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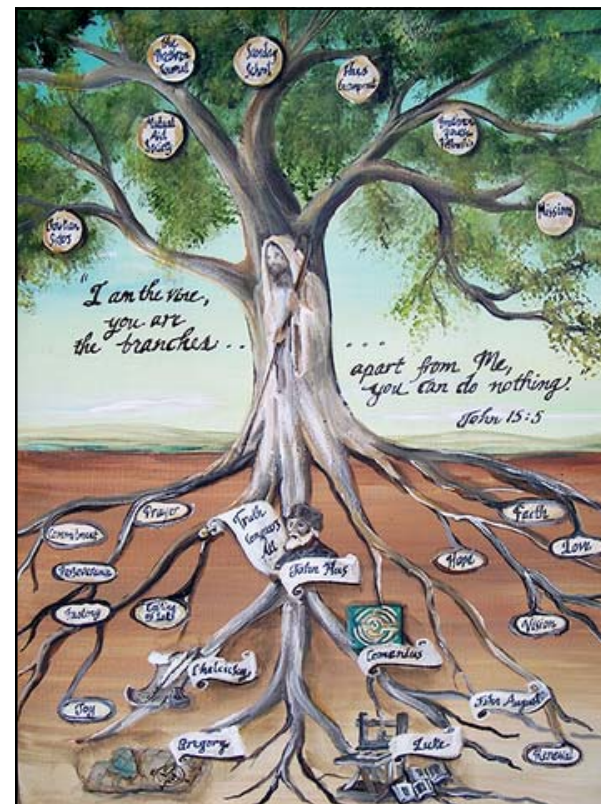
40 Pages

– from the editor

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BRETHREN JOURNAL



*(See President's
Column in this issue
for more details.)*

From the President . . . *What is Brethren?*
Good Luck . . . by Rev. Vanessa Mitchell
Convention Wisdom . . . by Jim Pokorny
 Primetimers' Retreat Invitation
 Summer Camping Program Wrap ups

... and so much more!

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EDITOR –

Cathleen Schlechte
3635 CR 225
Caldwell, TX 77836
(979) 255-8266
editor.brethrenjournal@gmail.com

BUSINESS MANAGER –

Ben Polasek
705 Woodson Dr.
Caldwell, TX 77836
(979) 220-9270
manager.brethrenjournal@gmail.com

BUSINESS COMMITTEE –

President: Rev. Mike Groseclose
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS –

Daily Morsels: Dorothy Kocian,
107 S. Barbara, Waco, TX 76705-1317.
Sunday School Helper: Angie Hairrell,
11482 FM 2155, Somerville, TX 77879.
Hairrell@gmail.com
Jim Pokorny, jwppsa@yahoo.com;
blog: otherbrotherjim.blogspot.com

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Unity of the Brethren
Website:
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And so fulfill the Law of
Christ."* (Gal. 6:2)

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(979) 574-0268; lajoiededieu@gmail.com
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josephjpasek@yahoo.com
Rev. Kay Polasek, 705 Woodson Dr., Caldwell, TX 77836. (979) 220-1289;
revkaypolasek@yahoo.com
Rev. Mark Sebek, 9235 FM 437, Rogers, TX 76569. (254) 931-2000;
papasebek@gmx.com
Rev. Thomas Tallas, 3829 Sandstone, San Angelo, TX 76904. (325) 949-7543;
rev.tjt@gmail.com (h), rev.tjt@zipnet.us (ch)
Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Terrill
jerryleeterrill@comcast.net
Rev. Ron Winsman, 3112 W. Ave. R, Temple, TX 76504. (254) 742-0827

Rev. Larry Zabcik, 2013 Burnie Bishop Place, Cedar Park, TX 78613. (903) 265-2277;
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Connie Janac; cjanac@st-joseph.org;
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Adviser: Dr. Larry Koslovsky;
lwkoslo@aol.com; (281) 328-2442

Synodical Committee Liaison: Kent Laza

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kent.laza@verizon.net

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Hwy 71, Fayetteville, TX 78940;
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Ministerial Alternate: Rev. Larry Zabcik,
(903) 265-2277; zabcikville@ymail.com

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Wiley Marx, wmarx@jcgllc.com

Lay Members:

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Wall – Dewyan Weise; hdweise@zipnet.us
Wesley – none

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betty_parthum@yahoo.com

President's Column . . . James Marek What is Brethren?

