRICT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR 2020 SLATE | 3 |
| LICENSINGS, ORDINATIONS & INSTALLATIONS | 4 |
| PLACEMENT NEWS | 4 |
| PRAYER CALENDAR | 5 |
| EVENTS | 6-7 |
| CHURCH2CHURCH OPPORTUNITY | 7 |