

ANE Today



ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Volume 51 Issue 4

July/August 2020

Our country is going through a difficult time in regard to racial injustice and peace. Belita Mitchell, pastor at Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren, has written the excerpt below. Harrisburg First serves the South Allison Hill area, which is in the neighborhood comprised of the largest concentration of low-income families.

"I CAN'T BREATHE"

STATEMENT OF LAMENT (Adapted from "A Litany of Loss" by pastor Belita D. Mitchell)

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears on the streets of cities across our country. Streets have become graveyards on which the promise of generations lies dying.

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears on our nation; Cities and towns are shrouded in the dust of desolation.

Streets and alleys are enveloped in the smoke of gunfire; enveloped in the smoke of arsonist fires ignited by anger, fear and frustration over repeated injustice and police brutality.

People in confusion, pain and horror whisper "Please God no more, no more; They shout aloud "No justice, no peace!"

Hearts ache in the reality that: "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".¹ and we are living out that reality right now in the midst of a global pandemic that has disproportionate negative effects on black and brown Americans.

Bruised and black clouds shroud our neighborhoods, our business centers, our playgrounds, and schools.

Our centers of government and law enforcement are shrouded in indifference and neglect, denial and contempt. People gaze upon devastation wrought by evil and ignorance.

Bruised and black clouds shed tears over our whole nation, a nation bowed and bloodied in battle, cowed and weary of violence, racial bias and injustice, and the failure of leaders and lawmakers to bring about change.

Our streets have become battlefields of despair. Our Halls of justice continue to be unequal playing fields. This is a lament of expectation that someone will hear and respond with an affirmation and join a call to action to bring about change.

This is my prayer:

God of life, who gives us hope and healing, be among us as we seek you. Guide us as we strive to find the path to justice and hope for all of your children. Keep us mindful that you are a God of righteousness and justice shall roll down like mighty waters² in due season. Help us keep our eyes on the prize and remain faithful in our pursuit of justice and peace for all your children. Amen.

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Belita Mitchell

1) Martin Luther King Jr. 2) Amos 5:24



District Executive Pete Kontra has challenged all of us to pray, in this excerpt of the District's statement calling for Peace and Prayer, released in early June:

Certainly, we are called to Pray. In the name of our Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of His Holy Spirit which we just celebrated last Sunday as He came upon us to reach all people:

- Pray for the family of George Floyd as they grieve the loss of their loved one.
- Pray for all those who are suffering in various ways, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, because of the acts of violence committed against them.
- Pray for healing and wholeness for those who are so broken to where such violent acts against another human being whom God created can be done.
- Pray for the grace to live into our call as followers of Christ to love others as He has loved us, and humble ourselves that we would be open to His transformation and example as willing servants to bring the needed change in this world.
- Pray that we speak less and listen to one another more.
- Pray for our leaders, that they would seek God's face as they make decisions which impact us all. Begin within your relationships. Move into your community. No matter the person in front of you and the situation you are in, be the Light of Christ.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. -Matthew 5:9

Introducing the new

ANE FACILITIES ASSISTANCE FUND

Prior to his death in 2014, John Stoner served as ANE's treasurer for more than 18 years. In 2019 ANE was blessed to receive funds from his estate for our ministries. Upon recommendation from the Stewardship Commission, ANE Board approved placing 50% of the funds into a reserve for the district's operating expenses and having the remaining \$286,790 available for ANE congregations and fellowships.

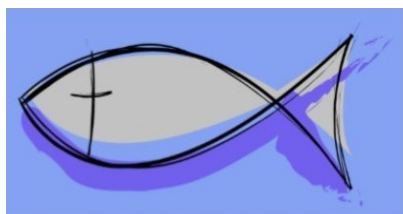
These funds are available through the application process in place for the current Barnabas Fund, Helping Hands Benevolence Fund, Seeds of Faith Fund, and **the newly established Facilities Assistance Fund.**

The Barnabas Fund, Helping Hands Benevolence Fund, and Seeds of Faith Fund have somewhat restricted criteria for congregations to obtain



funding assistance. However, the new **Facilities Assistance Fund is for ALL congregations.** Whether your annual Ministry Investment Plan (church budget) is \$60,000 or \$600,000, you may apply for funding assistance from this fund.