Most members of the Unity have been asked to describe what the Brethren Church is at least once in their lives. Many of us may find it difficult to give an informative answer to this simple question, particularly without comparing ourselves to some other mainstream denomination like the Lutherans, Methodists or Baptists.

In his sermon in the closing worship service of the recent convention, Bro. Tommy Tallas challenged us to be proud of who we are and encouraged us to be prepared to answer this question without comparing ourselves to other denominations. The truth is that the Unity predates the Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians, just to name a few. Bro. Tommy pointed out that for this reason, we are not like them, they are like us. It is true that reformers like Martin Luther, John Wesley, John Calvin, and others not only knew who the Brethren were, they admired them and held the Breth-

ren out as examples of how a Christian should live.

Here are a few quotes about the original Brethren:

Martin Luther (1483-1546) in a lecture to his students – “There have never been any Christians so like the apostles in doctrine and constitution as these Bohemian Brethren.”

Martin Luther to their deputies – “Tell your Brethren to hold fast what God has given them, and never give up their constitution and discipline. Let them take no heed of revilements. The world will behave foolishly. If you in Bohemia were to live as we do, what is said of us would be said of you, and if we were to live as you do, what is said of you would be said of us.”

Martin Luther in a letter to the Brethren – “We have never attained to such a discipline and holy life as is found among you, but in the future



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Bible Buddies – 2nd Wednesday, 6:00-7:30 PM

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we shall make it our aim to attain it.”

Martin Bucer (German Protestant Reformer) – “How shall I instruct those whom God Himself has instructed! You alone, in all the world, combine a wholesome discipline with a pure faith.”

Philipp Melancthon (German reformer who collaborated with Luther) – “I am pleased with the strict discipline enforced in your congregations. I wish we could have a stricter discipline in ours.”

John Calvin (French Reformer; Calvinism) – “We have long since recognized the value of such a system, but cannot, in any way, attain to it.”

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church – “The Bohemian community had apparently come very near to being the ideal community of the New Testament in terms of church order, discipline and moral life.”

The early Brethren created quite a legacy and example in the minds of these great reformers and church founders. Our legacy is certainly worth preserving and continuing.

At this year’s convention, we tried to commemorate our rich history and provide a few resources to help us

remember who we are and what we are here to do by giving each church 3 gifts. These gifts were all reminders of our rich heritage and the pride and responsibility that comes with our heritage as Brethren. Hopefully the gifts will also help us be better prepared to respond to questions about what it means to be Brethren.

The first gift is a three-pane framed display featuring a pictorial depiction of The Unity of the Brethren in context of the convention theme. The theme was taken from John 15:5 where Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches...apart from me, you can do nothing.” The painting features Jesus as the vine, Hus as one of the main roots, along with Comenius, Luke of Prague, John Augusta and others. Prominent character traits and tools of the early Unity are also included in the root system illustrating the building blocks of the original denomination. The branches of the vine contain Unity organizations through which God has produced fruit inside and outside the Unity in Texas for over 100 years. The purpose of the painting is to remind us that our purpose as a denomination is to serve God **and our fellow man and to bring others to**

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Austin – Bible Study at 10:00 AM
Worship at 11:00 AM.
– Rev. Linda Chandler

Bryan-College Station – worship at
9:00 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Mark Sebek

Buckholts – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday except the 5th Sunday.
Holy Communion on 1st Sunday.
Guest speaker on 4th Sunday.
– Rev. John Kueker

Cade Lake Community Chapel – A Home
Mission Project since 10-22-11 – Sunday
School at 11:00 AM; Fellowship Lunch
at Noon; Worship at 1:00 PM.
– Rev. Jim Heckman

Caldwell – Sunday School at 9:30 AM,
worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday.
Family Night, 1st & 3rd Weds. each
month in Fellowship Hall. Bring a
snack, a game, and a friend if able.
– Rev. Vanessa Mitchell

