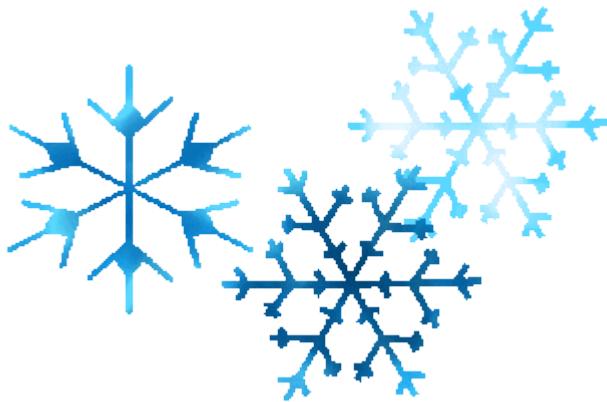


WEST MARVA DISTRICT

MEMO

JANUARY 2017

384 Dennett Road
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-9270
Kendal Elmore, Executive Minister
J. Rogers Fike, Executive Minister Emeritus
Brenda Harvey, Administrative Assistant
www.westmarvachurches.org



APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE POSITION OF CAMP MANAGER AT CAMP GALILEE:

The trustees of Camp Galilee are looking for an individual to serve as Camp Manager. Applicants should have a solid Christian foundation and live a life that reflects these values and have a love for children of all ages ad the outdoors. A minimum of a high school education and basic computers skills are required.

Some of the responsibilities of the manager are inspecting and coordinating with the caretaker to maintain the buildings and grounds; working with cooks to prepare menus and food orders; keeping records for camps, finances, insurance, regulatory agencies, etc..; and overseeing all other operations of the camp with the help of the trustees. Most responsibilities are during the months of April through October and the manager must be willing to stay at the camp when campers are present. An apartment and all meals are provided as well as a limited mileage allowance for travel. Salary is negotiable.

Interested person may request an application from the West Marva District Office.

Any questions may be directed to one of the following trustees:

Mark Seese - 304-698-3500; Bob Spaid - 304-290-3459; or Cathy McGoldrick 301-616-1147.

ATTENTION PASTORS AND TREASURER'S - IRS ANNOUNCES 2017 MILEAGE RATE: The standard mileage rate for 2017 is 53.5 cents per mile. This is a dip from the 2016 standard mileage rate of 54 cents per mile.

Kendal's Korner

So, How ARE You?

In phone calls, e-mails, conversations at churches and even in the grocery store, one thing is common: I am asked, "So, how **ARE** you?" People know that I was to have had bariatric surgery in late November, and genuinely want to know how I am.

In a few words, I am doing **VERY WELL!**

My first day in the office was Tuesday, January 3. I am feeling quite good, physically and emotionally. There are significant challenges as I am required to follow a complex regimen of eating specific small portions of specific types of food several times a day, as well as taking specific supplements and vitamins at specific intervals during the day. My weight loss is encouraging. Since the day of surgery, I lost 55 pounds as of January 12. My total

weight loss since the summer of 2014 is 146 pounds.

My energy level is already greater than it was prior to surgery, however, toward evening, instead of tiring gradually, it comes on suddenly, as I was told by the surgery team

it would. Being aware of this has enabled me to "manage" my activities and schedule appropriately.

I am enjoying embracing the work here in the office and looking forward to getting out and about among the churches once again.

I am very deeply touched by the outpouring of support and encouragement I have received and felt from all the prayers, cards, calls and visits during my recovery.

By the time you may be reading this, I expect to be away from home attending the Winter Meeting of the Council of District Executives in Melbourne, FL. We are to be meeting with the Leadership Team of Annual Conference to finalize the response to the query West Marva sent to the 2016 Annual Conference on Same Sex Weddings. This response is to be presented to the 2017 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, MI this summer. (*Information about attending this year is found on page 8 of this issue.*)



(Before Surgery)

Please keep all of us in your prayers, as this is a MOST important issue as many have reached the point of no longer being willing or able to see this issue continue in ambiguity.

