



Indian Creek Church of the Brethren
821 Main Street, Harleysville, PA 19438

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Sunday Schedule

9:00 am – Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship

Office Hours

Monday-Friday
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Church Staff

Mark E. Baliles
Pastor
Susan Gallen
Administrative Assistant
Don Ziegler
Custodian

Kathy Moyer
Wee Folk Director/Teacher
Heather Thomsen
Wee Folk Assistant Teacher

Personal Reflections on Annual Conference

In early July, delegates and other church members gathered at Cincinnati, OH for the 236th recorded Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren. Pat Bub was our delegate. She represented us well, and her written report can be found on page 2 of this issue of Ripples. For my Pastor's article, I would like to share reflections from more of a personal perspective and experience.

My best guess is that I have attended about 32 Annual Conferences. Over the years, some things still feel very much the same as when I first attended, but other things have changed. One of the best changes, in my opinion, was when the decision was made for delegates to sit at round tables instead of in rows of chairs, as had been done for decades previously. Now, delegates are assigned to table groups of 7-8 people during business sessions. Time is allotted for table groups to have conversation about specific reports or items of business. Each table has a facilitator, who helps to keep the conversation moving and on track. This creates opportunity for every delegate to share thoughts or questions and to listen to the perspectives of others.

This year, I was the facilitator for one of four non-delegate tables. We had a great group with both geographic and ideological diversity. One highlight for me from that experience was tied to our very first conversation on the first day of business. As we introduced ourselves, one gentleman said with real sincerity, "I just want everyone around this table to know that I love you. I don't know you. We may have different views about things. But none of that matters. I love you and I care about you." And even better than what he said was that he lived it out throughout the week in some beautiful ways.

Overall, the entire conference this year seemed to have less of a feeling of contention and animosity than there have been some years. The preaching and the Bible studies were exceptional and relevant to where we are as churches and as a denomination.

As both a pastor and as a church member, I value my experiences at Annual Conference for the ways it provides connection, inspiration, understanding, equipping, and participation in discernment. While some things about me seem much the same, over the years, I, too, have changed, and Annual Conference has played a significant role in my growth.

Pastor Mark (Your partner in the journey)



Deacon Ministry

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

Annual Conference Review

By Pat Bub

The 2023 Annual Conference was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, from July 4th through the 8th. There were 440 registered delegates and 932 non-delegates for a total of 1372. The daily format varies little from year to year—on-your-own or group breakfasts, morning business sessions, group or on-your-own lunches followed by “equipping sessions” (formerly insight sessions), afternoon business sessions, dinner followed by evening worship service and a musical concert or more equipping sessions. The concert on Wednesday evening was performed by the Walking Roots Band, a group based out of Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Childcare and activities were provided for different age groups as well as tours of museums, gardens and parks. There was a blood drive in which 120 units were donated, and the annual walk/run on Friday morning. The Silent Auction brought in about \$13,000, which was split two-thirds between Brethren Disaster Ministries and one-third to Annual Conference expenses, and the Quilt Auction brought in about \$3700, which was donated to the Nigeria Crisis Fund.

The evening worship offerings supported Annual Conference expenses-\$6400; Global Missions-\$8600; Discipleship and Leadership Formation-\$5000, and Found House, an emergency shelter for homeless families

connected to Interfaith Hospitality Network – nearly \$12,000.

On Thursday afternoon an anti-gun violence walk to City Hall followed the business session. It felt especially poignant because a young woman was gunned down during the fireworks display on Tuesday evening outside one of the hotels where delegates were staying. We later learned she was the great niece of one of the leaders of anti-gun violence groups in the city.

Copies of the Summary of Action are currently available in the Narthex, or if you would like one emailed or mailed to you, please contact the church office. For more information on the Conference, please go to www.brethren.org.



Save
the
Date

On September 24th at 2 p.m. in the pavilion, the Worship Ministry Team is planning a hymn sing celebration in memory of Kerry Ziegler and his love of Gospel Music. We encourage you and your friends to gather with us and former members of this worship team, which began over fifty years ago. Bring lawn chairs and plan to worship with us. (In case of inclement weather it will be held in the Sanctuary).

Make a
joyful noise
to the LORD
Psalms 100:1



Church Picnic

Article and photos by Donna Parcell



Even though VBS was cancelled, we still held our church and VBS combination picnic on July 2nd! We were so glad the forecasted rain held out so we could enjoy a beautiful afternoon together. It was great to have some VBS friends join us, and we loved catching up with them. We even met new friends, some neighbors from across the street who came to use the playground. We invited them to stay for the picnic and they accepted! These folks along with over 30 members of our congregation had a wonderful time enjoying good food and great fellowship. The adults enjoyed visiting while Micah and his new friend Olivia had fun on the playground. Later Cassandra and Veronica had fun doing magic tricks with Micah.



Chris Spigel once again ran the grill and did an awesome job. The burgers and hotdogs were cooked to perfection! The folks of Indian Creek never disappoint with their amazing sides and desserts. Even though it was a hot day, there is always a nice breeze at the pavilion and we were thankful for that. Thanks so much to everyone who helped to make it happen, and to all of those who attended.