If you need to paint your church building, replace carpet, professionally sanitize your church, add sanitizers, etc., you may submit a request for ANE to partner with your congregation on these costs. Also, many pastors have expressed the need to continue providing Online Worship even after we are able to gather again in our places of worship. (Continued on page 3)



MINISTRY

Licensings, Ordinations, and Installations:

Due to the inability to meet in person for worship during COVID19, the ANE District's licensings, ordinations and installations have been postponed.

As time and ability allows, services will be resumed.

ANE Facilities Assistance Fund

(Continued from page 2)

If the cost to upgrade equipment wasn't included in the current year's ministry investment plan, you may submit a request!

For an application to any of these funds, please contact Kay Weaver at kweaver@ane-cob.org or by calling 717-786-1645.

[Placement News]

East Fairview: Bob Kettering serves as Interim. Interviewing.

Geiger Memorial: Open

Lebanon: Erv Huston serves as Interim. Search Committee formed.

Lititz: Searching for Director of Youth Ministries

Mountville: Becky Fuchs retiring effective October 31. Search committee formed.

Mount Wilson: Donna Lefever-Hoover serves as Interim Pastor; Interviewing.

Myerstown: Dennis Garrison serves as Interim.

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

Schuylkill: Search Committee forming.

Wilmington: Developing Interim options.



SAVE THE DATE!
ANE DISTRICT CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 2-3, 2020

Due to COVID19 restrictions, our Program & Arrangements Committee will send out details regarding District Conference by the end of June. At the time of this publication, there are no updates. Please check our website after July 1 for details should you not receive an email.

**REGISTRATION
OPENS**

July 1, 2020



Barnabas Fund in action!



The Barnabas Fund Team met in early May to determine 2021 funding based on requests received from ANE district churches. Alpha & Omega, Brooklyn First, Germantown, and Harrisburg First were all offered funding for 2021 contingent upon approval from the ANE District Board and approval of the 2021 Ministry Investment Plan by the ANE District Conference in October. Approval for these funds is also subject to the availability of funds based on the 2020 giving of our ANE Congregations.

Harrisburg First received full approval of their request \$27,080 request for 2021 funding to support the ministry of Harrisburg First. These funds will help support a number of the ministries of this congregation. These ministries include:

Agape-Satyagraha: Youth Leadership development through Nonviolent Conflict Resolution and Social Change Training.

Bright Futures Transitioning young adults from high school to college/trade school to their career.

KIDS Church: A weekly program during the school year which builds character & self-image in elementary school-age children, while providing a healthy meal.

Pathway to Prosperity: Breaking Cycles of Generational Poverty.

Restorative Justice Community Service opportunities.

NeighborShare: (with other service groups) provides service projects in and around our neighbors' homes

Wellness Hub: This ministry is provided in conjunction with the weekly food distribution and offers referral services for needed family resources.

Safe and Affordable Permanent Housing Solutions: Renting our six two-bedroom apartments using a rental payment structure that is slightly below market.

Pastor Belita Mitchell, Pastor at Harrisburg First, shared these words of gratitude with the Barnabas Fund Team: *Thanks to the committee for the approval of our application for support from the Barnabas Fund to bolster our service to the South Allison Hill community. We are deeply grateful and pray the District Board and District Conference will uphold your decision. Harrisburg First has been blessed by your ongoing efforts and good works.*

For more information about the ANE District Barnabas Fund, check out the "ANE Special Funds" section of the ANE District website at www.ane-cob.org.





ANE Disaster Response Update

For those in our district who are supporters of our ANE Disaster Response efforts, here is an update from the Brethren Disaster Ministries website: All BDM rebuilding sites are currently suspended for weekly volunteers. The BDM site in the Carolinas that was previously planned to close August 2 will now not reopen. Some Brethren volunteers may serve with another local partner in July, but BDM will no longer host volunteers after conversations with local partners around COVID-19 concerns.