In other matters:

On **pages 10 and 11**, read Betty Dzubba's fine article about Dr. Emmert Bittinger, our Historian Emeritus. She shares a great deal of information regarding the current edition of *Allegheny Passage*. I'd like to remind everyone that copies are available from the District Office. They may also be picked up at the Westernport Church of the Brethren. For more information, please call the District Office.

End of the Year:

As we began the year of 2016, there was some anxiety regarding whether or not we would be able to carry out the essential ministries due to the widening gap between what our churches allocate (an advance notice of intent to support the ministries of the district financially) and the anticipated costs of our work. As you will note on **page 6**, our year end income report states that the churches of West Marva allocated \$75,402 for the year. At years end, however, all of our wonderful churches gave \$17,162.19 above that figure, totaling \$92,564.19. Added to this District Event offerings, sales of Allegheny Passage, Interest income, and gifts from individuals, our General Fund (Operating Expenses) total income for the year, was \$97,591.85. This along with the fact that we underspent the budget by \$17,832.44, resulted in an actual deficit of only \$6,570.77. (*We anticipated a the shortfall to be over \$25,000*) **THANKS TO ALL WHO GAVE!**

I wish to express my personal thanks to all for their support of our ministries during 2016. The 2017 budget reflects the best efforts of the district leadership and the delegates to the 2016 District Conference to fund essential ministries, with "no frills" or "extras" added in. If your congregation is interested in learning more about District Ministries, contact the office as Grover Duling, our Board Chair and I have a presentation we would love to share on a Sunday morning, or other time that's best for your situation, interpreting the work of the West Marva District.

Blessings,

Kendal ☺

COMPASSION... By Larry Dentler, Pastor, Bermudian Church of the Brethren

A Sunday late afternoon visit to the Pennsylvania Farm Show with my son John and granddaughter



Natalie (2) & my daughter Jessie and grandson Jericho (7) had me feeling blessed and reflective. Oh we did all the usual Farm Show things. Climbed on the big red IH tractors & posed for pictures, and walked to the other side of the aisle to avoid the green ones. Ate supper in the food court – between the 5 of us consuming: famous Farm Show milkshakes, pulled pork sandwich, famous Farm Show baked potato, fried cheese balls, pizza, apple pizza, ice cream. (And no ... of course ... Larry wasn't involved in any cheese consumption!) The children rode the tractor

amusement ride – Jericho picking a gold one and Natalie a purple one. We went through the butterfly house. We watched the sheepdog herding competition. We ogled over some beautiful restored tractors. We saw the butter sculpture, a giant pumpkin, and FFA exhibits. We looked at cows, sheep, alpacas, horses, and bunnies. Being there with my children and grandchildren was a blessing. It also brought back memories of Farm Shows of days long gone. My Dad (as an IH dealer) working in the big corporate IH exhibit. My brother Lewie working in the Schell Seed Company exhibit with the big map of the U.S. made of seeds. Meeting my "Brother" Brian Markle (who would go on to join our church @ Bermudian and then on to ministry in the CoB) as he worked the PA Wood Pellet Manufacturer's exhibit. Memories! Blessings!

But one thing really struck me and that was Jericho's love for the animals. Like his mother before him, he just seemed a natural with the animals. They responded to him and he was quiet with them as though they were communicating. It took me back to a time years ago when a little Jessie was brought to tears by a butterfly that had hit the front of our vehicle. At home she looked at the almost dead critter stuck in the grill of our van. She took the little butterfly and cared for it for a few days. She fed it, talked to it, sang to it. Finally, at Cathy's urging, placing it in the Butterfly Bush outside her bedroom window, which Cathy assured her was a heaven-like place for the little delicate creature to spend its last days. **COMPASSION**.



