

A Ministry Update

Boulevard News

August 2008

see our webpage at 1stcob.net

First Church of the Brethren



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Our Sunday Worship

"The 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren" will be a primary focus for our worship in the month August.

Annual Conference Report Sunday and 300th Anniversary (August 3)

We begin the month considering the place of service in our Christian journey. Using the "Mack Seal" as a visual aid, Pastor Kres will speak about a cross, a heart, and grape clusters as living reminders of our church's history and future.

Please read: John 12: 24-26 and Galatians 5: 22-26

How Are We Known? (August 10)

Alexander Mack, leader of the early Brethren movement, was asked how this new group of believers would be known? His reply, "By the manner of their living." This morning we ask a similar question. How are we known? What will people say about that body of believers who gather on Yale Blvd.?

Please read: Matthew 11: 2-6

Counting the Cost (August 17)

Our worship will focus on the 300th anniversary theme of the Church of the Brethren: Surrendered to God, Transformed in Christ, Empowered by the Spirit. Kres' message title is taken from the hymn "Count Well the Cost." Alexander Mack, Sr wrote the hymn.

Please read: Luke 14: 25-33 and Hymn #437: "Count Well the Cost"

Led by the Spirit (August 24)

We conclude the four-week focus on the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren by considering how we will look to the future. What might the Spirit of God be calling us to embrace in the years ahead?

Please read: John 14: 15-31 and Romans 8: 12-17

Whoever Welcomes...(August 31)

Over the years we have talked much about being a welcoming community and a people of hospitality. What does it mean to be hospitable? Does it come naturally or need planning? I believe the desire to be welcoming has a deeper side.

Please read: Matthew 10: 40-42

Celebrating with Song

First Church of the Brethren will be co-hosting, with the Harvard Park Neighborhood Association, an evening of music with "Sisters of the Son." It is scheduled for Friday, August 22 beginning at 7 pm. The evening begins with a 30-minute presentation on the "History of Harvard Park" by Springfield historian Curtis Mann. The concert will follow.

"Sisters of the Son" consists of musicians/singers Suzanne Moss, Sandy Begue' and Madonna Jones. They have been performing together for over 10 years. The trio performs for the Springfield area and has been booked for engagements in Wisconsin, St. Louis and Chicago.

While their musical repertoire is very diverse, "Sisters" specialize in Contemporary Christian Music backed by a band of musicians, "The Brothers of Soul." The "Sisters of the Son" debut CD of praise and worship songs was released in February 2008. For more information on "Sisters" visit

their website at www.sistersoftheson.org.

Please share this event with family and friends. Great refreshments will be provided. We are hoping for a great turnout.

Praying for Peace

A public "Prayer Service for Peace" will be held at our church meetinghouse on Sunday, September 21 at 6:30 pm. The service is being held on the annual date of the World Council of Churches' International Day of Prayer for Peace. The prayer service will begin in the sanctuary and conclude, weather permitting, outdoors on the boulevard by our peace pole. Last year over 100 Church of the Brethren congregations observed international day of prayer. On Earth Peace, the peace education and outreach agency for our denomination, has set a goal of 300 churches to participate. More information from our Witness Commission and Pastor Kres will be shared next month.





A Women's Celebration of Body, Mind and Spirit

A retreat, "Treasure in Earthen Vessels: A Women's Celebration of Body, Mind, and Spirit," will be offered from September 26-28, 2008 at the Leaven Retreat Center in Lyons, Michigan (<http://www.leaven.org/>). The retreat is designed for women who are seeking to develop balance, a sense of well-being, fullness of spirit...and who happen to be part of the Church of the Brethren. Church of the Brethren pastors Deanna Brown and Anita Smith Buckwalter are providing leadership.

The retreat begins at 7 pm., Friday, September 26 and concludes by 11 am., Sunday, September 28. Lodging is in the retreat center. There are two or three twin beds to each room with shared baths. Linens are provided. Meals and snacks will be served at the lodge.

The cost for a single registration is \$165 payable to the Association of Brethren Caregivers (<http://www.brethren.org/abc/>). The retreat is part of the program and ministry of the Church of the Brethren's Wellness Ministry (<http://www.brethren.org/abc/health/>). Registration forms are available through the church office.

Thanks for the Memories Annual Conference Report — by Terry Link

Thanks for the opportunity to serve as Annual Conference delegate these last two years, it is indeed an honor to represent our unique congregation at this gathering of the larger Church body. If you have never been, you need to go, next year – 2009 in San Diego, then 2010 is in Pittsburgh, PA. Delegates serve for two year terms, and we need someone to serve for the next two years. We budget for the expenses, so if you might be interested, please speak up and ask questions about being our delegate.

This year's conference in Richmond, VA was larger than the prior year at Cleveland. This 300 year anniversary included other Brethren denominations and the combined worship service was huge, as over 6,100 people were registered this year. Most awesome was the mixing of the waters, baptismal waters were brought from congregations by their district and mixed in a fountain up front along with water brought from the Eder River in Germany where the first Brethren baptisms took place 300 years ago. I watched as water from our congregation and our district was brought forward and added to the worship fountain by our District Executive, Kevin Kessler.

The business items went fairly smoothly, mixed feelings continue to be expressed over sexuality and mission strategy, but my sense was that people are

starting to see that life is short and it is our lives together that matter each day in the bigger picture. I was able to go to a couple of insight sessions, attending a contemporary music workshop and a panel talking about what part of our common heritage they see would be carried forward by their Brethren denomination. Last but not least, the best and yet saddest part for me was participating in the silent witness for the GLBT family and handing out flyers that explained what the faces on the 100 posters being held by silent witnesses on the plaza represented. The posters had pictures of friends, family, and loved ones who have felt the pain of exclusion by the church. I prayed for those who took the flyers and asked them to look at the faces in the pictures. Under each picture it read "COUNT WELL THE COST OF EXCLUSION". Thanks for the memories and for the opportunity to serve us all. Your Brother In Christ, Terry Link.