Youth Group News

Article and photos by Donna Parcell



Our June activity was an outdoor “cooking over a campfire” cooking challenge. The eager participants were Jadon, Claire, and Nathan. The first challenge was “Taste it and Make it.” Miss Donna prepared a mountain pie which the chefs carefully tasted. Then they had to recreate the exact ingredients plus properly cook it. The mystery dish was a mountain pizza, and the youth had to choose between three different kinds of bread, three different kinds of sauces, and three different kinds of cheeses.



Everyone presented a nice mountain pie to the judge, but the one with the best palate (guessing two out of three ingredients correctly) was Claire! All three of them made exquisite mountain pizzas, much to the delight of the judge. Judging proved to be quite difficult, so a guest judge (Micah Duett) was brought in. Micah gave a thumbs up to everything he was allowed to taste!



The second challenge was the Signature challenge. Everyone could make whatever they wanted. Nathan made awesome potato slices, nicely seasoned and roasted over the fire. Jadon played on the judge’s sweet tooth and made a s’more with a Nutella mountain pie concoction which was quickly consumed. Claire pulled out all of the stops by using rainbow marshmallows and chocolate, and thusly appealing to Miss Donna’s love of pink and of chocolate. The judging proved to be too difficult, and so a third judge (Jane) was brought in, but it was still declared a three way tie.

We spent the rest of the evening creating more fun campfire concoctions and searching for 4 leaf clovers.



Change as a softening to self and to others

By Lloyd Steffen

Buddhist author Jack Kornfield tells the story of a military officer who had just begun a regimen of meditation practices in a effort to reduce stress. One afternoon, the officer went to the grocery store and, when checking out, found himself standing in a long line. In front of him was a woman holding only one item, and in her arms she carried a baby.

By nature an impatient person, he was irritated when this woman stepped up to the checkout and then began to talk to the clerk. As the officer checked his watch and exhaled a sigh of annoyance, the woman handed the baby to the clerk, and they both began to coo over the child, oblivious to the lengthening line.

The officer was by now exasperated, and in his inner dialogue, he heard himself let fly with accusations and judgements at the nerve of these two and the selfishness. But then he remembered that his meditation practices were designed to help in such moments, so he stopped and shifted focus.

He tried to see what he was doing and how he was reacting. He took note of his irritability and judgmentalism, then resolved to take a different path. He took a few deep breaths, relaxed, then looked again—really looked—at the baby. When his turn came to check out, he unloaded his grocery cart and said to the clerk, “That was a beautiful baby.” The clerk smiled and replied, “That was my baby. My husband was killed recently in a fighter plane accident so my mother takes care of the baby now while I’m at work. She tries to come in once or twice a day so I can see him.”

Kornfield observes that we have a great need in our world to soften our relationships and interactions with ourselves and others. We are possessed of minds that are continually engaged in making judgments about all the things we experience in daily life that do not conform to our wishes and our desires.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wishing and desiring or even in making judgements, but we often do so without having all the facts and knowing the full story. We jump to conclusions and often those conclusions are wrongheaded if not mean-spirited. Our judgments can block our ability to show concern and compassion while feeding our desires to have things our own way.

In the spiritual life, it is important to recognize our own reactions to everyday things that happen, to seek change where we can and acknowledging when change is beyond our grasp.

We cannot—with the wave of the hand eliminate COVID-19 or the omicron variant—nor can we awaken those who have refused vaccination to the dangers they pose to themselves and others.

We cannot, as individuals, repair a world suffering the ravages of climate change and the prospect of a planet becoming inhospitable to human life.

We cannot, as individuals, eliminate poverty and war and the many breakdowns in civility that threaten peace.

We cannot, as individuals, address every injustice.

We can, however, make room for change by confronting the many things that we do to contribute to the harshness of life. We can soften the hard edges by changing outlook and perspective.

The story above presents a man open and willing to change his attitude, to rethink the meaning of his perceptions, and to look again and reconstruct meaning based on something other than his own anger and irritability.

This article was originally published in the January 15, 2022 edition of *The Morning Call*.

Submitted by Bonnie Cassel





August

- 6 Linda Greiner
- 12 Letitia Negro (Grande)
- 14 Jadon Bateman, Nancy Scherfel
- 15 Jeremy Steward
- 20 Esther Kishbaugh, Roy Feiss
- 21 Chuck Kane, Leyahna Stevens
- 26 Lance Clemmer
- 29 Pat Bub, Grace Moyer
- 30 Joanne Force
- 31 Herb Warriner

Early September Birthdays

- 3 Carol-Joyce Anton
- 4 Art Derstine

If we are missing *your* birthday, please let the Church Office know! We want to include everybody in our monthly birthday notice.

The Ocean

Beautiful, colorful, changing sea,
Breaking in thunderous roar,
Sweeping along the whistling trades
Onto the windswept shore,

With the fog in tow, the wind before,
And the racing clouds on high,
With the wet spray and the flying foam,
And the green swells bounding by!

There are ships that go down to the sea
With their gallant men and bold,
While the wild gulls scream
and sailors dream
Of a pirate's sunken gold,

With the fog in tow, and the wind before,
And the racing clouds on high,
With the wet spray and the flying foam,
And the green swells bounding by!

~Ruth L. Nine



Sea Gulls on the Sand

Many are there on the sand . . .
Quietly waiting sea gulls.
Of what are they thinking?
And why do they wait there?
The surf rolls high, and white
Sprays dissipate into the ocean air.
The sun is high in the heavens,
But its rays hardly pierce the maze . . .
And the sea gulls stand waiting
On the sand.

~Anne Dodson Buck