To me compassion for one another and for all of God's creation is becoming a lost calling in our fast paced, high tech world. I was driving along a country back road with a well known Brethren leader some years back and he made me stop at the sight of a large hawk that lay dead along the road. He knelt by the bird ... prayed ... took one of its feathers. I didn't know quite how to respond. I'm aware of some hunters that after killing a deer or other wildlife, pause for a brief moment to pray in thanksgiving for the creature's life and the blessing the food will be ... before field dressing the animal. I watch our farm kids so lovingly care for their show animals. **COMPASSION** for God's creatures.

I watch as a nursing home worker kisses the forehead of a dying resident. I watch the smile on the face of one of our elderly members as younger church members make a point to say "Hi" on Sunday morning and give a warm, sincere hug. I watch the tasty casserole make its way to the home of a church family member recovering from surgery. I see the embrace given to someone going through a difficult family situation ... no words ... just a lingering embrace that communicates ... I care. I'm on the receiving end of a card in the mail ... "thinking of you." My District Executive

stops by to check on me, telling me, "One of your members was concerned about the load you are carrying."

A poor child in a third world country opens an Operation Christmas Child box with the biggest smile! A weary truck driver, far from home, savors the taste of a little bag of homemade Christmas cookies with a note of Christian care. A mother in a poor country smiles broadly as she opens the can of Canned Chicken from our Meat Canning Project to feed her hungry family. A Food Pantry volunteer shares with a single Dad who has come to the Food Pantry feeling rather embarrassed ... the volunteer treating the young father with dignity, courtesy, and respect. A disaster victim is moved to tears as she marvels at the team of Brethren giving up their vacation time to come and work on their flood damaged home. **COMPASSION!**

Our Lord Jesus was our role-model of compassion. Our example. For all of His Father's creation. We wept over the very Israel that rejected Him and was about to demand His execution. When a funeral procession crossed His path, He stopped it and raised a young man because of His compassion for the boy's mother. He stretched out His arms to willingly die for you ... out of compassion for your very soul. He reaches out to you ... in whatever difficulty you are facing ... with great compassion. And He calls us to be men & women ... His beloved children ... of compassion to His creation and all of His children. Is there someone in your life today who needs a touch of compassion?

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, sympathetic, lovers of your fellow believers, compassionate, and modest in your opinion of yourselves."

1 Peter 3:8 CEB

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." Matthew 14:14 NIV

"Treat one another justly. Love your neighbors. Be compassionate with each other." Zechariah 7:9 Message

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care." Matthew 10:29 NIV

KEEP ON PRAYING: AN UPDATE ON THE CHIBOK SCHOOLGIRLS

The following are excerpts from an article from the December "Messenger" magazine:

On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram abducted more than 270 girls from a school in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria. Their kidnapping sparked outrage around the world, and promoted the #BringBackOurGirls movement. The majority of the girls - ages 16 to 18 at the time - were from families who attend congregations of Ekklesiyan Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), although Muslims as well as Christian girls were kidnapped.

When asked what the American church could do, EYN asked for prayer and fasting. A letter was sent to the Church of the Brethren congregations in the US and Puerto Rico, assigning a girl's name to each church for prayer.

A few girls escaped almost immediately, and within the first two weeks 57 had escaped. This year, another escaped, one was rescued by Nigerian military, and the Nigerian government negotiated the release of 21 with help from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss government.

Those who were released or have escaped reportedly have told the Nigerian authorities that some of the kidnapped girls have been killed or have died of illness or mistreatment, others have been "married" to Boko Haram fighters, and some have joined the insurgency. Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

As we reviewed the list of names of those who have escaped or been released we have found that Amina Ali Nkeki escaped in May 2016 and was being prayed for by the Moorefield Church.; Mary Usman Bulama was released in October and was being prayed for by the Onego Church; Comfort Habila was also released in October and was being prayed for by the Bear Creek Church. About 190 are still captive or may no longer be alive. **DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE GIRL THAT WAS ASSIGNED TO YOUR CHURCH? I HOPE THAT YOU DO AND ARE STILL TAKING THAT NAME TO THE LORD. LET US CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THE RELEASE OF THESE YOUNG WOMAN!! THEY NEED YOUR PRAYERS!**

WEST MARVA DISTRICT YOUTH WINTER RETREAT

On February 24-26 the youth of the West Marva District will be having their Annual Winter Retreat in Cabins, WV. We will be staying at the Smoke Hole Cabins and skiing at Canaan Valley. We will be accepting registration forms from the first 40 youth (grades 8-12) to respond; beyond that we cannot guarantee admittance as we had to book the cabins in advance of this notice. Counselors are arranged with Craig Howard as director. The retreat will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and will end on Sunday after Church.



