

MEMO ANNOUNCEMENT

Welcome to our new bi-monthly newsletter, Issue 1.

Some necessary changes have been made to the design and layout because Microsoft has discontinued support of the Publisher program our office manager Brenda Harvey had been using to publish our quarterly MEMO. All good things must come to an end, on this side of Heaven, at least.



Moving forward, please send all MEMO submissions to me directly by or before the following dates:

Issue 2: April 29 deadline (for May 1 release)

Issue 3: July 1 deadline (for July 8 release, including Annual Conference Wrap-Up – that issue will be one week late to include Conference information)

Issue 4: August 26 deadline (for September 1 release)

Issue 5: October 28 deadline (for November 1 release)

Send electronic submissions to westmarvade@gmail.com, call or text 540-742-2457, or send mail correspondence to the District Office at 384 Dennett Rd, Oakland MD 21550

Include anything you'd like the district churches to know about, learn about, pray about, support, copy, or otherwise enjoy!

- ✓ **service times, special occasions/events, fundraisers,**
- ✓ **prayers/poems/devotionals/liturgies/responsive readings,**
- ✓ **book/study recommendations,**
- ✓ **church or pastor anniversaries/homecomings/milestones,**
- ✓ **favorite potluck recipes,**
- ✓ **updated website, social media, or contact information**
- ✓ **obituary links or other remembrances of recently departed friends, and**
- ✓ **anything else that would be wonderful to share with your district brothers and sisters.**

Letter from the DE's Desk

Take that, aphids!

Every time I see an extended forecast this winter with consistently frigid temperatures with no end in sight, I get a little antsy, I feel a tinge of cabin fever. I haven't had good conditions for taking my dog on extended hikes on the Ghost Town Trail since early December, a practice that normally we do all year long two or three times per week. I have had car batteries die on me a couple times, including a brand new one that just stayed too cold for too long



while I was away at the Council of District Executives Meeting in January. I have one vehicle I'm trying to prep for sale, but there is either too much ice in my yard, the door is frozen shut, or the windchill is too low for me to be outside for more than a few minutes at a time. My wood chip pile is frozen solid, so I haven't been able to amend my no-dig/no-till garden beds and give those chips a good environment for breaking down like I would have wanted.

Complaining is easy when nights are long, air is chill, flu is going around, and activity feels stymied.

Then I think of the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and recall the lyrics to the second stanza:

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest;

Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

That hymn is a singable version of a lament from Lamentations 3. Israel is exiled, Babylon rules over them, Jeremiah is brokenhearted that his people had not heeded his warnings to turn their hearts to God, and now they are paying dire consequences for their unfaithfulness. As he pours his heart out to the Lord, Jeremiah writes these words of praise, knowing that God has not changed, that God has not abandoned them, God has not left them to experience weariness and restlessness forever. Rather God has consistently proven that Jeremiah's declaration is trustworthy and true:

This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:21-26)

The dark, cold, dreary season that we are in, that our church seems to be in, that our nation seems to be in, that our health, our finances, our family, our community, our world seems to be in, is fraught with mercies we cannot begin to comprehend, and a God who holds us with compassion, with "great faithfulness, mercy, and love."

So take that, aphids! I choose to remember that a stark, icy winter is just what my garden will need to have less pest pressure. I'll hold on to hope that with all the snow, the waterways will be full and our land will not experience drought. I'll believe that this is a season of rest, of waiting, of preparation and anticipation, and I will know with confidence that Spring is coming, and it brings new life, new growth, new possibilities.

God will bring the dead to life, warm the earth, reinvigorate our energy, and inspire new activity in the season to come.

Pastor Leah J. Hileman
District Executive Minister

NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT

February 15 was a wonderful day of celebration and fellowship. Brenda Harvey concluded 34 years of continuous ministry in West Marva at the end of December. Oak Park Church hosted a retirement party in her honor the same weekend as her birthday and Valentine's Day, so we had a lot to be thankful for. Brenda expressed her thanks to everyone who attended and those

involved in the planning and meal preparation.



She received a picture memory blanket and a commemorative plaque, along with many greeting cards, gifts, well-wishes, and a beautiful bouquet of roses. Thank you, Brenda, for all you have done in service to the kingdom of Christ. We appreciate you!



Clean-up Buckets and Donations are due by March 11. Drop off at the District Office, send monetary donations, or contact Denny Skeweris for other arrangements at 301-616-0013. Information was mailed to every congregation.

