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Let's Meet in St. Louis: July 7-11

For over 250 years, Brethren have gathered regularly for worship, fellowship, to discuss questions of faith and to be reacquainted with sisters and brothers from across the country. At these Annual Conference gatherings, Brethren have dealt with many practical questions of living out the faith. Many important public issues such as war, the environment, death penalty, etc. have been discussed. Resolutions on these issues are decided by congregational and district delegates.

The 2012 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will be in St. Louis, MO. from July 7-11. Conference worship and business will take place at the America's Center Convention Complex in downtown



St. Louis. Rebecca Lipscomb will serve as our delegate to the conference.

Delegates will be reviewing a number of business items including: a congregational ethics paper, guidance for responding to the changing of the earth's climate, polity revisions on districts and ministerial leadership,

and our Brethren ecumenical witness.

Participants will also be able to visit a number of Brethren ministries' booths and shop at both Brethren Press and SERRV.

Please let Rebecca or Pastor Kres know if you are able to come for all or part of the gathering. For more information go to www.brethren.org.

Pentecost Worship and the Acts of the Apostles

The season of Pentecost begins May 27 with the **Feast of Pentecost**. Our worship on that day will focus on the story of the day when the Holy Spirit came and rested on the heads of the disciples as

tongues of fire. You can read the whole story in Acts 2.

Then beginning in June, our Sunday worship will resolve around some of
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Faith in Farming by Jonathan Stauffer

The Lord answered: Who are the faithful wise servants? Who are the ones the master will put in charge of giving the other servants their food supplies at the proper time? (Luke 12:42 CEV)

I am among an increasingly small group of young adults in the US who have had the valuable experience of growing up on a farm. That experience has

helped shape my beliefs in connecting Christian faith with being good stewards of natural resources.

Since its beginnings, the Church of the Brethren has been involved in agriculture. Up until recently, the majority of Brethren operated farms, many helping to feed neighbors locally and globally. And even though more of us live in cities

these days, the church remains at the forefront of collaborations to alleviate hunger and poverty.

Every five years, Congress considers the choices Americans make with food and agricultural policy through a legislation called the Farm Bill. It covers a vast survey of items: food assistance, rural economic development, and conser-

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“Providing food assistance to and for hungry people is vital! But this alone is not enough.

-Stanley J. Noffsinger,

Conference Witness to the Host City

Delegates to the 2008 Annual Conference in Richmond, VA processed an item of business entitled *Query: Conference Witness to the Host City*. The query acknowledges that because AC is held in various cities, it would be good to give witness to our shared faith in Jesus in these places. Delegates in Richmond adopted the query and referred the

concern to the AC Program and Arrangements Comm.

The AC witness to the city of St. Louis will be the collection of school supplies for the St. Louis Public School system. During the 2012-2013 school year, the St. Louis Public Schools will serve around 28,000 students in 72 schools.

AC attendees and conger-

gations are invited to bring the following supplies to St. Louis: **2 pocket letter size portfolios, glue sticks, ball point pens (medium tip), highlighters, wasable markers (10 pack), 12” plastic rulers, colored pencils, protractors, #2 pencils,, 16 pack crayons, paper filler (3 hole, college rule, erasers, primary writing**

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Illinois Central Song & Story Fest

A **Family Camp** featuring Brethren musicians and storytellers will be held from July 1-7 at Camp Emmanuel near Astoria, IL. Registration can be for the whole week or on a daily fee basis. A daily fee of \$45 for adults includes all meals.

Registration information is available through On Earth Peace’s website, www.onearthpeace.org. You may call Darlene Johnson at 410-635-8704 to ask registration questions or to pay by credit card.

Song & Story Fest is taking its theme this year from songs and stories about trains. The Fest will explore the impact of our increasingly virtual (not to be confused with virtuous) world in our relationships with one another and in the church.

Witness to the Host City (cont. from page 2)



paper, and backpacks (black only).

Moderator Tim Harvey recently went to a local Wal-Mart and was able to purchase the entire list of supplies, not including the backpack, for under \$18. The color of the backpacks was requested by St. Louis school staff, and may be difficult to find this time of year.

