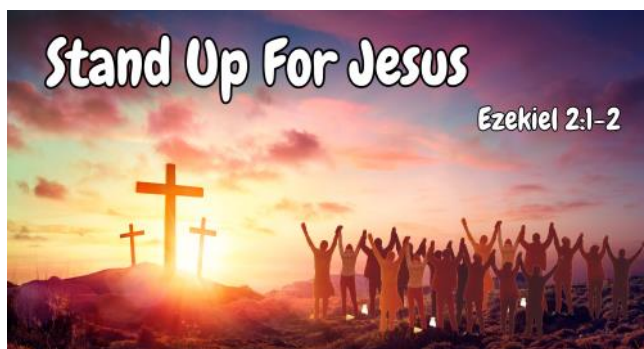


**WEST MARVA DISTRICT
MEMO
MAY 2024**

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

Brenda Harvey, Administrative Assistant (301-616-1367)
www.westmarvachurches.org



MEMO FROM YOUR DISTRICT CONFERENCE MODERATOR/MODERATOR ELECT:

The District Conference Planning and Arrangements Committee met on Thursday, March 21st to begin planning our 2024 District Conference. The committee decided not to have the Friday evening service this year at District Conference due to requests of last year's conference attendees. It was decided to incorporate the special music and our guest speaker to the Saturday morning session. We will begin at 8:40 with special music from New Covenant and then will hear from our guest speaker, Pastor Leah Hileman. Our business sessions will begin around 10:00 a.m. Conference will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2024, at the Moorefield Church of the Brethren, 115 Clay Street, Moorefield, WV with the hopes of ending by 3:45 p.m. With the amount of business items that are scheduled, we feel this can be accomplished in a one-day session and lower cost and travel time to attend the conference. We hope you will make arrangements to attend!

Our Conference Theme this year is: "Stand Up for Jesus".

Robert D. Combs, Moderator – (304) 359-0652 or (304) 359-0728
Allie Crowe, Moderator Elect – (608) 215-8619

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!



shutterstock.com · 72982084

The District Conference Planning and Arrangements Committee is looking for a church or churches to make breakfast available at District Conference on Saturday morning. It has been suggested to just serve donuts, muffins or fruit breads along with coffee and possibly some juice. We are thinking of possibly serving 35 to 40 people. If you are interested in assisting, would you please contact Brenda at 301-616-1367 or westmarva@brethren.org

THE DELEGATE REGISTRATION FORM WILL BE MAILED THE MIDDLE OF THIS MONTH! PASTORS AND CONTACT PERSONS, PLEASE BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THIS MAILING!

Don't Stop Praying!

I Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing (KJV)

Pray continually (NIV)

Pray all the time (MSG)

Pray constantly (RSV)

No matter what version you read we are called to pray, pray, and pray some more.

Last time in the Memo I talked about wanting my messages from God delivered in song. I still do and He continues to do so. Many songs daily speak to me, but a few have more impact than others. The latest song that has had an impact on me is by Matthew West called:

Don't Stop Praying:

What's your impossible? Your "I need a miracle"
What's got you barely hanging by a single thread?
What looks so hopeless now? What weighs down your heart with doubt?
You beg for a breakthrough, but no sign of breakthrough yet
When you've cried, and you've cried 'til your tears run dry
The answer won't come, and you don't know why
And you wonder if you can bow your head even one more time
Don't stop praying
Don't stop calling on Jesus' name
Keep on pounding on Heaven's door
And let your knees wear out the floor
Don't stop believing
'Cause mountains move with just a little faith
And your Father's heard every single word you're saying
So, don't stop praying

The song continues with more encouragement to keep praying, because even when we think we haven't seen answers yet, God hears every prayer we pray. His timing is perfect, we need to be obedient and keep on praying!

At our last District Board Meeting, Dan Ludwick, who is our Standing Committee Delegate to Annual Conference stated that we need to be in prayer for our Annual Conference Moderator. Not only for her, but for all in leadership at Conference and also for the Delegates who will be attending. He was encouraged by some events that happened at last year's Conference and our prayers can make more good things happen this year.

So when you become discouraged and loaded down with your cares, remember to: pray continually, pray without ceasing, pray all the time, pray constantly; because God is strong enough to carry every burden. Do not complain about your struggles, give them to the one who is in the business of doing the impossible. Take everything to the Lord in prayer.

Don't stop praying!

Anna Skeweris
West Marva District Leadership Team Member
annasauder@gmail.com
240-321-1561



Pastors – Do you need CEU's? Check out these exciting opportunities!

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center's 2024 Continuing Education Events

To register, email KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org, or call 717-361-1450.

