



You have heard it said, “speak softly and carry a big stick.” But I tell you, “grow more carrots!”

There are sticks, and there are carrots. You can prod an animal from behind with undesired consequences, or you can draw them from the front with desired rewards. I train my cats to stay off the food preparation area in the kitchen, but they always want to be sniffing around in whatever I’m doing. It’s a training that takes a long time to master. I usually use a combination of “sticks” and “carrots” with them. For one of my kittens, though, whenever I impose a consequence, it only serves to make her more adamant about doing whatever it is I’m telling her not to do. Perhaps you know people like that... perhaps you are a person like that! I have learned instead to reward my other kitten Ayla until Serafina notices and discovers how to earn treats of her own.

In the world’s way of operating, we have sticks and we have carrots. We tend to go first to the sticks. Negative consequences and enforcing the rules seem to be the easier choice. If we don’t agree with one another, we can simply declare who is right, usually by majority vote, and declare that everyone else should comply.

In the Church of the Brethren, we have always been suspicious of others who try to tell us what to believe or do by way of coercion or shaming or enforcement. We have seen the harm that can be done when hierarchy, rather than love, is at the center of our decision making, at the forefront of our discernment. And more than that, we trust the Spirit’s moving and the persistent activity of God’s love to be more powerful than any power we humans have at our fingertips.

So as we begin to prepare for District Conference and Annual Conference (yes, they are coming soon!), I have been thinking about this: Our sticks are tiny and ineffectual in the Church of the Brethren. Very little of what we do can we agree on, let alone enforce. The center of our denomination, the moderator, changes every year, because it is not primarily about any one person’s individual power. It is the Spirit’s power moving among the gathered body that we trust. Even District Ministers (gasp) have very little in the way of enforcement or punitive consequences at their disposal. Brothers and sisters, I am convinced: this is how it should be!

We are a priesthood of believers. Our power comes only from the movement of the Spirit among us. Is it messy? Yes! Is it frustrating? Yes, for everyone (in case you thought it was just you). Is it strange? Very often, yes. Is it beautiful? In God’s eyes, I believe it is. Is it radically healing? I am counting on it!

(continued on page 2)

Our task is not to be honing our sticks or deciding who has the authority to wield them. Our task is to grow lots and lots of carrots, through the yeast, salt, light, mustard seeds of the kingdom's logic. Our task is to grow carrots to share and to enjoy, in the Love of our Lord and the Good News of our Christ.

What does that look like in your corner of the world? Here are a few thoughts: Meet your fellow Brethren folks in your area. There are good people out there! Listen deeply to the desires of your peers in your neighborhood. The need out there is great. And plan to attend District Conference and Annual Conference. Let's grow more carrots together; many hands make light work!

Laura

****By the way, here's what Google's AI says about Church of the Brethren polity (aka, the way we make decisions and structure the church):*

"The Church of the Brethren's polity is based on the principle of the priesthood of all believers. This means that all members of the church are equal in the sight of God and have a responsibility to participate in the life and work of the church.

"The Church of the Brethren's polity is also based on the principle of consensus. This means that decisions are made by the whole church, and that all members are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process.

"The Church of the Brethren's polity is designed to promote unity and cooperation among its members. It is a system that allows for the expression of a wide range of viewpoints, while still maintaining the unity of the church.

"The Church of the Brethren's polity is a reflection of its commitment to peace, simplicity, and service. It is a system that is designed to promote the common good and to build a more just and equitable world."

A way that Laura will be using to stay in touch with the S/C IN District and provide updates is via video!

Her videos are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@SouthCentralIndianaCoB>

Please watch - this is a great way to get to know Laura and learn about what is going on in the District!



MEET AND GREET THE NEW DEM

Laura has been joining each section for a chance to meet and celebrate with folks around the district after her installation service in April.

Dates and locations for the remaining section events are:

West Section - Sunday, May 21, 3:00 pm
Living Faith CoB - 310 N 250 W, Flora, IN 46929

Central Section - Sunday, June 4, 3:00 pm
Marion CoB - 2302 S Geneva Ave, Marion, IN 46953

