

Wabash Church of the Brethren

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Kay Gaier, pastor



Here is what I'm thinking...

January 2017

The word on the streets is that 2016 was a particularly difficult year for many people. This was confirmed in an internet article about words on the streets from "browbeat," Slate's Culture Blog. The article begins, "Oxford Dictionaries chose post-truth. Dictionary.com selected xenophobia. The Cambridge Dictionary picked paranoid, and the Collins Dictionary Brexit. Merriam-Webster is coming later this week, but fascism is leading its pack. It's "Word of the Year" season, when lexicographers and linguists name one word that best sums up the top cultural themes, on-line look-ups, or language patterns and innovations in the past 365 days. The compilation of these words gives us a sense of the conversations that dominated our public life in a year that the article later calls "a steady stream of world-historic awfulness."

Maybe awfulness is actually the word that captures the racial violence, political division, and refugee displacement that dominated this past year. Which leads to this question: How should we as individuals who are followers of Jesus, and who together make up the Wabash Church of the Brethren, respond to the awfulness which has impact that is as vast as the world and as close as our neighbor? We will start this new year focusing on the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus comes into his calling in a time when the world is saturated with awfulness. The scriptures we will be reading this month tell the story of how Jesus began and focused his mission and ministry in the midst of the awfulness that permeated his world. It is tempting to dismiss Jesus' teaching and example as too far removed from the realities of our situation today to be instructive in more than an abstract way.

So here's what I'm thinking...Rather than feeling helpless or victimized, let's respond by being intentional about taking Jesus seriously. During our sharing time in worship, in addition to giving attention to the joys and concerns in our local congregation, let's give voice to what is going on in our city, country, and world. Then, after we name specific current manifestations of awfulness, we will listen to scripture while holding those things in our hearts and minds. We will listen for how the story of Jesus informs our response to the real situations of our lives. If our calling is as Micah says, "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God," and as Jesus stated God's requirements similarly -- love God and your neighbor -- what would that look like as we respond to these situations? In part, I hope there will be a realization that in ways we may not even be thinking about, we are already participating in this calling. I also hope that in situations that can be complicated, confusing, and divisive we will gain clarity and focus. Several years ago, at an all-church retreat, we claimed that the focus for our mission and ministry was to "be the healing presence of Christ" in Wabash. May it continue to be so even in the midst of awfulness.

Blessings,

Kay



Worship Schedule

January 8 Truth or Consequences?

Scripture Matthew 3:13-17

Message Pastor Kay Gaier

What was the significance of John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River as Jesus began his ministry? How do we decide who to follow in our own spiritual lives? What does it mean to hear God's voice through the mentorship or guidance of others? In a time when fake news and false claims are always in front of us, now do we decide who to listen to and how to align with God's truth for us?

January 15 What do we have to show for it?

Scripture John 1:29-42

Message Pastor Kay Gaier

It is easy to forget that John had followers of his own, his own disciples. But from John's perspective, it wasn't about him—it was about the kingdom coming. What is amazing about John is that he wasn't just waiting for the Messiah to come—he was expecting him. How do we live in faith and expectation that God's kingdom came and is coming through Jesus Christ? How do we as disciples in this age invite others to "Come and see"?

January 22 Go toward the light

Scripture Matthew 4:12-23

Message Pastor Kay Gaier

Isaiah reminds the people of God of their call to be the light to the nations, helping them find a focused hope during a troubled time of exile. Similarly, Jesus calls the first disciples in response to these prophetic words of Isaiah. Now how do these words and stories shine light into the confusing places of our own real lives and help us clarify our focus and answer God's call.

January 29 Keep your eyes on the prize

Scripture Matthew 5:1-12

Message Pastor Kay Gaier

The wisdom of the world, the power and strength of personal success—these are to be scorned in favor of the blessings that come from humility, peacemaking, and righteous living. These aren't just religious platitudes. These are the keys to the kingdom. Or so Jesus says. Are you convinced? How does this make sense when we have all kinds of examples to the contrary? If we are continuing the work of Jesus, what exactly are we working for?

Would you like to participate in the worship service sometime? If so, you'll find a sign-up sheet outside the office for various positions.