Various buckets and kits will be gathered throughout the year as an ongoing project, but with flood, tornado, wildfire, and hurricane damage across the nation, these Clean-Up Buckets are of great value.

If you have not already made arrangements to support the project, please consider taking up a special offering at your church to help sponsor Clean-Up Buckets.

If you have not already submitted updated information for the **2025 DISTRICT DIRECTORY**, the time is **NOW!** Check that your pastor information, church contacts, email and website addresses, telephone numbers, addresses and driving directions, and service times are all accurate. Email Leah at westmarvade@gmail.com or call 540-742-2457 (leave a detailed message if I don't pick up) with any edits by March 4. Thank you to those who have responded with valuable updates!

Does your church have a directory? We'd love to have a copy at the district office! Email a digital version to westmarvade@gmail.com or send a paper copy to West Marva District, 384 Dennett Rd, Oakland MD 21550.

Pray for **Keyser Church of the Brethren** as they enter into a pastoral search process and **Morgantown Church of the Brethren** as they are presently in a call process; pray for God to bring success to them as they call a settled minister.



West Marva District offers prayers of blessing and condolence to the families of William Shimer, Sr., Alma Webster, and Ray Hileman. Pray for healing for our brother and sister Moderator Bob and Pastor Brenda Combs as they face health challenges.

Have a prayer request or praise report? Email Leah at westmarvade@gmail.com to be included in email blasts and future MEMOS.

From Pastor Robin at Georges Creek: "After a wild winter and winter closure of George's Creek we are planning to **reopen March 23 2025**, weather permitting. We continue to be in contact with each other by phone calls and are planning a ***Dinner Night at Keyzers Ridge Little Sandy's Restaurant on March 7 2025 at 6 pm. Come join us for food and fellowship.*** They have a good fish fry on Friday nights. Brother Mike Beeman continues to struggle with illness and is now in hospice care. He is in Ruby Memorial until a nursing home bed opens up closer to home. Continue to pray for the Beeman family."



Our District Spiritual Growth team is returning this year with another ***Pastor and Deacon Banquet***, to be hosted at ***Westernport Church of the Brethren on Saturday, May 17.*** There will be a catered meal and inspiring program. Spread the word that the ministers and deacons in your local congregation and their spouses are encouraged to attend and be blessed for their service to the kingdom.



Did you participate in last year's District-wide ***PULPIT SWAP?*** We would love to have even more congregations participate in this fun opportunity to meet members in the district and hear good preaching from fresh voices. Notify Richard Funk at 304-897-5319/debfunk@frontiernet.net if you are willing to be included in this year's upcoming event. (This is a great opportunity for newer ministers and ministers-in-training to get out into the district, by the way.)

WMMTP (West Marva Ministry Training Program) has updated its fee structure to simplify the way current and prospective students pay their portion to participate. Moving forward, all students will pay an ***annual fee of only \$75*** beginning with the first class of the fiscal year, usually early February. This covers registration for quarterly classes, including a stipend for the teaching staff.

The next class will be **May 3 at Westernport parsonage 9am** taught by Jennifer Kreighbaum, **New Testament Survey**. Email program director Allie Crowe at allie.crowe.07@gmail.com for syllabus.

The postcards to the right of **Camp Galilee** were sent to the district office, found in a personal collection. If anyone can identify people or recall what year these postcards may have been printed, let us know at westmarvade@gmail.com.

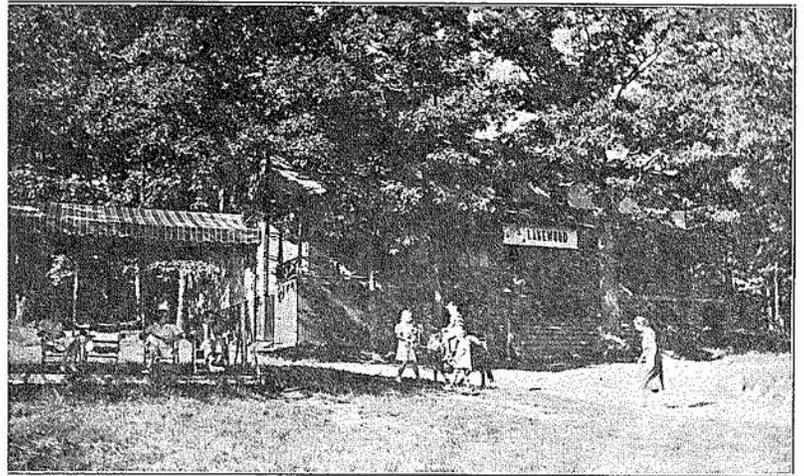
SAVE THE DATES! May 4-7, Elkins Church of the Brethren is presenting revival meetings with guest preacher Rev. Leah J. Hileman, West Marva District Executive, Sunday morning through Wednesday evening. More details to follow.