Those attendees who

participate in this outreach will be invited to bring their supplies to the Sunday morning worship service on July 8th, where they will be received during the offering. Representatives from the St. Louis Public Schools will receive the supplies during the afternoon business session on Tuesday, July 10. If you wish to contribute, please speak with Pastor Kres.

Pentecost Worship (continued from page 1)

the stories found in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. These are stories of ordinary people who through the power of the Holy Spirit were able to touch the lives of others in Jesus' name. A brief outline of the schedule follows:

June 3: We will look at the story of the healing at the gate. Acts 3:1-10 tells us that Peter and John were on their way to the

temple to pray when they came upon a man asking for alms. Pastor Kres' message, *Incident at the Gate*, will focus on this meeting at the gate and the response of the rulers and elders that is reported in Acts 4.

June 17: The message this week is *Shaken and Filled with the Holy Spirit*. The text for the morning is Acts 4:29-5:11. At the end

of the 4th chapter we are given a glimpse of how God's people cared for one another. Then in chapter 5 we read the story of Ananias and Sapphira who weren't willing to practice the generosity of the community.

June 24: You are invited to read Acts 5:27-32. Kres' message is *The Audacity of Spirit-Filled Disciples*.

Men's Breakfast: June 4

A Men's Breakfast and time of fellowship and conversation is scheduled for Monday, June 4 at 6:45 am. Pancakes, fruit, juice and coffee will be served. There will be time for personal sharing about matters of faith and time to catch up with the

events going on in our lives.

Beginning with the month of June our Sunday worship will focus on the work of the church as described in the Acts of the Apostles. It is also time to reflect on how we

can continue to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Iona Community in Scotland works at this very intentionally. Time permitting; we'll take a look at what they call the *Rule*. Let Pastor Kres know if you can attend.

Acts 2 lays out a vision of a community that shares everything...

First Church of the
Brethren

Worship on Sunday at
10:30 am

Phone 217-523-5212

E-mail
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Continuing the Work of Jesus
Peacefully, Simply, Together

We're on the Web!
www.1stcob.net

Vacation Bible School in July

This summer's Vacation Bible School has been scheduled for July 15-18. The theme is *Fruit of the Spirit* and is taken from Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." The VBS will offer two classes, for early elementary and middle school age children. **We are partnering again with Heartland MCC.** A couple of teachers have stepped forward already. But, we could use teacher assistants in the classroom. Heartland's pastor, Rev. Tony Thieman, will provide music. April Poole is serving as our local coordinator. Marsha Krall, Roger Ruth and Pastor Kres have been assisting. There are plenty of ways to help, still. We will need adults to assist with crafts, games, and refreshments. Please let us know how you would like to be involved.

National Jr. High Work Camp Meeting in Springfield

Twenty-one junior high youth and eight adults will arrive in Springfield for a Brethren work camp from July 11-15. Participants are from around the country. They will be staying the four nights in our meetinghouse. During the day, the youth will be volunteering with local agencies which feed and serve the poor and hungry of our community. The group will be with us for worship on July 15. Let's do all we can to help them feel welcome in Springfield.

Faith in Farming (continued from page 2)

vation of natural resources, to name a few.

The last Farm Bill was completed in 2008, which means that now is the time to determine revisions that will be implemented in 2013.

The Church of the Brethren has several statements relating to food conversation and poverty issues. The statements on *Creation: A call to Care* in 1991, *Caring for the Poor* in 2000, and *Christian Stewardship* in 1985, are a few examples.

That last statement says that, "Living as faithful stewards is no small task. Stewardship is caring and sharing in depth...a total orientation of working for God and with God and others for peace, wholeness and the glory of creation."

No small task, indeed. But here are some good ways to start:

-Thank God for farmers, and for their good stewardship of the land.

-Consider choices you make as a consumer. How can you support local farmers or farmers

who practice the conservation of resources?

-Contact your senators and representatives. Tell them as a person of faith, you believe that the next farm bill must protect programs and policies that curb hunger, support economies in rural communities and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

(Reprinted from eBrethren, May 23, 2012.

Jonathan is advocacy assistant in the COB's Peace Witness Office.)