P.O. Box 158, Milford, IN 46542

Phone: 574-658-4831 Fax 574-658-4765

Email: info@campmack.org

Website: www.campmack.org

- ⇒ January 14 Camp Rep Meeting
- ⇒ February 16-19 Quilt Retreat
- ⇒ February 23-26 Scrapbooking Retreat
- ⇒ March 4 Team Leader Training
- ⇒ March 13-15 Volunteer Work Days
- ⇒ March 17 Annual Dinner
- ⇒ March 18-19 Mother Daughter Retreat

Volunteer Work Days

Work with Camp Mack staff as we prep for the summer camp season. We have planned work tasks for all skill levels and ages. March 13-15. Come for a few hours or all three days. Meals and lodging are available. There is no fee for this event. Please contact the office at 574-658-4831 for reservations.

Team Leader Training

Is March 4, 9am—3pm and is the first of our leadership trainings for summer programs.

Team Leaders Needed

Creative Arts (July 9-14)

Pedal Paddle Camp (July 2-8)

Team Leaders are a crucial link in forming the leadership team for each camp.

We also have a few Team Leaders who would appreciate an assistant.

Seekers (June 18-23)

Finders (June 18-23)

Finders (July 2-7)

Dune Challenge (June 25-July 1)

Culinary (July 11-15)

Archery (June 11-15).

Training is scheduled for March 4. Email jessk@campmack.org if interested or in need of more information.

Summer Staff and Program Assistants

We are ready to start interviews for 2017 Summer Staff, Summer Photographer, Summer Challenge Course Manager, and the Summer Waterfront Director. Summer Staff employment begins at Camp Mack in mid to late May. Lifeguards have the opportunity to attend/ be trained as part of their job. Summer staff works in the areas of Facility, Housekeeping, Kitchen, Program, Life-guarding and more. Lodging and meals are part of the summer staff package as well as opportunity for college scholarship. Summer staff will change your life! Email info@campmack.org if interested. Applications are available at www.campmack.org under employment.



DID YOU KNOW...

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN
YOUR ARTICLES
EARLY!**

R E M I N D E R :

**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES IS
January 15**

Manchester CoB is seeking an Administrative Assistant

It is a 27 hours weekly salaried position.
More information at
<http://www.manchestercob.net> Submit
application to kurt_borgmann@yahoo.com
OR ATTN: Kurt Borgmann, PO Box 349, N
Manchester, IN 46962

Special Offering — Supportive Community Network

SCN is a part of the Brethren Mennonite Council and seeks to:

- To offer support, resources and opportunities for dialogue among congregations which welcome gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual members
- To encourage meaningful dialogue at the denominational level
- To offer support and resources for individuals who are working toward welcome



Christian Citizen- ship Seminar 2017

Registration for
[Christian Citizenship
Seminar](#)
2017 is now open!

This year's theme fo-
cuses on Native Ameri-
can rights,
particularly related to
food security.

April 22-27

Register today at
www.brethren.org/ccs

Snow and ice

If we ever have to
cancel Sunday morning
worship this winter
because of snow and/or
cold, please check
WANE-TV (Channel 15),
Ft. Wayne, for such an
announcement. An
attempt will also be
made to post this info
on the local radio
station(s).

You are Cordially Invited

.Navigating Difference

Cultural Awareness Training

Monday, January 16 from 8:30—Noon

Winchester Senior Center, 239 Bond Street, Wabash IN

Registration is required by January 11, 2017.



Navigating Difference is designed to assist volunteers and professionals expand skills in working with diverse audiences. In this free training you will:

- Become more aware of your own personal and organizational cultures.
- Build skills to increase culture awareness in working with communities.

What People say about Navigating Difference:

"It was an amazing experience. One of the best training classes I have attended."

"Thank You for opening doors that I have only been looking through."

Open to Wabash and Surrounding Communities

Refreshments & Lunch Served ~ Limited Space ~ Registration Required

For more information or to register contact:

Teresa Witkoske: twitkoske@purdue.edu

Beverly Ferry: 260-563-4475 or beverlyf@livingwellinwabashcounty.org

PURDUE
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Brethren Leadership Institute

(BLI). BLI is offering a course on Old Testament, taught by Bob Bowman, January 14, January 28, and February 11, 2017. Class will be held each of those Saturdays from 9am to 4pm at Marion Church of the Brethren (2302 Geneva Ave, Marion, IN 46953). Coffee and light snacks are provided. Please bring your own lunch, and we encourage you to bring your own travel coffee mug to conserve resources.