The cost will be \$65 which includes room, meals and skiing. The fee must be returned with registration form no later than February 10, 2017. Registration forms may be obtained at <http://www.brakecob.com/apps/documents>

Make checks payable to West Marva District Youth and return with form to Craig Howard, P. O. Box 831, Petersburg, WV 26847.



GUATEMALA MISSION TRIP SCHEDULED THROUGH THE BRAKE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

The Brake Church of the Brethren is once again sponsoring a Guatemala Mission trip and the date for 2017 has been set for June 10th-19th. The cost is \$1,300.00.

You must be at least entering the 9th grade and 14 years old by the start of the 2016-2017 school year. Deadline for application and \$50.00 non-refundable deposit is March 3, 2017. Late registration will be considered on a space available basis. Please reply early to allow enough time to raise the necessary funds for your mission trip. You will receive a packet of materials to help with your fund-raising as soon as your application is approved.

Registration forms may be obtained at <http://www.brakecob.com/apps/documents>

Make checks payable to the Brake Youth Mission Fund and return with form to Craig Howard, P. O. Box 831, Petersburg, WV 26847.

Income Report—January 1, 2016—December 31, 2016

Church	Allocation	YTD Giving	Church	Allocation	YTD Giving
Asher Glade	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 4,568.19	Pine Grove	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00
Bean Settlement		\$ 670.00	Peasant Hill		\$ 800.00
Bear Creek	\$ 4,500.00	\$4,500.00	Pleasant Valley		
Beaver Run	\$ 2,592.00	\$2,592.00	Red Creek/Bethel	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 800.00
Bethel	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	Romney	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,000.00
Bethesda	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	Salem	\$ 3,300.00	\$ 3,300.00
Bowden		\$ 2,400.00	Shady Grove		\$ 500.00
Brake	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	Shiloh	\$ 3,235.00	\$ 2,600.00
Brick	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	South Mill Creek	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,300.00
Brookside	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	Sugarland		
Capon Chapel			Sunnyside	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Cherry Grove		\$ 2,500.00	Tearcoat	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Clifton Mills		\$ 500.00	Terra Alta/Whitedale		\$ 125.00
Danville	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	Valley River		\$ 50.00
Elkins	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	Walnut Grove		
Fairview	\$ 1,500.00	\$1,500.00	Westernport		\$ 500.00
Frostburg			White Pine		
Georges Creek	\$ 75.00	\$ 100.00	Wiley Ford	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 1,750.00
Glady		\$ 400.00			
Gortner Union		\$ 600.00	Totals	\$75,402.00	\$ 92,564.19
Hanging Rock					
Harman	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00			
Harmony			Allocations		\$92,564.19
Harness Run		\$ 122.00	Individual Giving		\$ 1,720.00
Harpers Chapel	\$ 100.00	\$ 400.00	District Event Offering		\$ 2,229.66
Hazelton		\$ 225.00	Interest Income		<u>\$ 566.42</u>
Jordan Run	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	Total Income 2016		\$97,080.27
Kelley Chapel	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,400.00			
Keyser	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,612.00			
Knobley		\$ 600.00	Brenda Harvey, Financial Secretary		
Laughlin	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00			
Laurel Glen	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00			
Livingstone					
Locust Grove	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00			
Maple Spring	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,500.00			
Moorefield	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00			
Morgantown		\$ 1,000.00			
Mount Zion		\$ 100.00			
Mountain Dale		\$ 500.00			
Oak Dale	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00			
Oak Grove, MD	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00			
Oak Park	\$ 10,000.00	\$10,000.00			
Old Furnace	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00			
Onego	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00			
Petersburg	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00			

Service Sunday

Recognized annually the 1st Sunday in February



sayhello

"I have a lot more things to tell you, but I'd rather not use pen and ink. I hope to be there soon in person and have a heart-to-heart talk. Peace to you. The friends here say hello. Greet our friends there by name."