MAY 2023 - DISTRICT CALENDAR DATES

- May 3** - Program & Arrangements Committee - 10:00 am - Kokomo
- May 6** - BLI Practice of Ministry Day - 9:00 am - Mexico CoB
- May 10** - BLI Task Team Meeting - 11:00 am - District Office
- May 20** - District Board Meeting - 9:00 am - Pike Creek CoB
- May 24** - Phillip Matarese Licensing - 4:00 pM—Buck Creek CoB
- May 24** - Agape and Crisis - Kingian Nonviolence Workshop - 6:30 pm - Zoom
- May 25** - BLI Beliefs & Practices of the CoB Organizational Meeting - 7:00 pm—Zoom
- May 31** - Program & Arrangements Committee - 9:30 am - Zoom
- May 31** - Ministry Credentialing Committee - 2:00 pm - District Office
- May 31** - Annual Conference Delegate Briefing - 7:00 pm - Peru CoB

ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATE BRIEFING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023, 7:00 PM

Peru Church of the Brethren
134 E 5th St, Peru, IN

Presentations by:

Annual Conference Moderator, Tim McElwee &
S/C IN Standing Committee Representative, Aaron Gross
as well as viewing of the delegate information video.

Viviendo el amor de Dios
Viv Lanmou Bondye A
Rayuwan Kaunar Allah
Living God's Love

Ephesians 5:1-2
Languages: Spanish, Creole, Hausa, English

All S/C IN Annual Conference delegates are encouraged to attend!

DISTRICT NEWS ITEMS

DISTRICT CONFERENCE — SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, August 19, 2023

Creative Financial Centre
2704 S. Goyer Rd., Kokomo, IN 46902

Theme: “Cross Training”

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’” - Luke 9:23

Moderator: Mark Stahl

Be watching for delegate designation forms in the mail beginning the week of May 15,
Non-delegate forms will also be available on the website soon!

DISTRICT FINANCIAL REPORT as of March 31, 2023

	<u>March</u>	<u>YTD</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Congregations’ Self-Allocation	\$3,875.00	\$15, 942.63
Restricted Income	\$0.00	\$115.00
Other Income	\$15,439.65	\$50,753.53
Total Income	\$19,314.65	\$66,811.16
<u>Expenses</u>		
District Expenses	\$14,447.48	\$34,932.74
Restricted Expenses	\$88.19	\$493.12
Total Expenses	\$14,535.67	\$35,425.86
Net		
	\$4,778.98	\$31,385.30
District Fund Balance		\$1,203.554.08

2023 DISTRICT DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE!!

The 2023 South/Central Indiana District Directory is now available. Digital copies will be sent to all churches and everyone listed in the directory.

If you do not receive a digital copy and would like one, or would like to have a paper copy mailed to you, please contact Sarah at the District Office (scindcob@gmail.com or 260-274-0396).

MAY DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

May 7 - Join us as we lift up Manchester University.

May 14 - Join us as we lift up Living Faith CoB and the Southern Pennsylvania District.

May 21 - Join us as we lift up Logansport CoB and the Western Pennsylvania District.

May 28- Join us as we lift up Camp Mack.



ON EARTH PEACE PRESENTS



Agape and Crisis: An introduction to Kingian Nonviolence



May 24, 2023 from 6:30-8:30pm EST

A workshop for members and friends of the South/Central Indiana District Church of the Brethren - planting seeds for a longer-term district-wide leadership development process

We are living as disciples of Jesus in a time of war, injustice, and violence. As the Prince of Peace, Jesus calls us to love enemies and overcome evil with good. Do you always know how to do that? Neither do we. We need tools and the spirit of peacemaking for these discipleship tasks.

Mark Cripe from Lafayette CoB and Cliff Kindy from Eel River Community CoB learned about On Earth Peace's dream to train 1000 Brethren in Kingian Nonviolence. We invite representatives from each congregation in the district for a two-hour introductory training via Zoom on Wednesday, May 24, 6:30-8:30pm Eastern.

This two-hour session is planting seeds for a longer-term process in our district. In addition to beginning our training for peacemaking in these times of war, it will begin to develop the deep spiritual undergirding of nonviolence to carry us for the work ahead. Through the summer we invite these individuals who participate to center their spirits and identify the focus of the soon-to-be newly learned skills of Kingian Nonviolence. We'll set a date in the fall for longer and deeper training in those skills and gather groups to work together in achieving their actions nonviolently. That work may be in our local communities, our local churches, in our families, in the political arena, or even in the larger world. Jesus' resurrection opens the door for any task. Will you dream with us? Will you listen with us to that Jesus Spirit? Will you come and learn with us? Invite pastors, youth, those working in peace and justice, your congregation's Sunday School teachers, and other interested folks!

