



INTERSECTIONS

A newsletter for the Richmond Church of the Brethren community

August

All are welcome

Sunday school: 9:15

Fellowship: 10:00

Worship: 10:30

**Continuing the
Work of Jesus...
Peacefully.
Simply.
Together.**

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Matt's Musings

In ___ we trust

Who do you trust? Really - think about it for a minute or two. Maybe who is too specific. *What* do you trust? Your family or friends? Your own intuition and knowledge? The scientific method? Capitalism? Complete strangers with whom you have no real sense of relationship or connection?

The Greek word for faith, *pistis*, can be understood as including a range of meaning, starting with trust, deepening into confidence, and culminating in faith.

We are living in an age of mistrust. All around us we see why it isn't wise to blindly accept the honesty or integrity of governments, corporations, and news media outlets. We've seen the damage that can be done when we uncritically and universally entrust power and influence to such groups. So instead, we only trust the politicians, businesses, and journalists that we can confidently believe are on "our side."

These ways of interacting with the world around us are equally present within the church. We find it difficult to trust those who believe differently than we do. We often don't trust their good intentions, their faithfulness, or their desire to be in true relationship

with us as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Our tradition teaches that we can come to know the mind of Christ by listening to and learning from the ways the Spirit is speaking as we gather together around scripture. This is why we practice a time of shared response as part of our sermons on Sunday mornings - because we trust that God reveals the Living Word to us in many ways and through many voices.

But such a pattern depends upon mutual trust - that each of our stories are connected with God's story, that the Spirit speaks to and through all of us, and that God may have more in store for us than any of us as individuals can discern alone. In an age when trusting others that we don't agree with is seen as foolish, this way of following Jesus is decidedly counter-cultural.

Ultimately this comes back to our trust, confidence, and faith in God. Trusting that God is at work both within us and those with whom we disagree. Confidence that the Spirit is present within and beyond our human-made systems. Faith in the promise of Christ that all things are being made new through God's still-emerging reign of love. Even in this broken, crumbling world in which we live, there's still a place for trust.

Grace and peace,

-Pastor Matt

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference Business Report and Reflection

The business sessions of year's Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, proved to be a time of both hurt and hope.

The deep divisions within our denomination concerning the church's language and official position on same-sex covenantal relationships were on display as we concluded a 2-year special response process. The committee charged with gathering reports and input from

across the denomination shared that there were two clear majority positions. Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of those who participated in the process voiced support of the 2009 Standing Committee's Statement of

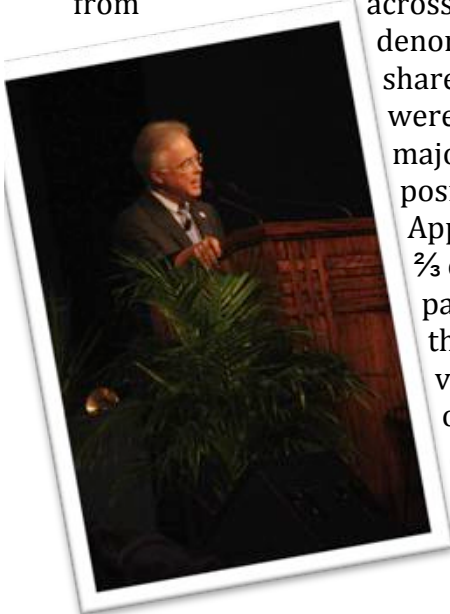
Confession and Commitment, which included an affirmation of the 1983 Human Sexuality paper. Additionally, in summation of the overall process, it was reported that about a large majority expressed their hope for the denomination to remain united amidst our differences - a position supported by both those who wished to keep and to revise our existing statement. The final Annual Conference decision was to "return" both the Statement of Confession and Commitment and the Query on Same-Sex Covenantal Relationships, claiming that they had served their purpose of helping us to discern where the denomination as a whole stands. An amendment from the floor was approved which included a specific re-affirmation of the 1983 paper and a recommendation that while further conversation is encouraged, it should take place outside of the query process. It was made clear that this was not a moratorium, however, and that these conversations should continue at all levels of the church.

Other places that our division and brokenness were evident included the nomination from the floor and later election of Bob Krouse as moderator-elect, despite

the Nominating Committee's selection of two very capable and qualified women for the ballot.

Also, in every election where a woman or young adult and a man were nominated for the same position, the man was elected. It seems unfortunately clear that the larger denomination still has a long way to go when it comes to affirming the leadership of gifted women and young adults. There was also divided and contentious conversation on queries concerning climate change and proper decorum.