—3 John 13-14 (The Message)



Celebrate those who serve in our communities and throughout the world.
Discover opportunities to serve through the Church of the Brethren ministries.

Explore possibilities for service in our local communities.
Be transformed by serving one another in the name of Christ.

Go to www.brethren.org/servicesunday to find worship resources!



Church of the Brethren



Sponsoring Ministries: Brethren Workcamps, Brethren Volunteer Service, Brethren Disaster Ministries, and Brethren Service Center

Sending Your Congregation's Delegate to Annual Conference

www.brethren.org/ac/2017

In 2017, the 231st recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. And once again congregations will be encouraged to send a delegate to come together for fellowship and to discern the business of the denomination. For those who may be unaware, here is some information on sending a delegate from your congregation.

Why is it important for my congregation to send a delegate to Annual Conference? Sending a delegate to Annual Conference is the only way to ensure your congregation has a say in decisions that affect the whole church. The Annual Conference delegate body is one of the most important—if not the highest-level of decision making in the Church of the Brethren. Each congregation may play a vital part in Annual Conference by sending a delegate or delegates. The number of delegates a congregation may send is relative to the number of members in the congregation.

Who can be a delegate and how many delegates does our congregation get? Each congregation may choose who their delegate(s) may be, and all delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The pastor of a congregation is not automatically a delegate.

The number of delegates allowed per congregation is based on its membership statistics as reported in the Church of the Brethren Yearbook for the previous year.

The number allowed is as follows:

1 - 200 members	1 delegate
201 - 400 members	2 delegates
401 - 600 members	3 delegates
601 - 800 members	4 delegates
801+ members	5 delegates



2017 Annual Conference Theme

What do delegates and their congregations get from Annual Conference? Delegates benefit personally from the opportunities for spiritual renewal, continuing education, and faith formation. Their congregations benefit from the spiritual growth that their church leadership may bring back and share with the church. In addition to business sessions, each Conference features daily worship services, Bible studies, insight sessions on a wide variety of topics, support groups, meal events, an exhibit hall with booths and many free resources, a Brethren Press bookstore, and much more. All of these are open to every Conference attendee. Every congregation that sends a delegate will also receive a copy of that year's Annual Conference minutes.



To take full advantage of sending a delegate, a congregation should make time for that person to report back following the Conference, so that they can share the experience with the whole congregation.

Delegate registration for Grand Rapids will open online on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. The registration fee for each delegate is \$285. For more information about how to send a delegate to Annual Conference, contact the Conference Office by email at annualconference@brethren.org or call 800-323-8039 ext. 365.

Carol Scheppard, Moderator



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SUMMER CAMP DATES!

CAMP GALILEE:

*Senior Citizen's Day - June 6
Primary Camp - July 7-9
Youth Camp - July 9-15
Alumni Camp - July 15-16
Junior High Camp - July 16-22
Junior Camp - July 23-28
Women's Camp - August 10-12*

CAMP HOPE:

*Women's Retreat -June 10
Youth Camp - July 9-14
Junior Camp - July 16-21
Primary Camp - July 23-26*

Please share this information with your congregation!!

STUDY TOUR OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE:

Bridgewater Chaplain Dr. Robbie Miller will lead a study tour of Israel and Palestine this June. The tour guide for this 13 day program will be Dr. Ginger Caessens who is on faculty at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem and has taught in Israel for over 30 years. The Brethren Academy will offer 4.0 CEUs for any ordained clergy who participate in this professional growth experience.