Workshop description:

What is the crisis where you are-- and what might being a nonviolent Christian lead you to do about it? Are you hungry to get involved in dynamic and creative ways in the concerns and conflicts of your community? Join us to explore nonviolence as an active force based in agape love. Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation is a philosophy and methodology based in the work of the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the leaders of the Civil Rights era. Curriculum co-author David Jehnsen (Living Peace CoB, Columbus OH) played an important role in codifying the lessons of the movement for future generations. Join us to consider the call of nonviolence on our lives as disciples of Jesus.

By the end of the session, participants will...

- Experience a glimpse of the nonviolence imagination and perspective
- Explore the "will" (principles) and the "skill" (steps) of Kingian Nonviolence
- Reflect on specific crises or challenges we face in our lives and communities
- Consider ways to apply the Kingian Nonviolence framework to ministry and community settings
- Explore next steps with this work in the South/Central Indiana District

"Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless." - Church of the Brethren "Compelling Vision" Statement

UPCOMING BRETHREN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE COURSE

BELIEFS & PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Instructor: Laura Stone

Organizational Meeting: May 25, 2023, 7:00 pm, Zoom

This will be a hybrid format course, with both in person and online sessions to be determined at the organizational meeting based on instructor and student schedules.

For full details and class brochure, go to:

https://www.scindcob.org/2023_Belief_and_Practices_of_the_CoB.pdf

You may be exploring ministry, answering a call to ministry, and/or seeking further education. There are no prerequisites to these courses. Anyone may enroll.

To register, contact the District Office at scindcob@gmail.com or 260-274-0396

UPCOMING BRETHREN ACADEMY COURSE

Defining Set-Apart Ministry Within the Multivocational Reality

September 6-October 31, 2023

Instructor: Sandra Jenkins

This class will explore the set-apart ministry within the multivocational context, including the rewards and challenges for both pastor and congregation. Topics include the multivocational ministry of the Apostle Paul and an investigation of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

The deadline to register for this course is **August 2, 2023**

Persons interested in taking an Academy course for CEUs or Personal Enrichment may register in one of two ways:

- 1) Mail registration form with payment to Brethren Academy, 615 National Rd. W., Richmond, IN 47374.
- 2) Register and pay online at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/brethren-academy-course-registration-annual-trim-payment/> There is a 3% service charge when registering online.

Questions may be directed to Academy Director, Janet Ober Lambert at oberlja@bethanyseminary.edu or 765-983-1820

JUNE VENTURES COURSE OFFERING

“Black Panther Films as Metaphor: Lessons about Race, Colonialism, Violence, and Identity in Wakanda”

Monday, June 5 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Central Time, online

Instructor: Dr. Steve Schweitzer, Bethany Seminary

The MCU film Black Panther (2018) engages in complex topics such as race, colonialism, violence/nonviolence, and issues of identity in explicit and surprising ways. The sequel, Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022), continues to explore these themes. The two films provide a helpful metaphor and entry point for such theological questions being raised both in the wider culture and within the church.

Registration for all courses and more information about Ventures in Christian Discipleship is available at www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

Message from Annual Conference Moderator:

Living God's Love in Cincinnati and Beyond

Viviendo el amor de Dios
Viv Lanmou Bondye A
Rayuwan Kaunar Allah
Living God's Love

Ephesians 5:1-2
Languages: Spanish, Creole, Hausa, English

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

It's exciting to say that in just a couple of months thousands of us will gather in Cincinnati for the 2023 Annual Conference! I hope you will be one of them and I look forward to seeing you there. A great deal of work has already taken place to ensure that when we gather everything will be in place to ensure a joyous and meaningful gathering as the Body of Christ. And even more preparations are still underway!

As you may know, our theme for Annual Conference this year is *Living God's Love*. It is based on Ephesians 5:1-2, but the central message is found throughout the Bible. In fact, I think this calling is the most basic and most important teaching we can commit ourselves to live out as disciples of Jesus Christ.

To illustrate the call to live God's gift of inclusive love, our Annual Conference logo this year refers to the three words, Living God's Love, as they appear in English, along with the translation of these three powerful words in Spanish, Creole, and Hausa. We are truly a global church and no matter where we live, we are called to live God's love in a bold, compassionate, and inclusive manner—which is how God loves us.

Between now and when we gather July 4-8 in Cincinnati, I urge you to make a commitment to seek out those in your midst who may not often experience the love of God. Search for those in your community and in your church who are often marginalized, ignored, or forgotten. Find you sisters and brothers who are readily dismissed because of their sexual orientation, their faith perspective, or their personal characteristics. Once you've found them, demonstrate God's love for them as completely and as fully as you possibly can.