Anyone can take these classes. You do not need to be licensed, ordained, or pursuing credentials at all. There are no prerequisites. You may audit the course for sheer interest or for CEUs (continuing education units), or you may take it for credit as part of BLI's 3-year program, which you may begin at any time.

Costs:

\$25 to audit the course

\$50 to audit and get 1.6 CEUs

\$75 to take the course for credit (plus \$50 application fee, if not already a BLI student)

\$25 late fee added onto registration fee, if registering after 12/31/16

Here's a description from Bob Bowman:

Survey of the Old Testament will explore that "huge, sprawling, tactless book" with an eye to its role in shaping faith as well as its setting in its own time. Through a combination of lectures and assigned discussions we will dip into the Books of Law in the first weekend; books of History and the Prophets in the second; and Psalms, Job, and other writings in the final session. These are the scriptures Jesus knew and assumed his listeners would understand as the foundation for the Christian faith.

Peace, Tina Rieman, Administrative Assistant

Brethren Leadership Institute, S/C Indiana District COB Office, 260-982-8805

News from the (Camp) Director

"Oh the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful."

The first words from the Christmas song, *Let it Snow* describe the weather, and the second half of the verse describes our optimism about the upcoming year at camp.

As we experience this Christmas season and move into a new year, we are thankful for many gifts. We've had gifts of time and love from our volunteers; we've had gifts of treasure from all over our two districts – from churches and individuals; we've had prayers and phone calls of encouragement. Each of these gifts is crucial to our success, and we cannot thank you enough for what you have given us through the years – especially this last year.

We end 2016 with a much brighter future than we started. Our finances have stabilized, and we have begun working on projects that will significantly improve our camp infrastructure and the experiences of our guests. More groups are showing interest in using the camp facilities. There is a new excitement about what Camp Mack can become as we move through the next few years.

We also want to share that we continue to be involved in our community. In December we sponsored a family for Christmas, and we were able to provide temporary shelter to a homeless family as they were waiting for a paycheck to get housing in Milford.

My hope is that you have truly had the opportunity to reflect on God's gift to all of us in this Christmas season. May the gifts you have received and the gifts you have given bring joy to you and all those who have been touched by them. Christmas is the time when we can truly understand the depth of God's great love for us. "To us a child of hope is born; to us a Son is given." We cannot really understand these words without pausing to marvel at the way God cares for us. Let us all carry that wonder with awesome gratitude into and throughout the coming year.

From all of us at Camp Mack. We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Gene Hollenberg, Executive Director

2017 Palestine/Israel Trip

From Michael Spath, director of Indiana Center for Middle East Peace:

I am very excited about my upcoming June 7-20, 2017 trip to Palestine and Israel and the possibility of you joining me. I am as excited about leading this trip, my 14th, as I was my very first one in 2001. And for those of you who know me, I've traveled, done research, and lived in the region about 30 times in all.

The trip has grown, but still - in addition to the major holy sites of the three faiths - we meet with the people on the cutting edge of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, Palestinian and Israeli, religious and secular, non-violent resistance movements for justice and peace. And on this trip, too, we have some of the leading peacemakers and justice and human rights advocates/activists eager to meet with us, each one a personal friend.

An added feature on this trip that I know will interest some of you is an optional 4 1/2 day extension in Istanbul (June 20-24) on our return from Palestine and Israel.

I'll be showing slides of the places we'll visit and the people with whom we will meet. In addition, I'll be ready to answer your questions about safety, money, airline travel, in-country travel, costs, accommodations, food, etc.

Folks who have participated in past trips have described the tour as life-transforming, and it has encouraged them in their own callings as peacemakers here back home, as well as connecting them with new friends in Palestine and Israel.

And friends, because as you know, the land travel costs decrease with every factor of five number of participants in the tour, again, please invite friends who might be interested to join you. This meeting is for information only, and I won't be asking for any money. I really look forward to seeing you, answering your questions, and beginning the process of discussing our trip together.

Blessings, friends, and peace! Michael

Learning from Kermit Eby: Face-to-Face Discipleship During a Negative Election

This year's Presidential election has generated all sorts of contempt and shock and it has left many Brethren wondering how they can be involved in politics at all.

For a long time, voting was seen as a rather un-Brethren act. Annual Conference repeatedly spoke against it, but as Brethren communities became less rural and less isolated from wider society, political involvement became inevitable. One Brethren leader who exemplified this tricky transition well was Kermit Eby.