The estimated cost of the tour is \$4,000 and includes all expenses including roundtrip airfare, all meals (except lunch on the free day), ground transportation, entrance fees, taxes, and tips. If interested in more information, please contact Chaplain Miller at rmiller@bridgewater.edu or at 540-421-2720.

BRETHREN BITS from Betty's Desk . . . Dr. Emmert Bittinger
Author of: ALLEGHENY PASSAGE Churches and Families West Marva District 1752-1990

My faithful readers will recognize this name, many of you are fortunate enough to know him and can call him a friend—but it is “time” to focus on this good Brethren gentleman who has given us something truly special. Recently an email came to me reminding me that he had celebrated his ninety-first birthday. He has close ties to West Marva, interests in history and genealogy, is a retired professor of Bridgewater College, and has authored a number of books—more on that too.

It always turns out to be impossible for me to complete a “Brethren Bits” for the Memo without picking up a copy of **Allegheny Passage, Churches and Families of the West Marva District**, originally published in 1990, then revised and reprinted in 2010. You certainly have often read his name in those articles. Many of you may also remember his father, Rev. Foster Bittinger served the Westernport Church beginning in 1941; and his father actually wrote the first history of our churches. Some of you may even have that volume in your church libraries.

Emmert is a graduate of Bridgewater College class of 1945 and married to Esther (Landis) also a graduate of the same College. In an article prepared by Karen D. Bowman for the Spring-Summer 2015 Bridgewater College magazine, we learn about the extensive genealogical research this scholarly man has done on many Brethren family groups including tracing Esther’s family back to 1580 and covering about twenty generations. Generally, hobby genealogists are happy when they can go back twelve or thirteen generations.

Countless hours of research were involved before our district “history book” was ready to go to the publishers. If you take the time to look at the *Foreword* written by Donald F. Durnbaugh, one of our premier Brethren historians... this is what you will discover..."and in the true sense—it was a labor of love." ...

Personally, I recall when this excellent book was first in my hands; I simply started on the first page and read it as though it were a favorite novel. In addition to the Bible, it is a book I have opened and read portions of more times than any other publication. At both my work places, *Allegheny Passage* is on my desk and at home in a specific spot close by.

Dr. Bittinger found an exceptional story to tell about our district, and I know for a fact he meticulously researched the materials he unearthed or was given. Of course it was helpful to have the book written by his father but Emmert sought “the whole story” of our churches’ development. As he interviewed older community members or had pastors helping search through old dusty church records, he uncovered material which he expertly integrated into this book as he sought to reveal the development of our district churches and the people of those communities.

Being competent at his task, he gathered bits and pieces—fit it all together and produced a book of more than eight hundred pages. Serious genealogists, across our nation with their roots in the hundreds of families he researched and has written about, are interested in this work and have an **Allegheny Passage, Churches and Families of the West Marva District**, in their possession. Actually—if you have procrastinated and not yet purchased one; they are still available at our District Office. Give Brenda Harvey a call if you are interested.

Donald F. Durnbaugh whose career at the Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown PA College mentions an important point..."Where an absolute answer is not to be found, Emmert indicates that." ... This is a book as accurate as any you are likely to buy anywhere.

Not only is this a valuable research tool, but we can learn about the service our leaders and members have given over three centuries since the early Brethren ventured to settle what was then the “frontier.” It is fascinating to learn of unselfish preachers riding horseback in all kinds of weather without getting a salary, to reach the needs of what much, much later became the West Marva District. If you have a copy or if there is one of these books in your church library, I urge you to open it, read about your family, friends, former pastors, your home church and you will discover this book is written with fascinating facts.

Having taught at Bridgewater College for twenty five years, Emmert retired in 1988. He was a sociology professor and former sociology department chair. Let me share some of the other writings he has accomplished during his lifetime. He was editor of the six-volume series **“Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley”** a twelve-year project of the Valley Research Associates—a partnership between Emmert, David Rodes and Norman Wenger. ..."Based on documents of the Southern Claims Commission found in the National Archives in Washington, DC these books reveal the experiences of 300 families from three Virginia counties whose farms were occupied and ravaged by the Union soldiers..." according to the 2015 Bridgewater College article.

