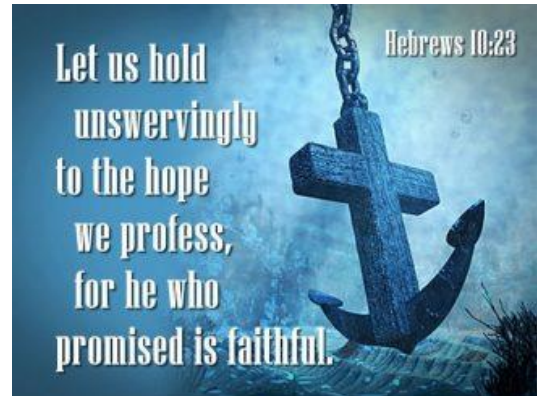


# WEST MARVA DISTRICT MEMO AUGUST 2023

384 Dennett Road  
Oakland, MD 21550  
301-334-9270

Brenda Harvey, Administrative Assistant (301-616-1367)  
[www.westmarvachurches.org](http://www.westmarvachurches.org)



## Thoughts from our District Conference Moderator

Summer just flew by, didn't it? District conference will be fast upon us. I am looking forward to seeing everyone there. No matter what is going on around us, the theme scripture from Hebrews 10:23 speaks volumes. When life presents storms, hold unswervingly to the hope we profess. When health issues arise, hold unswervingly to the hope we profess. When the family car breaks down, hold unswervingly to the hope we profess. When..... yes, you get the point. No matter what, God is faithful and we can hold on to Him.

Friday night at District Conference, Pastor Nate Polzin will deliver the message. As a long time friend, brother in Christ, church planter, and pastor, Nate brings a heart and passion to the message. *Anchored* will also be providing our music in the evening.

As we prepare for conference, may our hearts be in tune with God and may we hold tight to the hope we profess!

Jennifer Kreighbaum

The 2023 West Marva District Conference will be held September 15-16 at the Moorefield Church of the Brethren. The Friday evening program will begin at 6:30 and "The Anchored Quartet" from Accident, Maryland will be our guests musicians. A freewill offering will be received. Our guest speaker will be Nate Polzin who serves as the Executive Director of Discipleship and Leadership Formation for the Church of the Brethren. The evening will close with an ice cream social in the fellowship hall. Friday morning registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. The Moorefield Church will be preparing a meal for us on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. The meal will be chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, coleslaw, applesauce, roll and butter, dessert and drink. The cost of the meal is \$15.00 and must be pre-paid by September 8, 2023. Make check payable to West Marva District and send to 384 Dennett Road, Oakland, MD 21550.



## DISTRICT CONFERENCE CHOIR

We are putting together a choir for the conference to perform one song. If you are interested in being part of this, please reach out to Allie at Westernport so music can be sent to you. We will practice at 8 am on Saturday morning of the District conference.

Allie Crowe  
608-215-8619  
[allie.crowe.07@gmail.com](mailto:allie.crowe.07@gmail.com)

## CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE UPDATE

The Children's Assistance Fund was established by the Women's Fellowship in 2013. Over the years we have truly been blessed by churches and individuals from inside and outside of the Church of the Brethren who have made donations to this program. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have made this project successful!

**We have assisted 585 children since we started this project in 2013. During this past school year, the requests were extremely high and we assisted 122 children just during this time period.**

Time is flying by and it will soon be time to send out our yearly letter to over 60 schools reminding them of our program and how it operates. The request for assistance can only be initiated by a faculty or staff member of the school. We never make personal contact with the child. We never add literature of any type to the items we deliver. We simply desire to help children in need. We only receive the grade of the student and their sizes from the school.

We are requesting your help in two ways:

- Talk to any school personnel you know. Talk to the school nurse, the guidance counselor, teachers etc. Unfortunately, many principals don't pass the information along and so teachers or first line staff members have no idea this program is available. The more staff members we can reach, the more children we can help.
- Secondly, as your church prepares a budget for next year, please consider adding a donation to the Children's Assistance Fund. A lot of churches have said they would help if we have a child in their area in need. That's wonderful, but the problem is that when we get a call, we try to get everything to the school by the next day and we just don't have time to track down people to ask for donations.

In addition to the two ways listed above, you can also help by praying for these children. Even though you won't know their names or the details of their needs, there are many children in every school who desperately need our prayers. They are in home situations that most of us cannot even imagine. Every time you drive by a school, pray for the children of that school. For their safety, for their home situations and that if they don't already have a relationship with Christ that they come to know Him.

Diane May, chair 301-707-9935

## Called by God

You are a blessing! You who were created by God, and you as a church family, doing the work of Jesus together are a blessing! God called each of you for a purpose – a purpose to believe in God’s one and only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ and to be a witness for him. Through belief in Jesus, and only through Jesus, we have salvation. He is the one and only way, through his death on the cross and resurrection. Yes, we are called to be witnesses for Him, to serve him, and bring others into Christ’s saving grace.

