



“Seeking the Way of Christ: Ordinances of the Brethren”

A month long series on the "rites and ordinances" of the church as practiced by the Church of the Brethren will begin on September 9. The Sunday messages will highlight a particular ordinance and explore some of their historical and contemporary meaning. Here is the suggested schedule:

- September 9: Baptism
- September 16: Laying on of Hands
- September 23: Anointing for Healing
- September 30: The Holy Kiss
- October 7: Communion

This series will begin our yearlong 300th anniversary observance as the Church of the Brethren.

Celebrating 300 Years

The Church of the Brethren, together with sister churches, will celebrate 300 years of existence in 2008. A national committee has been working on a variety of plans that will assist congregations and districts in illuminating the rich past; examining the crucial present; and projecting the challenging future. Rather than focusing on nostalgia, Brethren are encouraged to discover and use the resources of past achievements to encourage present activities and future mission.

The 300th anniversary will be celebrated from September 2007 through August 2008. An opening anniversary event is scheduled for the weekend of September 15-16 at the Germantown Church in Philadelphia. Germantown was the first Brethren

congregation in America. The anniversary will be celebrated at next year's Annual Conference in Richmond, VA. in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Brethren Church. Sunday, August 3, 2008 will be Celebration Sunday. All Church of the Brethren congregations will be urged to observe the anniversary during their regular worship on this date.

Here at First Church we are planning a variety of activities throughout the anniversary year. Thus far, we intend:

- * to plan for a least one monthly activity which will highlight the anniversary;
- * to use the anniversary curriculum "Piecing Together the Brethren Way" with our younger children;
- * to offer a small-group study in the winter on the anniversary theme: "Surrendered to God, Transformed in Christ, Empowered by the Spirit".



We have invited two district youth, James Gible-Keenan (Highland Avenue) and Carlos Maldonado (Cerro Gordo), to be with us, on a Sunday, in either September or October. James and Carlos have been trained to visit congregations in our district to lead in worship and share in educational settings.

Please share your suggestions and ideas for programs and activities for the coming year with Pastor Kres or our board members.

Benefit for Pleasant Hill Village

The 11th annual Dinner & Auction to benefit Pleasant Hill Village will be held Saturday, October 20, 2007 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Virden, IL. The theme for the evening is "A Western Hoedown." The doors will open at 5 pm with dinner served at 6 pm. Cost is \$25 per person. The goal is to raise \$20,000 for various projects at the facility. Ticket and auction donation forms are on the table at the rear of the sanctuary.

International Day of Prayer for Peace - Sept. 21st

We will be observing this annual day of prayer for peace by offering a morning "prayer service for peace" outdoors on the boulevard in front of our meetinghouse. The International Day of Prayer for Peace is a joint effort of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the United Nations. Brethren congregations have been asked by On Earth Peace and the COB Washington Office to participate. As of this writing, over seventy Church of the Brethren congregations from coast to coast have committed to sponsor an event and fifty-seven more are in discernment.

Our service will be held near our peace pole on the boulevard. Please invite friends, neighbors and families to join us as they make their way to work and school on Friday, September 21. There will be several other "peace" opportunities that week, as well. On Thursday, September 20 at 7 pm an interfaith service for peace will be held at Forst Presbyterian Church. On Friday afternoon (the 21st) a rally for peace will be held at the State Capitol.

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference 2007 Cleveland, Ohio

Annual Conference - WOW - making new friends and seeking out old ones from around the country made the conference just as I was told "like a big family reunion". And with over 3,500 in attendance, this was indeed one big family. As a first timer I tried to do everything, but the 14 hour days (without a nap) soon caught up to me. The daily opportunities started at 7:30am and lasted until after 10pm. The choices were hard to make, one day there were 15 different insight sessions offered during the same hour! The conference exhibit hall in the civic center was immense. It was eye opening to see the wide variety of denominational groups represented and their involvement in issues at a level that is really relevant and not fluff.

Deciding what to attend was even harder because again this year, and for about 20 years now, the conference denied space to the Brethren Mennonite Commission for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender concerns (BMC). So they sponsored a separate hospitality room three blocks away in the hotel I was staying at and had information tables, insight sessions, snacks, live music and a wonderful spirit filled love feast. This year the Voices for an Open Spirit (VOS) and Women's Caucus respectfully refused official conference space in order to set up and join in solidarity with the BMC in the hotel ballroom.

Oh yes, the reason I went was to be a delegate wasn't it? Well there was business to do, so much so that we were called back for an overtime session that went until 10:30 one night. Most of the items were pretty straight forward decisions. I did change how I intended to vote on one item after hearing voices from the floor speak to the issue. And was disappointed that the doing church business study was amended to be received instead of implemented, an action that in effect but these good ideas away in the good idea file! There is an excellent wrap up of the business items which I recommend at this web site <http://brethren.org/genbd/newsline/2007/AC2007/AC2007WrapUp.pdf> I will put copies of this document on the back table in the meetinghouse for you.

Even being just a block away from the Rock and Roll museum, I never got a chance to go and see if "Cleveland Rocks". I did hear music a number of times drifting up from the Lake Erie pier area just across the highway as I walked to and from the convention center. Next year should be an even bigger conference in Richmond, VA, as it is the 300 year anniversary of the Church of the Brethren and is being held at an eastern location where more Brethren live. I encourage you to attend because it should be a doozy.

I am looking forward to the next working family reunion,
Your 2007/2008 delegate, Terry Link

2007 CROP Walk

The 2007 Springfield-Area CROP Walk will be held on Sunday, October 7, rain or shine. The 10k walk will begin promptly at 1:30 p.m. Walkers are asked to arrive for registration and announcements between 1pm-1:15 pm.

The CROP Walk raises money for the disaster and human development ministries of Church World Service.

Mary Bushnell will serve as our congregation's walk recruiter. Walkers can get pledge forms from her throughout the month. Mary's challenge is for our walkers to exceed the \$950 we raised at last year's Walk. She's hoping for \$1000. If you are unable to walk, we hope you will sponsor one of our walkers from the church family.

How Many Pastors Does It Take...

Pastor Kres will join four other pastors for a two and one-half days retreat in Lake Geneva, WI. On September 24-26. The purpose of the retreat is to jointly plan a series of services for this year's Advent season, which will be used in the congregations of Highland Ave. Elgin, Chicago First, York Center, Naperville and Springfield. Pastors Joel Kline, Orlando Redekopp, Christy Waltersdorff, and Dennis Webb will take part in the retreat.



Psalm 68: 34-35