Is your church holding Spring Renewal/Revival services? Let the district office know!

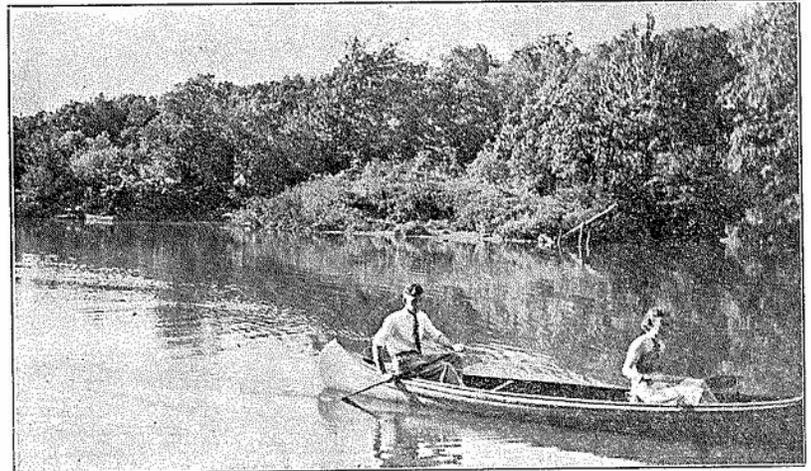
LENT BEGINS Wednesday, March 5, with ASH WEDNESDAY.

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. -Isaiah 53:6, NKJV*

May you have a fruitful season of being pruned, of releasing the old ways so that God can make alive the new soul within, through the resurrected Christ, Jesus our Lord, Amen.



CLUB HOUSE, CAMP GALILEE, TERRA ALTA, W. VA.



BOATING AT CAMP GALILEE, TERRA ALTA, W. VA.



Join Us in Making a Difference!

Disaster Relief to Kentucky March 16-22, 2025

In the Spring of 2023, devastating floods swept through Letcher County, Kentucky, leaving many families without homes. Now, we have a chance to bring hope and healing to those affected by this disaster.

Brethren Disaster Ministries is calling for **8 dedicated volunteers** to join us in rebuilding homes and restoring lives. No prior construction experience is needed—just a heart willing to serve.

Why Volunteer?

- **Make a tangible impact:** Help rebuild homes and bring comfort to those in need.
- **Grow in faith and fellowship:** Work alongside fellow believers and strengthen community bonds.
- **Learn new skills:** Gain hands-on experience in construction and disaster relief.

Details:

- **Dates:** March 16-22, 2025
- **Location:** Letcher County, Kentucky
- **Contact:** Denny Skeweris at 301-616-0013, denskew@gmail.com

This is a wonderful opportunity to serve people in a time of distress and make a lasting difference. Let's come together and show the love of Christ through our actions.

Join us and be a beacon of hope!

Financial Resource Team Report

The Financial Resource Team is pleased to report the financial results for 2024.

The 2024 year-end results are:

Expenses = \$41,147

Income = \$50,177

Designated and non-designated fund allocations are as follows:

Designated Funds - \$142,621

Non-designated Funds - \$203,752

Total Funds - \$346,373

As part of the Financial Team member rotation, we are also pleased to announce that Kathryn Ludwick and Carl Fike have joined the Financial Resource Team.



NEWS FROM CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

CHURCH PLANTING and RENEWAL CONFERENCE

Date: May 14-16, 2025

Location: Elgin, IL at Brethren General Office

Theme: God Is Doing a New Thing – Isaiah 43:19

[Register now](#) (Control+Click to open link in browser)

Early bird pricing: \$129/person until April 20 for both on-site and virtual.

Regular pricing: \$179/person starts Monday, April 21 for both on-site and virtual.

CEU's will include both live sessions and recordings

New & Renew is a vibrant hybrid gathering focused on church planting and church renewal that is rooted in worship and prayer that equips, nurtures, and stimulates creative, practical ministry.

Visit [New & Renew – Discipleship and Leadership Formation](#) to learn more.

www.brethren.org/dlf/newandrenew/



Young Adult Conference May 23-25 at Camp Brethren Woods, Keezletown VA.

National Junior High Conference June 20-22 at Juniata College, Huntington PA.

Registration for both events is open now at www.brethren.org.