We are called to live our lives for Jesus Christ, to love and serve others, and to share our faith. When we do, we become closer to Jesus and each other. To follow God’s call and continue to grow in Christ, we need to make Him a priority both individually and together in Bible study and prayer. We need to thank him for his leading within our churches and district. God blesses us in so many ways, yet the world tries to keep us so busy that we don’t take time to thank him, spend time with God, or to make him a priority in our lives.

Do we ever get lonely for God or out of touch with Him? Do we ever feel a tug from the Holy Spirit to get back in touch with God? When we have special events at our churches or within the district for God’s glory, are we happy to participate or do we put other things first? Do we ever feel overburdened by a load on our shoulders? I would have to say, I am just as guilty as the next person in answering some of these questions. God is trying to get our attention. He is calling us to be in relation with him. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **(Matthew 11:28)**. God wants us to come to him. He gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us, to speak to our hearts, and to help us, but are we listening? God has a hope for the future of our churches and our district if we only take time to listen, follow, and obey. God will pull us through to something better that we can even imagine. Praise the Lord!

We look forward to the remainder of 2023 and to 2024 with excitement and enthusiasm to serve where God calls us to. We have a lot of opportunities in our communities and in our district to reach out and serve others. God is leading us in a new direction. Maybe we don’t yet understand how or why, but you may be assured he is with us in this time of change! May we be faithful to him as we look forward in hope and expectation! God has called us to persevere as we see changes within our district. He gives us hope for our future as a district! He is walking right with us and never forsakes us as we look to Him for guidance and give him thanks for all he does in our lives.

**Hebrew 10:23-25** says, “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

God is calling us to move forward! Move forward through our faith in God, and our hope in the Lord’s plan. His plan for each of us individually, for our churches, and for our district. Let us move forward into God’s plan. Through God’s calling us individually and as a district, with his leading and direction, he will make us strong again. May we tune our hearts to God’s direction and be attentive to his plan for us. God is good! God is love! God never forsakes us! His Holy Spirit is within us! Listen! Do you hear him calling us? Do you recognize he has a plan for our district? He does and we just need to hold on to him and let him lead us through the storm to the calm. We are alive in Christ Jesus! Hallelujah!

**Isaiah 40:31** “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Submitted by: Linda Sanders, West Marva District Board Chair



# **WOMEN'S RETREAT AT CAMP GALILEE AUGUST 17-18, 2023**

## **“THE WRINKLE FREE WOMAN”**

**Psalm 51:7 “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me  
and I shall be whiter than snow.”**

Registration begins on Thursday at 4:00 p.m. and camp closes Friday at 6:00 p.m.

The fee is \$12.00 for each meal that you are present or \$48.00 for the entire retreat. You are invited to spend the night in a cabin free of charge or travel home and return on Friday. Pre-registration is not mandatory but will be helpful in planning for meals. You may call the District Office at 301-616-1367 or Donna Kempfer at 304-288-1004 by August 14th.

### **COME JOIN US FOR LOADS OF FUN!!!**

If you wish to donate to our service project this year (Dove Center) here is a list of items they requested:

**Laundry detergent for front lading machines**

**Cleaning supplies**

**Paper supplies (toilet paper, paper towels)**

**Shampoo/conditioners**

**Body Wash**

**Towels & wash clothes**

**Walmart Gift Cards**





## **Announcing the Hanging Rock COB New Church Building Dedication Event!**

The Hanging Rock Church of the Brethren invites you to a celebration of our newly built church on August 13! We had our first Sunday service on July 16 with 37 people in attendance. We continue work on completing the building's interior and audiovisual systems. Getting to this stage of completion is the result of many people's contributions of time and materials. This celebration will be held to thank those who made it possible, especially Pastors Bob and Brenda Combs, and to welcome to our church the many people in the area who live close by. We will offer food and the New Covenant Music group will perform for us. The event starts at 03:00 PM, Sunday afternoon. The address of the new church is 317 Hanging Rock Road, Augusta, West Virginia.

If you have any questions, call Brenda Combs at 304-359-0728 or Mark Jones at 540-533-0122.



## **BRETHREN BITS - BETTY DZUBBA**

*With a look at some of our churches, we honor those who established and were active in the growth of our West Marva meeting places. It is fun to explore their origins and share “their stories” in this new series.*

*Again, we continue to be grateful to Dr. Emmert Bittinger for the extensive research in preparing the “Allegheny Passage” our most valuable historical tool which I continue to use for learning and sharing about the history of West Marva’s churches. Betty Dzubba*

### **BEAVER RUN      Long Known as a “Parent Congregation”**

The first in in this series during 2023 introduced information about the first settlers along the Potomac River at what is today Keyser. The Brethren connection to Keyser was somewhat different from the Arnold and Leatherman families who settled later in what is known today as the Beaver Run community—not far from the Hampshire County line.