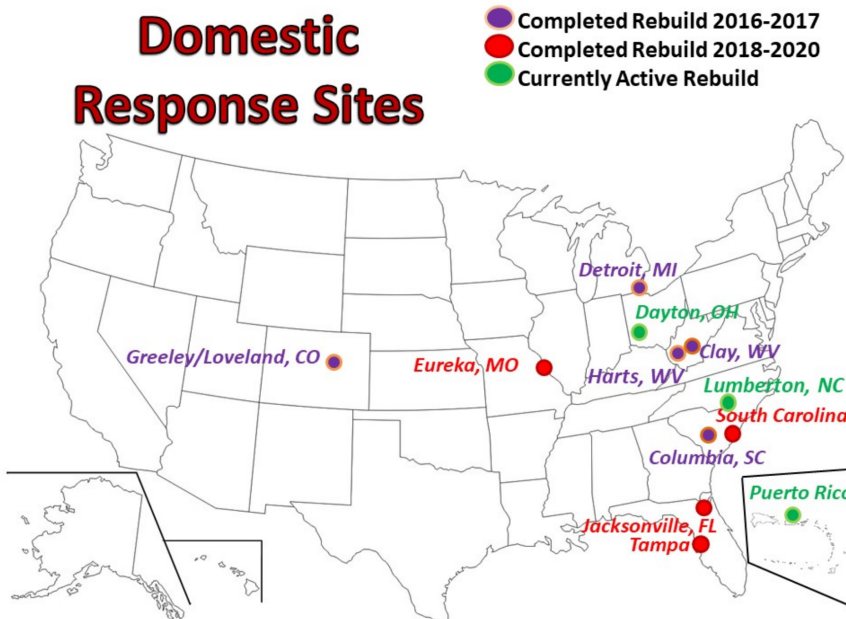
The remaining volunteers on the Puerto Rico site were cancelled for April 25-May 23. These were the last volunteers scheduled for Puerto Rico as the volunteer side of the project was set to finish on May 23. BDM work has resumed on approved homes on the island through local contractors and homeowners who can complete their own work. This site is scheduled to close completely at the end of June.



The location of Project 2 is officially scheduled to move to Dayton, Ohio for tornado recovery. BDM anticipates that the move and set up can take place for a July 12, 2020 opening date of the BDM project. For at least July, volunteers are limited to Ohio residents and no volunteer housing will be available. Any change to that requirement for volunteers and housing for August is yet to be confirmed.

All of the dates named are subject to future change depending on CDC guidance, restrictions from local officials in the project site areas and other states, and the local BDM partners in those areas being willing to accept volunteers. We are in close contact with these partners while monitoring when it will be acceptable to send volunteers without imposing any health concerns for our volunteers, the host community and most importantly the homeowners. If any further extension of these dates needs to be made in the coming weeks or months, it will be announced first with the groups and leaders on the schedule, and then publicly. These schedules will be updated as decisions are made in the coming weeks and months

Domestic Response Sites



Travel costs for ANE congregations who travel to BDM work sites under the coordination of our District Disaster Coordinator, Robert Eisemann, may be reimbursed by funds from the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction and the ANE District Helping Hands Benevolence Fund. For more information you may contact Robert Eisemann by phone at 717-733-7413 or email at rgeisemann@gmail.com or Mary Etta Reinhart, ANE District Director of Witness and Outreach, by phone at 717-808-4306 or email at mreinhart@ane-cob.org.



HISTORICAL COMMITTEE



Blue Ball Congregation Meetinghouses

In 1897, growth in the Conestoga congregation created the need for a three-way split, which gave birth to the Spring Grove and Mechanic Grove congregations. The Spring Grove congregation had three meeting houses: Kemper's House, a sandstone structure built in 1864 near the Murrel section of Ephrata; the Spring Grove House, an 1892 40 x 50-foot frame building in Spring Grove; and the Blue Ball House, an 1875 30 x 40-foot frame building in Blue Ball.

In 1916, services ceased to occur in the Spring Grove meetinghouse, which became a private residence. In 1947, the Spring Grove congregation voted to build a new structure, the Blue Ball Church, which was completed in 1951. A new Kemper House was constructed, starting in 1960 and completed in 1962. The 1962 Kemper House, on Hahnstown Road, is now used by Grace Church, and carries the original cornerstone dated 1864. Despite no longer using a meetinghouse in Spring Grove after 1951, the con-

Blue Ball Church in 1950



Blue Ball Church today, showing the 1990 expansion to the left of the original building.