Despite the heated discussion on both these preceding queries, the ultimate decisions of the conference were



hopeful. The query concerning climate change was adopted and referred to the Washington Advocacy Office of the Global Mission Partnerships with the intention of providing guidance about how individuals, congregations, and the denomination can take concrete action and offer leadership on the changing of earth's climate. The query on proper decorum, which was interpreted to concern the wearing of particular garb to identify personal convictions, was returned, stating that existing recommendations concerning how we relate to one another were sufficient.

More hopeful business included the acceptance of a resolution on the war in Afghanistan, calling for the withdrawal of combat troops and an increased focus on humanitarian aid, alternatives to violence, ministry to those affected by the war, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and study, prayer, and action related to just peacemaking.

In other business:

- The Congregational Life Ministries office is working on a revision to the Congregational Ethics Guidelines, the final version of which will come to conference in a couple years.
- The Office of Ministry continues to work on a revised Ministerial Leadership paper, which outlines the

calling, credentialing, and support of ministering persons, which will be presented at next year's conference.

- The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory committee recommended a 3.6% cost of living increase to the salary scale, which the delegates approved.
- The Mission and Ministry Board sharply reduced their budget for 2012, requiring \$638,000 of yet-to-be-decided cuts from the Core Ministries Fund.
- We were given a preview of the new denominational vision statement: "Through Scripture, Jesus calls us to live as courageous disciples by word and action: To surrender ourselves to God, to embrace one another, to express God's love for all creation."



In addition to these business items, many of which call for us to be in prayer for our denomination and its leaders, another very serious prayer concern was shared at Conference on Tuesday evening. While attending Conference an LGBT person within the Church of the Brethren received a credible death threat which referenced the person's sexuality. Police have been investigating both e-mails and threatening notes, and thus far no suspects have been announced. In the midst of our deep divisions as a church, to have such a threat of interpersonal violence shows why it is so important for the church to make itself a place where all are welcomed, loved, and safe, regardless of our differing theological convictions.

A two-page wrap-up report from Annual Conference is available in the gathering area outside the sanctuary. Denominational Annual Conference news & webcast recordings are available online at <http://www.brethren.org/news/conferences/ac2011/>.

-Pastor Matt, 2011 Annual Conference Delegate

Thanks to Becky McKimmy for the photos

CONGREGATION NEWS

Pastor Matt's Travels

Pastor Matt will be out of town August 19th-21st. As always, when Matt is away please contact one of our deacons (Mary Eller, Amy Ritchie, Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm) or our Ministry Team chairperson (Enten Eller) with any pastoral care needs or other church-related issues.

Office Manager on Vacation

Our Office Manager (Anna Woofenden) will be on vacation from August 1-8th and will not be available via phone or email. Please contact Matt McKimmy or Enten Eller if you have questions for the church office. And if you have anything for the bulletin or weekly announcements, please send it to Matt. Anna's looking forward to being back in town and in the office again at the end of August!

Stewardship worship series begins Aug. 7

Beginning August 7th we'll be exploring the subject of stewardship during our Sunday morning gatherings. What does stewardship mean to you? How do you care for and share resources such as wisdom, wealth, time, and talents? In what ways does being a follower of Jesus impact the relationship with your "stuff"? How do you see yourself joining with

God at work in our church, community, and world? Our series will draw to a close September 4th as we share the ways we hope to participate in and support our church's shared ministry in the coming year, both financially and with all our various gifts and abilities.

Feast of Love Discussion

A number of folks from across the denomination, including some from RCoB, have been discussing forming a new district within the denomination, tentatively named Feast of Love, based on spiritual geography rather than physical location. The vision of this new district includes bringing congregations together for worship, ministry, education, support, and resourcing. As part of it's functioning as a district, Feast of Love hopes to call, credential, and support ministers, including LGBTQ persons, and allies. You are invited to discuss your own hopes and dreams as they pertain to Feast of Love after the potluck on Sunday, August 14. There will be an informational presentation and a worshipful discussion time for all who are interested. Come with questions, as well as a spirit open to discernment.

Hosting Opportunity

Musa and his wife, Sarah, Mambula, will be in Richmond from August 18th until September 2nd. Musa is the former head of Theological College of Northern Nigeria and studied at Bethany Seminary in the late 1970's. He and Sarah are in the states for several months visiting friends in the Church of the Brethren. Nancy Faus-Mullen is taking care of their schedule while in Richmond, and would be happy for you to invite them to your house for a meal, to the church and seminary for any discussion groups, etc. Please let Nancy know if you would like to entertain some daytime or evening. You will be blessed by their presence, deep faith, and exciting (and dangerous) experiences living in Nigeria during these days of violence and the challenge of Christians and Muslims to live with each other peacefully.