Christ Covenant Church – Tuesday
Evening Bible Study.
– Carl Shamel

Crosby – 9:00 AM: Worship
10:00 AM: Faith Adventure
– Dr. Larry Koslovsky

Cy-Fair Community Church – worship at
10:45 AM every Sunday.
1st & 3rd Sundays – Rick Chandler
2nd, 4th, & 5th Sundays – open

Dime Box – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday.
– Rev. Jim Heckman

Fayetteville – Sunday School at 9:45 AM,
worship at 10:45 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Kay Polasek

Good Shepherd Moravian – worship at
11:30 AM and 6:30 PM every Sunday.
– Rev. Adolfo Gonzalez

Granger – Bible Study every Sunday at
9:00 AM with worship service following
at 10:15 AM.
– Rev. Larry Zabcik

Houston – Sunday School at 9:15 AM;
Worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill

Industry – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday with Sunday School for all
ages following.
– Rev. Kay Polasek

Nelsonville – Sunday School at 9:00 AM
Nelsonville – Worship at 10:15 AM
– Rev. Michael Groseclose

New Tabor – Sunday School at 9:30 AM &
Worship at 10:30 AM every Sunday,
“Tune Up” on Wednesdays, 7:30 PM.
– Rev. Dave Johnson

Ocker – worship at 10:15 AM every
Sunday. Sunday School at 9:00 AM
every Sunday.
– Rev. Ron Winsman

Pasadena – Sunday School at 9:30 AM
and worship at 10:45 AM every Sunday.
Midweek Study twice per month on
Thursdays at 6:30 PM.
– Visiting Ministers

Community Christian Church of Rosenberg –
Sundays: Adult Bible Study and Sunday
School for children at 9:00 AM; worship
at 10:30 AM.
Wednesdays: 5:30 PM Dinner; 6:30 PM
Bible Study.

Seaton –
Sunday, 9:15 AM – Prayer Gathering;
9:30 AM – Sunday School, All Ages;
10:30 AM – Worship Celebration Service.
Wednesday, 6:30 PM – Kid’s NITE Out
and Priority ONE Youth (BYF), Adult
Bible Study.
– Rev. Denise Mikeska

Snook – Sunday School – 9:00 AM;
Worship – 10:15 AM.
– Rev. Joseph Polasek

Taylor – worship at 10:15 AM every
Sunday.
– Rev. James Hejl

Temple – Sunday School at 9:30 AM.,
Worship at 10:45 AM.
– Pastor Tim Chaplin

Vsetin – A non-official member congregation
of the Unity of the Brethren – Worship at
10:00 AM every Sunday.
– Dr. Mark Labaj
5th Sunday – Visiting Ministers

Wall – Sunday School (for all ages) at
9:30 AM; worship at 10:45 AM every
Sunday.
– Rev. Thomas Tallas

Wesley – worship at 9:00 AM every
Sunday. Sunday School follows.
– Rev. Michael Groseclose

West – Sunday School at 9:00 AM and
worship at 10:15 AM every Sunday.
– Rev. Curtis Holland

Westheimer Community – 9:30 AM, Christian
Education; 10:30 AM, Worship, with Holy
Communion every 5th Sunday.
– Visiting Ministers

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512-689-1593

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Mary Kokes
M-Th 8:00 am-noon

DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

Daily Morsels for September 2015

- by Dorothy Kocian

1. This is love, that we walk in obedience to the Father's commands. 2 Jn. 6
2. Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers. 3 Jn. 5
3. I, Paul, thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because your faith is being reported all over the world. Rom. 1:8
4. Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Rom. 3:22
5. Jesus our Lord was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Rom. 4:25
6. **Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5:1**
7. I press onward toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:14
8. Aim for perfection, be of comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Cor. 13:11
9. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Rom. 1:1
10. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Tim. 4:7
11. From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 3:15
12. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. 2 Tim. 2:22
13. **Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Ps. 37:3**
14. I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you. 2 Tim. 1:6
15. You guide me with your counsel and afterward You will take me into glory. Ps. 73:24
16. The Lord says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go." Ps. 32:8
17. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Pet. 4:9
18. I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me a drink, a stranger and you took Me in. Mt. 25:35
19. Let us not love with words of tongue, but with actions and in truth. 1 Jn. 3:18
20. **Let us not become weary in doing good. Gal. 6:9**
21. As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Gal. 6:10
22. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal. 6:2
23. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Rom. 12:13
24. A voice from heaven said "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." Mt. 3:17
25. Jesus offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death. Heb. 5:7
26. Once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. Heb. 5:9
27. **He said, "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." Mk. 1:15**
28. The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. Heb. 13:6
29. Do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent His rebuke. Prov. 3:11
30. The Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father does the son he delights in. Prov. 3:12