Jesus said: "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same" (Luke 6:32-33). God, through Christ, calls us out of our comfort zones and into all of humanity. My fervent prayer is that we love inclusively and extravagantly within this family of God that we call the Church of the Brethren.

During Annual Conference we will have many exciting opportunities to experience God's love and to hear about the many ways we are living out God's love as 'Jesus in the Neighborhood' stories are shared. We will also be inspired as we welcome new fellowships and celebrate the growth of the global church, while we learn together through Equipping Sessions, as we are renewed through worship services, and as we are strengthened through fellowship during common meals, concerts, and countless discussions. It will also be a joy to celebrate the 75th anniversary of BVS and the 100th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria: EYN!

It will be wonderful to see you in Cincinnati and to hear about the many ways you are living God's love in your church and in your home community.

In Christ and through God's love,

Tim McElwee
2023 Annual Conference moderator

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

Duke Energy Convention Center
Cincinnati, Ohio
July 4-8, 2023

Registration is now open!!!

To register & for more information:

<https://www.brethren.org/ac2023/>

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Ephesians 5:1-2
Languages: Spanish, Creole, Hausa, English

NATIONAL OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE (NOAC)

September 4-8, 2023
Lake Junaluska, NC

NOAC is a Spirit-filled gathering of adults 50 and older who love learning and discerning together, exploring God's call for their lives and living out that call by sharing their energy, insight, and legacy with their families, communities, and the world.



Online registration opens May 1. Past participants will receive an e-mail soon with updated information. For more information: <https://www.brethren.org/discipleshipmin/noac/>

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **Mark Charles**, speaker, writer, consultant on the complexities of American history, race, culture, and faith
- **Ken Medema and Ted Swartz**
Ken is a singer/songwriter and “sneaky” theologian. Ted is a Mennonite actor and writer.
- **Osheta Moore**, writer, pastor, speaker, and podcaster

Note: Timbercrest is planning to host online viewing of NOAC for Timbercrest residents and S/C IN District folks who are not able to travel to Lake Junaluska.

More details about plans for this will be available in upcoming newsletters.



NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE 2023

Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA
June 16 – 18, 2023

Come join us for a weekend packed with powerful worship, fun workshops, music, and recreation!

For more information, registration and conference schedule, go to: <https://www.brethren.org/yya/njhc/>

Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience and Beloved Community

July 3-4, 2023
Cincinnati, Ohio

Church of the Brethren Ministers' Association
Pre-Annual Conference Continuing Education Event



Speaker: Sheila Wise Rowe, M.Ed., Author-Speaker-Spiritual Director

For more information and to register go to: www.brethren.org/sustaining

Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience and Beloved Community

A Brethren Academy DISU Course

July 3-4, 2023

Facilitator: Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey

This course is a Directed Independent Study Unit (DISU) in conjunction with attending the Annual Conference in Cincinnati, OH. The registration deadline is **May 29**.

TRIM/EFSM students will receive one credit in Ministry/Ministry Skills upon completion. This also qualifies for the Annual Conference Experience. Pastors participating in this course will earn 2 Continuing Education Units. This course is open to anyone for Personal Enrichment.

This is a two-step registration and payment process:

1. Fill out the attached registration form on the brochure and return payment of **\$115 to the Brethren Academy** for the DISU credit or register online, see below, for the DISU and pay \$115 plus a small fee by credit card.

2. Fill out the registration form for the Pre-Ministers Association event, (<http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/sustaining.html>) and **pay** the appropriate fee for the Brethren Minister's Association Pre-AC Continuing Education Event:

- \$50 EFSM/TRIM fee - \$50 if first time attendee - \$90 for individual

You may now register online for the DISU at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/brethren-academy-course-registration-annual-trim-payment/>

Please select "Directed Independent Study" as your purpose for registering. Then select your registration preference. You will then have a box to type the name of the course: Healing Racial Trauma.

You may learn more about the conference, and register for the conference at (<http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/sustaining.html>)

Peacefully, Simply, Together.

SOUTH/CENTRAL INDIANA DISTRICT OFFICE, CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
260.274.0396

LAURA STONE, DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MINISTER
scindlaura@gmail.com, 574.306.8768

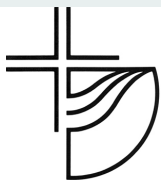
SARAH O'HARA, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
scindcob@gmail.com
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

District Website: www.scindcob.org
Denominational website: www.brethren.org



<https://www.facebook.com/SouthCentral-Indiana-District-205091192857321/>

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