Original Kemper Meetinghouse in 1950



gregation's name remained the Spring Grove Church of the Brethren.

The current Blue Ball congregation, located east of Ephrata near New Holland, represents the 1976 merging of the Kemper's worshippers with those in Blue Ball at the 1951 Blue Ball church. In 1986 the congregation's name was changed from Spring Grove to Blue Ball Church of the Brethren. The facility was expanded in 1990, adding space and a covered entranceway.

Cornerstone at Kemper Church, now Grace Church



Grace Church on Hahnstown Road



The Lebanon Expo 2-Day Auction Event scheduled in late September is canceled over pandemic concerns!

This year's Lebanon Expo Brethren Disaster Relief Auction that has been a tradition since 1977 has been canceled because of the coronavirus crisis. The BDRA association determined the health concerns due to COVID-19 complicated the ongoing planning and volunteer coordination for the two-day event set to begin September 25.

Even if current restrictions were lifted for opening of the Auction, it would be extremely difficult to have complete assurance that all volunteers, vendors and supporters would attend.

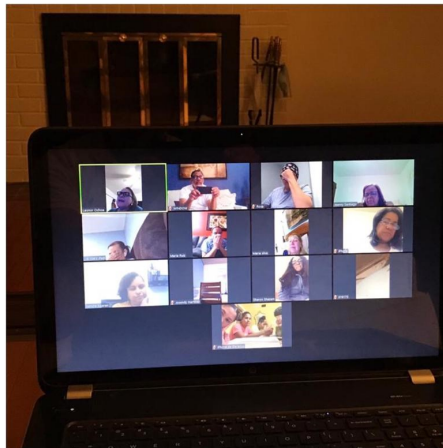
While the entire Board of Directors was heartbroken to make the decision, they feel it is a safer and more conscientious decision to take this year to continue fundraising efforts with the Church of the Brethren (COB) organizations in central Pennsylvania. While this is sad news for the COB denomination and the Brethren Disaster Relief Ministry (the recipient of the Auction proceeds to rebuild disaster damaged areas), the Board of Directors look forward to seeing everyone in 2021.

~BDRA Board of Directors

ANE Hispanic Churches Meet Online

Lately, the majority of Hispanic leaders have been meeting twice a month via Zoom to share their challenges/ways they are using to communicate with our brothers and sisters during this time of COVID-19 in order to make church under this new norm. One of the biggest challenges the majority of us are facing is technology, which in some cases can be helpful but in other cases can be your enemy.

Some people feel intimidated to download an app and follow a Sunday Service through their phone/computer, but despite the fact, the Hispanic churches are adapting and celebrating God's glory every Sunday though Zoom services and glorifying God's mercy and care for his people. On the other hand, Zoom has opened another door to extend the message to people that otherwise wouldn't be able to attend our churches. There is not doubt that the word of God is fulfilling his plan more that ever.



Ebenezer, COB
Vigiliade Oración
Y Santa Cena
por Zoom



PhotoGrid



Wyomissing Church Comes to the Rescue— Demolishes Kitchen

On January 6, 2020, a team from the Wyomissing Church of the Brethren came to the assistance of Brethren Community Ministries.

Brethren Community Ministries ("BCM") is the non-profit arm of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren, formed to carry out the community ministry activities of the church. BCM engages in numerous community development and welfare activities, including Friday food distribution, non-violence training for teens (Agape-Satyagraha) and computer classes.

BCM also owns a building in the south Allison Hill neighborhood (one of Harrisburg's poorest areas and where Harrisburg First is located) that contains 6 residential apartments, usually leased to low-income, minority people. The apartments are seemingly in constant need of repairs and refurbish-



Before



Men at work.

ment. The complete project was the replacement of kitchen cabinets, counters and sink in one of the units. The cabinets were literally falling off the walls and one of the countertops had collapsed. In order to minimize costs, we hoped to get the old kitchen removed without costs. Dan Biss, Ted Noble, Glenn Pfautz, Scott King, and Ray Dotter (members of self-proclaimed "GRMRG," or Grumpy Retired Men's Repair Group*) came to the rescue in January. They handily ripped out the kitchen and helped dispose of the debris. They worked so efficiently that they had time to perform some other small repair jobs in another unit. And they offered to return when another project worthy of their attention popped up.