Often in the articles "Brethren Bits" comments are included about Elder John Kline, the evangelist who lived in the Shenandoah Valley during the 1800's and who often crossed the mountains to encourage and establish churches in what is now West Virginia District. Many of you are aware Kline was an opponent of slavery and eventually was killed by Confederate sympathizers.

Emmert organized a unique tribute to this wonderful servant of the Lord and led the first Elder John Kline Bicentennial Horseback Ride into West Virginia in 1997, with riders traveling 150 miles to visit some of Kline's congregations. The ride became an annual event. Some of our district church members became involved and have participated over the years. This ride becomes more of a challenge, but not for lack of interest in the "riders"—rather safety is an issue. Many roads are not suitable for fast moving vehicles and "John Kline riders."

In a recent discussion with the Bittingers, we learned the "Riders" accept invitations to area churches. If you are interested, get in contact with the Bittingers and the riders will find a suitable route—or if you simply wish to learn more about the John Kline riders, this group will respond. During this past year, they came to the South Mill Creek church and presented a program. It is hardly a surprise, Emmert was honored with the "John Kline Homestead Hitching Post" presented by the John Kline Memorial Riders. In some papers Emmert gave me, I found a flyer advertising the May 2004 "ride" which gives the following information:

"Learn what travel was like over 150 years ago, have a great adventure and a unique experience by riding through South Fork Valley and highlands...on Friday begin the ride, load horses after several miles riding—for transport to the Clayton Farm one mile north of Brandywine... Saturday: begin at Cedar Grove Church near Brandywine and ride into Franklin, continuing to Smith Creek Church of the Brethren for overnight and evening meal; Sunday a.m. services at Smith Creek, picnic at church, 7 mile ride to Friends Run Church for dinner and evening service (the Elder Kline Riders relate stories about this famous Dunker servant of God and explain to the local church people this was one of the typical circuit missionary routes taken by Elder Kline). The weekend activities closed by another 7 mile ride on Monday morning before the horses were loaded to return across the Shenandoah Mountain and back into the Shenandoah Valley." ...

Emmert and Esther have moved into the Bridgewater Home Retirement Community. Over the years they have been active members of the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, in addition to researching (even after his retirement he has published 37 articles and done more writing and editing) they have volunteered with Brethren Disaster Ministries, and Habitat for Humanity to mention some of their endeavors. Esther is a lovely lady at his side and has been interested in her husband's research work.

Since their retirement, they have been able to travel to various countries in Europe, as well as Africa, Central and South America. Not only is Emmert an authority on Church of the Brethren history and received awards for outstanding research, he was also named Outstanding Scholar of the Year at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Virginia Social Sciences Association in 2000.

Several years Emmert and Esther came to our District Conference, often for book signings. Actually, Emmert served the Beaver Run church as summer pastor many years ago. His heart remains in the genealogies of the numerous families he has researched and his interest and knowledge of our District is impressive. ***We thank you, Emmert—we appreciate your "labor of love."***



**Church of the Brethren
West Marva District Office
384 Dennett Road
Oakland, MD 21550
January 2017 Issue**

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IN GOD WE TRUST

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 18-29	Kendal out of office—Florida CODE Winter meeting
February 4	Benefit Sing at Walnut Grove Church for Donnie Knotts 7:00 p.m.
March 18	District Board meeting—Walnut Grove

The following is a poem written by Janie Stark from the Kelley Chapel Church

JESUS SAYS COME FOLLOW ME

*Come follow me my lost sheep. I have so many wonderful things to show you.
Come follow me and I will show you what it will be like to walk with God.
I will show you so many different things,
Come follow me and I will show you a life without pain and suffering.
Come with me and I will show you things that are so great beyond your means..*