Autism and the Church

Lisa Kruse, Tim Miller, David Crumrine, Stan Dueck, Leaders

Thursday, September 26, 2024 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Juniata College (In-Person or Zoom)

In-person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

Zoom: \$45.00 for .5 CEUs; or \$35.00 for no CEUs

The church is a place where people should feel welcome no matter what challenges they may have. Families with an autistic member need to feel the welcome and acceptance of a church who cares for their special circumstance. This Continuing Education event will provide information to pastors and other church leaders regarding autism, how to support families with an autistic member, and how to make the church a safe and welcoming place for families.

Grief Literacy

Julie Guistwite, Leader

Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM – Zoom Only

\$35.00 for .3 CEUs or \$25.00 for no CEUs.

Society's grief-avoiding mentality and limited community-based support initiatives affect the well-being of bereaved persons. This interactive case-based workshop examines the grief literacy movement in connection with Christ-Centered Ministry Leadership. Attendees will gain practical knowledge and skills applicable to enhancing the welfare of grieving congregational members and persons in their community.

The Question of Leadership: Why It Matters

Jeff Carter, Leader

Saturday, November 16, 2024, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Elizabethtown College - In-Person or Zoom

In-person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

Zoom: \$45.00 for .5 CEUs; or \$35.00 for no CEUs

What does it mean to lead in today's church and world? The American protestant church is in steep decline. The Church of the Brethren is experiencing schism. The pandemic accelerated the already changing patterns of religious life. Resources are scarce. Furthermore, Brethren are naturally suspicious of leaders; called, elected, or self-proclaimed. Values, such as humility, consensus, and the priesthood of all believers, lead to a flat hierarchy and a communal pragmatism. We celebrate leaders such as Dan West, Sarah Major, M.R. Zigler, and Anna Mow, but in their day, they stirred controversy by the manner of their leading. So, what does it mean to lead in today's church and world? I believe leadership begins by asking the first question and having the willingness and curiosity to pursue the second question. It is a way of thinking that results in effective doing. And yes, it is something we do together.

West Marva Ministry Training Program:

The program is moving along with individuals at different stages of the program. April 27th was a class on Interpreting the Bible taught by Carl Fike.

Future dates:

August 24th: History of the Universal Church w/Allie Crowe and Jennifer Kreighbaum

Textbook: Church History: The Basics by Edward Engelbrecht

October 12th: Old Testament Survey w/John Ellifritz

As we come up on renewals for many clergy, realize you need to check on your CEUs. If you need CEUs, you are welcome to come and sit in on a class, participate in discussion, and help our students grow.

For more information, please contact Allie: allie.crowe.07@gmail.com (608) 215-8619

FINANCIAL RESOURCE TEAM REPORT

The Financial Resource Team is pleased to report the financial results for quarter ending March 31st, 2024.

The First Quarter 2024 results are:

Expenses = \$12,074

Income = \$14,810

Designated fund allocations held in savings and CDs = \$143,017.30

Non-Designated funds held in savings, CDs, and checking = \$196,186.68

The planned 2024 budget includes:

Expenses = \$79,874.57

Income of \$50,100.00

The 2024 budget includes allocations for a part time DE. The actual expenses are dependent on the timing for hiring the part-time DE.

The forecasted income includes \$12,000 in rental income for the residence portion of the West Marva District Office.

The lease for the office copier has expired and the Board has elected buy out the copier and forgo rental of a new copier for the foreseeable future.

In summary, we continue to explore opportunities to reduce expenses and increase income for the continued operations of the West Marva district.

We continue to pray with time and dedication that we can overcome our daily challenges and grow our ability to fulfill Gods desire to seek and find opportunities of outreach through the mission of the West Marva District.

MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT— ORDINATION RENEWAL TIME

It is that time of year again. It is time for all ordained ministers to begin searching through their files and try to figure out how many CEU's they have earned in the last 5 years. If you are a part-time minister, you will need 2.5 CEU's while a full-time minister needs 5. If, in the last 5 years, you have attended both days of the district conference, you have earned .5 CEU. If there are things that you have done and feel you earned a CEU, then you need to submit it to the district office, or to John Ellifritz at jellifrit@k12.wv.us. Begin checking your records now and do not wait until the last minute.

One of the required classes all ordained ministers must take every 5 years is an ethics class. This year the class will be held on October 26 from 9 until 3 at the Moorefield Church of the Brethren. All ordained ministers should have received a letter by mail that includes a registration slip to send back to the district office. The deadline to have this done is May 31. This also includes a check for \$7 made out to the district to cover the cost of the required book for this class. If you have not received a letter, then you should contact the district office or John Ellifritz. If you cannot make this date, other ethic classes are held in our neighboring districts. Contact the district office or John Ellifritz to find out the date and times of these classes if needed.