The project was finished up several days later. What a change! And the kitchen is not just more attractive, it's much safer now as well.



After

We give thanks to all of our helpers, past and present, as we try to make South Allison Hill a better place to live. We look forward to working with GRMRG and other churches in the future.

*These initials, we were told, are the same backwards or forward (a palindrome) because their significant others say the group does not know if it is coming or going.

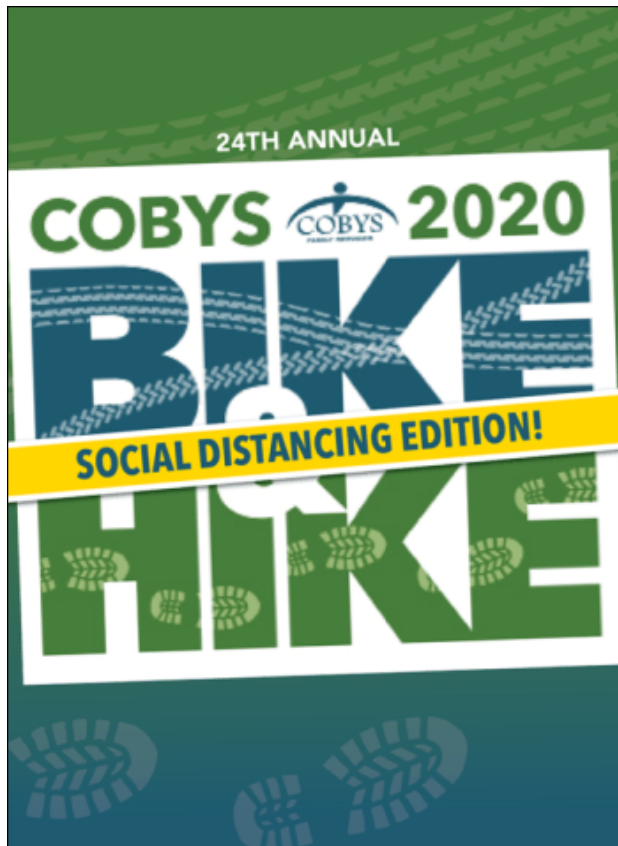


Church 2 Church is a "community building" ministry outreach opportunity that allows churches with needs to partner with churches who are interested in a service project.

Interested persons may contact:

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

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



This year is different. There's no question about that. But, we can all still experience and enjoy what we love about Bike & Hike.

First and foremost, it is about raising funds to offer the children and families COBYS serves the kind of transformative, positive, life altering care they deserve.

Second, it is about getting out, being active and enjoying fellowship. Admittedly, that looks different this year, but it is no less important.

For more information, please see their website:
<https://cobys.org/bike-and-hike/>

Christian Preschool Assistant Teacher

A Private Christian Preschool in Elizabethtown is seeking an Assistant Teacher for the Pre-K, Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes for the 2020/2021 school year.

Candidate should have a sincere love for Christ and the Preschool children and also be able to work well with a team. Required to walk about, maintain balance while walking, standing, crouching or running. Regularly required to reach up & out with hands and arms, required to talk & hear; verbally express information or instructions, required to use hands to grasp objects, move objects, or hold objects, required to stoop, kneel, crouch, required to climb stairs, required to lift up to 50 pounds and carry a distance of 10 feet, regularly required to stand for long periods of time.

Contact Paula Jones at
paula@westgreentree.org



3001 Lititz Pike, Lititz, PA 17543

www.bv.org/careers

Apply today...

Brethren Village Retirement Community offers full-time and part-time employment opportunities to qualified applicants age 16 and up. Brethren Village Team Members provide the highest-quality care, and exceptional hospitality, to our adult Residents. ***If you would like to make a positive difference each day, apply through www.bv.org/careers.***

**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**

Our Vision:

*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.*

Deadline for the September/October
issue of ANE Today is August 10.
kbernstein@ane-cob.org.