As Dr. Bittinger writes, “the home congregation of most of the churches in the eastern group was Beaver Run.” Had it not been for the colonial churches of Pennsylvania and Maryland, it is anyone’s guess how the Brethren would have arrived on the frontier of what is now Mineral County.

Early settlements of Lancaster County Pennsylvania swept out further into what was then the wilderness of unsettled portions of what is now our West Marva District. Elder Daniel Leatherman moved to Frederick County Maryland to organize Maryland churches.

This was the era of groups crossing the Potomac River and settling in the state of what was then Virginia, now West Virginia. By the early 1800’s these Brethren were meeting in homes. Church buildings appeared on the scene much later. You may not realize the Brethren migration pattern tended to be in family groups—often made up of families inter-related by blood ties and marriage.

Dr. Bittinger writes that the early settlements before 1800 probably had very few Dunker families. On page 29 of his book, *Allegheny Passage* we read ...” Often property was purchased by parents for their sons or sons-in-law.” Is this how the Brethren growth aided in the settlements? Also, did the Dunkers at Beaver Run play a role in the development of these communities?

Among the founding families of the Beaver Run congregation were the Arnold and Leatherman families who settled in the Beaver Run community in the 1784 or 1785. The Arnold family was associated with the Dunker faith in Maryland.

The Arnold family said to have moved to Beaver Run around 1785 were offspring of John Arnold, son of John George Arnold, the German immigrant. After settling here the Arnold family members married into the Ludwick, Whipp, Leatherman, Rinker, Biser, High, Rogers, Rotruck and Miller families.

Beaver Run built its first meeting house in 1834. Earlier they worshipped in homes. Built of high-quality logs that ran the full length of the building, this symbolized the rugged strength of those early Brethren.

Some of these logs are visible today in the “new” building of 1876. The next time you are in the basement of Beaver Run, glance up at the ceiling. This original house of worship stood at the same spot as the present-day brick structure.

By 1875 a larger church was needed, in 1876 the old log church (then 42 years old) was torn down and the brick building we are familiar with was constructed. Bricks were baked from soil on the nearby farm of Daniel Arnold. The bricklayers were Keller, Sheetz and Kibler but members of the church transported or carried the bricks from the kiln to the construction site.

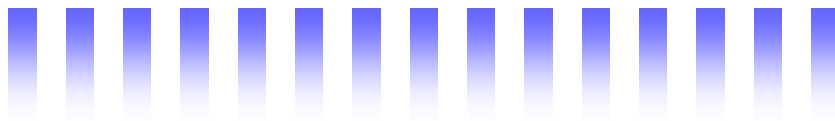
The flooring, windows, frames, benches, tables and other materials were made on the grounds as needed. The benches were constructed in such a way that the backs could be rotated to form tables to be used for Love Feasts.

You may be familiar with the two entrances, one for men and one for women that were traditional during that era. The pulpit was between the doors. At each end of the church, seats were raised in a step-like manner.

Dr. Bittinger includes this information: "Those raised seats contributed not only to the need to better see the minister, but it encouraged better behavior in the audience. Those misbehaving people were easily identified and embarrassed."

Beaver Run offers the opportunity for us today to observe the traditional style of early churches within our district (and the nation). Many modifications have been made over the years, partitions to create Sunday School rooms, a basement not originally under the structure was dug by men of the church, new pulpit, enlarging of the platform, an electric organ and grand piano, and carpeting. It's interesting to note in 1928 the first (pump) organ was installed after a lengthy council meeting discussing this matter.

Many congregations have grown from the evangelism of those early Dunkers and Brethren who established Beaver Run so many years ago.



## CHURCH NEWS:

**Wes Bergen**, pastor of the **Morgantown Church of the Brethren** reported that they are working with other interested folks in Morgantown to sponsor a refugee family through the new Welcome Corps program. This program allows individuals and groups to directly sponsor refugees. We are hoping that a refugee family will be arriving in Morgantown some time this fall.

**Elkins Church of the Brethren** recently held a welcome lunch for Interim **Pastor Danny Ludwick and his wife Amy**.

Pastor Danny has served the church since September 2022 and became the Interim Pastor effective June 1, 2023. Danny has been a Brethren minister since 1976. He was ordained in 1981 and has been the pastor of several churches in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia before beginning his service at Elkins. He and his wife Amy have two children and six grandchildren. They reside on a farm in Burlington, West Virginia.

**Church of the Brethren  
West Marva District Office  
384 Dennett Road  
Oakland, MD 21550  
August 2023**

**IN GOD WE TRUST**

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**August 13 - 3:00 pm - Hanging Rock New Church Building Dedication**

**August 17 & 18 - Women's Camp at Camp Galilee**

**September 15 & 16 - District Conference, Moorefield Church**

**September 16—Board meeting with new and current members immediately following conference.**

**October 23—8:30 am - Board meeting at Hanging Rock Church**