Deacon Ministry – How important is it in the life of your church?

In the Church of the Brethren, deacon ministry is a vital and significant expression of our caregiving ministries to individuals and families. The 1997 Annual Conference statement, “Deacon Ministries in the Church of the Brethren.” states the vision for a deacon ministry as follows:

“Deacons are called to be dedicated caregivers who use their spiritual gifts in a shared ministry of concern for the total well-being of God’s people. Deacons are to be Christ-like, welcoming, nurturing, reconciling, sensitive to the presence of God’s spirit in their lives and in the lives of others, witnessing for Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord within and beyond the Body of Christ, the church.”

Deacons play such an important role in the life of the church but are they aware of their duties? Have you ever considered having a training session for your deacons? You might say our numbers are small, but why not consider inviting neighboring congregations to come together for a one-day retreat. There are many resources available that will assist you in planning this type of program. For more information, email DiscipleshipMinistries@brethren.org or call 800-323-8039, ext. 303

If a retreat is not something you would wish to do, how about considering providing your deacons with up-to-date manuals. The new Deacon Manual – Calling; and the second Deacon Manual – Caring is available for purchase at the Brethren Press Store.

Let’s make sure that your deacons are equipped as they serve your congregation!

BRETHREN BITS by BETTY DZUBBA

KEYSER CHURCH of the BRETHREN FOUNDED 100 Years Ago in 1924

Once more we have the opportunity to learn something more about one of our churches. As we’ve noticed over the years we are familiar with the congregations but often there are some features which make each church extraordinary—including surprises. Did you realize Keyser is celebrating in 2024? They are sharing information each month during their services.

Keyser is celebrating 150 years since the town was named “Keyser” and the governing men organized what became a city with some interesting developments and history. The Keyser Church of the Brethren also has a reason to celebrate during 2024. The Methodists and Presbyterians had established small churches in Keyser long before the Civil War. By the end of the hostilities both denominations found their buildings destroyed by fires from the warring troops by the time the war was over.

Until 1924, there was no established Church of the Brethren in the town. Elder Geroge W. Leatherman who had ties to the Brethren at Beaver Run, moved to the New Creek Valley, near what is today the Keyser Walmart and conducted farming enterprises. The first “Leatherman Church” was located on the Cut Off Road not far from the Duling Methodist Church. Later, this group moved the location of their meeting house to the Sunnyside community.

There were ties to many of the Brethren families who had moved from the Grant County area where the Knobley Church of the Brethen has been having services and after the early 1900’s many of these families began moving into Keyser as more employment opportunities were available due to the B&O railroad shops and the growing community of Keyser.

The date of the first Brethren worship services in Keyser are unknown. Evidence indicates it was likely prior to 1911. Those first years the Odd Fellows Hall on Mineral Street was rented and public services began. The Mystic Chain Hall on North Main Street was also used.

Charter members of the church were Dr. Harry & Ruth Coffman, Charles & Nora Ludwick, Grace Harris Cook and Rosa Martin, Harvey & Melinda Arnold, Grayson & Minnie Poland, Jesse & Beulah Rotruck, Frank & Jessie Rotruck, Marie Rotruck, Alva & Lucy Rotruck and Marie Rotruck according to Dr. Emmert Bittinger.

Growth was noted when in 1916 the New Creek Congregation sent a request to District Meeting for the right to solicit funds for a church house. Due to the first World War this project was slowed since prices were inflationary during that war. It was not until 1919 District Conference gave strong support for plans for building a church in Keyser and encouraged all the district churches to respond generously toward this solicitation.

A desirable lot located on the corner of Main Street and Fort Avenue was purchased on January 25, 1919. Soon thereafter work was begun. Most or all of the work was done by volunteers, and progressed rapidly forward so that the church house was dedicated on December 20, 1920. The dedication speaker was Elder Jeremiah Thomas of Sandy Creek. Brother B.W. Smith who had been serving as one of the pastors conducting services at nearby Sunnyside held revival services and new members were added.

The work of the first pastor, Russell G. West began June 11, 1922. At that time the membership was fifty with Sunday School attendance averaging forty-five. Under the guidance of a pastor (rather than using the Elders and brothers who donated their time and money to preaching from church to church) rapid progress took place as the church grew and gained recognition in the town and within the District.

In 1924 the territory of the New Creek congregation was divided. Those worshipping at Keyser chose the name First Church of the Brethren. Since 1960 this congregation has been known officially as the Keyser Church of the Brethren.