Eby's grounding in the Church of the Brethren was sound, but society was changing so quickly that he realized that adaptation was needed in order to be faithful and effective disciples in the modern world. One way he did this was by advocating for political, religious, moral, and civics education in a "face-to-face" manner. In his article "Learning Person to Person" Eby said:

I have been unable to get away from the growing conviction that characteristic democratic attitudes expressed as an interest in politics and the community, an interest in people, tolerance for our fellow human beings, interest in international organization, and in short, the achievement of a peaceful world-are a by-product of that which develops out of living experience more often than of persuasion and argument...Development of constructive attitudes can be achieved only when persons meet persons. They must be achieved in the community fellowship, in the classroom, with and through people more interested in living values than arguing them."*

This personal approach of Eby's fits well with our Brethren ethos and also commends itself to how we might live and speak during such a heated election. We know that neither political party represents the total interests of our church and faith, and we know that both major candidates will continue the cycle of war that our faith testifies against.

Despite this depressing knowledge, we cannot allow ourselves to fall into despair since God did not leave us with a Spirit of fear but power (2 Tim 1:7). Christ came to redeem, empower and enliven us to be courageous disciples who stand united by the Spirit to love and live in the manner of Christ (Phil 2: 1-5).

Christ came to meet us face-to-face, and Christ calls us to love others the same way Christ loves us. A tumultuous election is no match for the love of God. Politics, God's politics, is done face-to-face.

In this era of hateful rhetoric and insulting actions, I challenge you to choose another way of living. Instead of demonizing others, get to know your neighbor. Seek the peace of your city. Get educated and involved in politics. Seek the Kingdom of God, face to face.

- Bryan Hanger

*Kermit Eby, "Learning Person to Person," The Phi Delta Kappan 33, no. 4 (1951): 214-217.

Bethany Seminary Announces 2017 Peace Essay Contest

Richmond, IN - The 2017 Bethany Peace Essay Contest

Where Do You See Peace?—invites aspiring writers to tell the story of a community, a person, or a movement that is addressing injustice and building peace in our world today. The contest is open to seminary, graduate school, college, and high school students who are fully enrolled in a program en route to a degree, and prizes of \$2000, \$1000, and \$500 will be awarded for the top three essays.

This year's topic is of the utmost relevance as our world struggles with racism, poverty, war, displacement, and so much more. Some have denied the severity of these problems while many face the brunt of these issues in their own lives. The need for justice and peace are great, but those working towards peace are often ignored and resisted, and thus these problems continue to plague our world.

The prophet Jeremiah was familiar with this challenge of injustice and empathy when he chided the powerful in Israel for saying, “Peace! Peace!”, when there was no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14). Attuned to the injustices of his time, Jeremiah wouldn’t allow his people to get away with covering up these problems, because God was capable of healing these wounds and bringing the people true peace (Jeremiah 33:6).

It is hoped that writers will creatively and passionately address questions like the following: Where do you see people following Jeremiah’s call to resolve injustices, heal wounds, and build true peace in our world? What problems are the most pressing for our world to solve and bring peace with justice? Where do you see these problems and the other problems of our world and society being addressed? A focus on pressing issues such as racism, poverty, and war are encouraged, but a focus on other social issues deserving attention are welcome.

The contest is underwritten by the Jennie Calhoun Baker Endowment, funded by John C. Baker in honor of his mother. Described as a “Church of the Brethren woman ahead of her time,” Jennie was known for actively pursuing peacemaking by meeting the needs of others, providing community leadership, and upholding the value of creative and independent thinking in education. John Baker, a philanthropist for peace with a distinguished career in higher education, and his wife had also helped establish the peace studies program at Bethany with an earlier endowment gift.

Scott Holland, Slabaugh Professor of Theology and Culture and director of peace and cross-cultural studies at Bethany, oversees the contest, assisted by MA student Bryan Hanger. Ecumenical partnership also helps make the contest possible, with peace church representatives serving as judges along with Holland.

Essays can be submitted between March 1 and 27, 2017, and results will be announced by the end of April 2017. Winning essays will appear in selected publications of the Church of the Brethren, Friends, and Mennonite faith communities. For guidelines, terms, and submission procedures, go to www.bethanyseminary.edu/peace-essay. Contact Bryan Hanger at hangebr@bethanyseminary.edu for additional information.