Prayer Request for Pastor Juan Pablo Plaza and his family; their parsonage was burned to the ground in the California wildfires. No one was hurt, and the church building is intact. [Pacific Southwest District requests prayer for Conexion Pasadena congregation affected by fire – News](#)



To: Pastor, Moderator, or Church Representative

Re: **2025 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference,**

Greensboro, North Carolina -- July 2 - 6

Annual Conference provides an opportunity for the body of Christ known as the Church of the Brethren to come together to hear the voice of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit within and among us. Please join us for inspiring worship, informational Bible studies, communal discernment, engaging breakout sessions, energizing exhibits, empowering witness, nurturing fellowship and meaningful connection.

Registration for both delegates and non-delegates
for the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference

will open at 12:00 Noon Central Time on Wednesday, March 5, 2025.

- The advance delegate registration fee is \$350 per delegate. Advance registration will close on June 10. The fee for registering delegates onsite in Greensboro will be \$425. Don't wait!
- The advance non-delegate registration fee is \$175. Advance registration will close on June 10. The fee for registering non-delegates onsite in Greensboro will be \$210.
- Registering as a Virtual Non-Delegate to watch business online, participate in a number of Equipping Sessions and see the Rockingham Male Chorus concert Saturday night is again an option. The advance virtual non-delegate registration fee is \$195 through June 27. There is also an option for Groups and Institutions to participate virtually from a common location for \$500. For more information go to www.brethren.org/ac2025/registration and select Virtual.

Registering a Delegate Congregations may register their delegates using online registration beginning Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 12:00 Noon Central Time. Payment options include paying by credit card or sending a check. Go to www.brethren.org/ac and click on the "Registration" button and then choose "Delegate Registration". Each delegate's complete name, address, email, and phone number are required. If you need assistance, call the Annual Conference Office (847-429-4366) and we will be happy to answer your questions. Delegate registration fees provide each delegate with a Conference booklet, the business materials packet, a designated delegate name tag, and seating at the delegate tables at Annual Conference. Each congregation who registers a delegate or delegates will also receive a copy of the 2025 Annual Conference minutes.

Delegate Eligibility and Allotment Delegates must be full members of the Church of the Brethren. The number of delegates for each congregation is based on the membership statistics as reported in the 2024 Church of the Brethren Yearbook:

Up to 200 Members	1 delegate
201-400 Members	2 delegates
401-600 Members	3 delegates
601-800 Members	4 delegates

Non-Delegate Registration Non-delegate registration opens Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 12:00 Noon Central Time. When registering anyone other than a delegate, click on the “Non-Delegate Registration” button.

Registration System We are again using the registration system that was launched last year. For information about how to use the new site go to www.brethren.org/ac2025 then click Registration and click on the link: **A Guide to Registering Online for Annual Conference.**

Conference Hotel The Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons is connected to the Koury Convention Center, making it extremely convenient for guests. Our Annual Conference Room Rate is **\$120 plus tax (12.75%) totaling \$135.30 per night.** Parking is complimentary. The Sheraton Hotel provides complimentary shuttle transportation to and from Piedmont Triad International Airport from 8am to 10pm. In room Wi-Fi is complimentary for all hotel guests. **The link for hotel reservations will be on the last page of the registration site immediately after you register as well as in the confirmation email sent.** Everyone can reserve a room upon completing their registration. *Do not call the hotel to make a reservation! Annual Conference discounted room rates are only available for online registrations made through our provided link.*

Worship Services All five worship services will be available free of charge to all registered and non-registered persons.

NEW!! Welcome Meal on Wednesday, July 2. Come meet and greet other conference goers on **Wednesday evening, July 2,** beginning at **5:00 p.m. in Joseph’s restaurant** located in the Koury/Sheraton Hotel. A dinner buffet will be available for the cost of \$19.95 for adults, \$14.95 for ages 12 and under. No reservations are required. Attendees will pay onsite at the restaurant. Questions on table tents will encourage conversation and there will be live music in the lobby outside the restaurant. *Come join us!*

New Attendee Orientation We encourage delegates or non-delegates who have never attended or have not recently attended Annual Conference to attend the New Attendee Orientation session in Greensboro at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon July 2. The location will be listed in the conference booklet.

Online Information Please check our webpage at www.brethren.org/ac2025 for more information about Annual Conference in Greensboro, including leadership, themes, activities, schedules, catered meals and food options, meetings and events, webcasting instructions and much more. New information is added regularly, so check back often!

Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions.

Rhonda and Debbie

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