OUTREACH

Furniture Needed

Taylor and his little brother, Alexi, have birthdays this summer. Taylor's is on July 22, Alexi's August 29th. Candy, their mother, (who has been off work for at least the summer months) has informed me that they need either a bunk bed or two single beds. If any of you happen to have such and are ready to get rid of them, or if you would be willing to give a contribution toward buying them beds, let Mary Eller know. Thanks.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

8/2 Tom Mullen (in memory)
8/4 Jane and Jeff Muller
8/8 Travis Poling
8/11 Christina Singh
8/16 Anna Lisa Gross
8/19 Phyllis and Don Miller
8/21 Janet Wagner
8/22 Grace and Paul Morentz
8/23 Elwood Skillings
8/24 Kelly Burk
Delora and Gene Roop
8/30 Judi Haitch
Alexi Harrell (2008)



August outreach emphasis - Hope House

Our August outreach emphasis is Hope House. Located on the grounds of the Richmond State Hospital, Hope House is a program of the Richmond/Wayne Country Halfway House. Local founders were inspired by "The Healing Place," a nationally recognized, effective homeless services & recovery program model in Louisville, Kentucky. Hope House offers an emergency shelter to homeless men, many with addiction problems; a residential, mutual-help alcohol & drug recovery program; and other services aiding addicted individuals in transforming their lives & re-entering the community as constructive and productive members.

Hope House needs our help to continue their vital work, which is why we've teamed up with them this month! If you feel called to help the men of Hope House, please make your check out to Richmond Church of the Brethren with "Hope House" in the subject line. You may also place a donation in the Service Cup our worship center.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUMMARY

Congregational Meeting Summary June 5, 2011

Finances - The financial report for 2011 to date showed our giving through May was slightly higher than needed to meet the budget. Building and grounds spending is down as we have not kept up with maintenance needs.

District Loan – Our standing with the South-Central Indiana District regarding our loan was summarized:

- We received a \$100,000 loan in 2003 for the purchase of our building. Per the loan's terms, conversations with the district regarding repayment were held in 2008.
- We followed up with a letter stating that according to the original terms, capital improvements to the building would count as "repayment," and the district would establish a fund to help retire loans such as ours. The district did not respond to this letter, and no other documentation exists.
- The current district considered us to be in default and did not accept the stated original terms as valid.
- After conversation between our church's leadership and the district's, we submitted a proposal: An immediate payment of \$10,000, annual payments of no less than 2 percent of our annual budget, additional payments made from special offerings we take, and the district's forgiveness of 50 percent of the loan.

These terms were accepted by the district and approved at the congregational meeting. Documentation of this arrangement is essential.

Welcoming Conversations This task team submitted a report of their work—including guest speakers on the topic of homosexuality and cottage meetings within the congregation—and a summary of the cottage meeting discussions. They recommend that the congregation consider becoming open and affirming. Ministry Team is discussing the formation of a small group to craft a welcoming statement.

Building and Grounds Ron Itnyre will serve as building and grounds coordinator. Mark Stosberg was thanked for extra work in helping cover maintenance needs during the interim.

Building Use The congregation affirmed further discussion by the Ministry Team on making our building available to other groups as a service and for income.

New Worship Space The room is cleaned and ready for furnishing and painting with the hope that it will be ready this summer. Contacts have been made with people interested in using it.



Calendar

August

- 8.1 Dinner and Conversations 7:00 p.m. (McKimmy's)
- 8.2 Loops of Love 5:00 p.m. (Unwind Yarn Shop)
- 8.3 Senior Breakfast 8:30 a.m.
District Pastors Gathering 7:00 p.m.
- 8.7 Worship 10:30 a.m. Stewardship Series Begins
- 8.8 Dinner and Conversations 7:00 p.m. (McKimmy's)
- 8.9 Ministry Team Meeting 5:30 p.m.
- 8.14 Worship 10:30 a.m.
Potluck 12:00 p.m.
Feast of Love Discussion 1:00 p.m.
- 8.15 Dinner and Conversations 7:00 p.m. (McKimmy's)
- 8.16 Loops of Love 5:00 p.m. (Unwind Yarn Shop)
- 8.21 Worship 10:30 a.m.
Hymn Sing during worship
- 8.22 Dinner and Conversations 7:00 p.m. (McKimmy's)
Office Manager back in town
- 8.26 Pastor Matt's Spiritual Renewal Day
- 8.30 Worship 10:30 a.m.
- 8.31 Dinner and Conversations 7:00 p.m. (McKimmy's)

Mark your calendars for *next* month:

- Sept. 11-21 - 10 days of prayer for peace, in honor of the 10th anniversary of 9/11 and the International Day of Prayer for Peace.
- Sept. 17 - Visit to Mosque in Cincinnati with Children of Abraham
- Sept. 18 - Worship in the Park with West Richmond Friends
- Sept. 24 - South/Central Indiana District Conference



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