Various additions were made as the original facility no longer was large enough to accommodate the congregation. During those years the church purchased and remodeled the double house next door which provided ten new classrooms and an office. In 1955 a Wicks pipe organ was installed. Later, in 1980 a new and modern educational facility with kitchen, fellowship hall and restrooms, library, pastor's study and church office replaced the former quarters.

In 1935 the church purchased a house and lot on First Street, a very short walk from the church to be used as parsonage.

Upon arrival of the first pastor the membership was only fifty. By 1925 it was up to 150 and by 1937 there were 390 members. Several pastors have served since the early 1920's and the congregation grew within the city and the Keyser members were active in many facets of the West Marva District work over the years.

Heidi Gardner shares the information the church has had Vacation Bible Schools annually since 1922. The Brethren in Keyser were pioneers in establishing ecumenical Bible Schools. Rev. Russell West directed the first Community Bible School held during the summer of 1928 in Keyser.

During the 1940's Keyser played a role in assisting with the West Marva camping program. The pastor at the time and the late Arnold Ludwick were instrumental in obtaining the property at Camp Galilee for the district camp. Many of the Keyser adults and youth assisted with building the cabins. Keyser youth and counsellors were active over those years in the activities at Camp Galilee.

Westernport Church of the Brethren Upcoming Events:

The youth group has some service projects for the community and a back-to-school trip in August. This is a fundraiser to help them raise money to achieve what they want to do. The Ledo's pizza fundraiser is from open to close, dine-in and carry-out. Please mention that you are with the Westernport Youth Group on May 20th, and some of the sales will come their way.



Our third annual community block party will be on June 8th. Have you ever had the urge to throw water at a pastor after a message being preached hit too close to home? Well, Pastor Allie will be in a dunk tank at this year's block party! Here is your chance to dunk a pastor! We will have an inflatable bounce house/water slide and a dry one for your enjoyment! We will also have carnival-style games and prizes. Come on out and grab some food, beverages, snow cones, and cotton candy!



Our Free Day Camp will be July 15-19. Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren will be back to help us provide an all-day experience for the children and youth who attend. The age range is kids going into 1st grade through youth going into 8th grade. This year's theme is Scuba! For registration, email Betty Dzubba: westernportcob@gmail.com to have a form mail to you!



CAMP GALILEE 2024 CAMPING SCHEDULE

CAMP GALILEE	Grades Entering in fall	Dates	Suggested Donation: Please make donation the day of registration	Director	Pastor -in- Residence
Youth	9-12	July 7-13 Registration 6PM	\$120.00	Craig Howard	Mark Seese
Jr. High	6-8	July 14-20 Registration	\$120.00	Matt/Crystal Combs	Don Judy
Junior	3-5	July 21-26 Registration	\$120.00	Natasha De- Mars	Bob Combs
Primary	K-2	July 5-7 Registration 10 AM	\$60.00	Sarah Spaid	LaDeana Teets

CAMP HOPE 2024 CAMPING SCHEDULE

“BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD” Psalm 46:10

Youth Camp: July 7-July 11, 2024
 Junior Camp: July 14-July 18, 2024
 Primary Camp: July 21 - July 24, 2024

Sign in is at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday and wraps up with a family picnic and program on the last day at 5:00 p.m. for each camp.





SENIOR CITIZEN'S CAMP AT CAMP GALILEE

Tuesday, June 4th, 2024

*Registration begins at 9:00 am with donuts and coffee
in Recreation Hall.*

Program begins promptly at 9:30 am

***COME and ENJOY THE DAY
FREE FOOD, FUN, and FELLOWSHIP!***

*Enjoy an outstanding lunch (ham, scalloped potatoes, green beans, tossed
salad, rolls, drinks and dessert) and a wonderful opportunity to fellowship.*

The afternoon freewill offering will be going to a National Charity

Samaritan's Purse

REMEMBER TO CALL Elisabeth Thorne at 681-999-1378 to register by May 27th.

*Pre-registering helps the Camp Staff to adequately plan for meals- but walk-ins are wel-
come.*

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9

**Church of the Brethren
West Marva District Office
384 Dennett Road
Oakland, MD 21550
May 2024**

IN GOD WE TRUST

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 4	Senior Citizen Camp at Camp Galilee
23	Pulpit Exchange Sunday
25	Executive Board Meeting, District Office 6:00 p.m.
July 3-7	Annual Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan
20	District Board meeting, Bear Creek Church
September	
21	District Conference, Moorefield COB
October	
26	Ethic's Training, Moorefield COB