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Christ so that God may be glorified through the process of more people coming to know the love we have experienced through Christ our Savior.

The second pane in the display contained a chronological timeline of significant events in the life of the ancient and current Unity. This piece is intended to remind us from whence we come, including some of our accomplishments and possibly regrets that we do not want to repeat. The third pane contains a membership creed, which although not entitled as such in our bylaws, is taken from our current Constitution and Bylaws. It reminds us what the life of a modern-day Brethren should look like and what it is that we are supposed to be doing. In summary, the framed display is intended to be a reminder of our history, our responsibility and our denominational mission.

The second gift received by all congregations was the book by Dr. Craig Atwood entitled *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*. Dr. Atwood contends that his is the first book to focus on the theology of the Unity of the Brethren ever written in English. As we have studied Dr. Atwood's book in our

Sunday School Class, I have enjoyed learning about who the early Brethren were, what they believed, and how they lived. Additionally, I have been surprised and impressed by the tremendous contributions the Brethren made to the church universal we know today. I cannot recommend this book enough because it details who the Brethren were and who we ought to be. Studying Dr. Atwood's book has made me begin to realize just how proud we should be of our denomination because of our rich history and incredible sacrifice made by those who have gone before us. Reading and studying this book can easily lead to a profound sense of responsibility to live up to the heritage of the ancient Unity.

The third gift is the DVD entitled "Truth Prevails". This is a documentary on the life, death, and inspiration of Jan Hus that helps explain what happened to Hus and the obstacles he faced and mistreatment he endured for the advancement of the Gospel and Reformation of the Church.

These gifts are intended to benefit all Brethren. If you have not seen them yet in your local church, ask



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your pastor or one of your convention delegates where they are.

All of these gifts will hopefully provide information that can be used to explain what the Brethren Church has been throughout history.

In addition, here are a few other data points about the Brethren:

- The Brethren established the first voluntary church in Western History.
- The Brethren were the first to publish a Protestant hymnal.
- They were the first Protestant group to establish their own priesthood.
- The first to publically debate government officials.
- The first to publish a Protestant catechism.
- The followers of Hus were instrumental in establishing the practice of allowing the laypeople to receive both elements of communion in the church universal. One could easily argue that this practice may not have become as common as it is today had it not been for the efforts of the Brethren.
- In Hus' day, mass was given in Latin. Hus and his followers fought to see that the people could have the

gospel read and preached in their own language. One of the clearest illustrations of this was the establishment of Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, which was founded by 2 businessmen. Since the Chapel was not owned by the Catholic Church, services could be held in a way that was most beneficial to the people instead of exclusively in Latin, which the common worshipper could not understand.

The early Brethren were what we might call "shakers and movers" today. They were leaders in a movement to reform the church long before the official reformation led by Martin Luther 100 years later. Their faith was proven in their daily lives. People of their day knew Brethren by the way the Brethren lived and conducted themselves. The Brethren were the salt of the earth and light of the world because they did not live like most other people. They had an impact because they were different, disciplined and devout.

The obvious question is, what kind of testimony are the lives of Brethren making today not only to our heritage as Brethren, but as members of the family of God? Can the

SAVE THE DATE...

November 7, 2015 – Seaton Brethren Church Christian Sisters Annual Bake Sale & Quilt Show.

November 8, 2015 – Industry Brethren Church Honor Our Veterans Service: Texas A&M Singing Cadets Quartet will perform. For more information please contact Liz Treybig at: Liztreybig@yahoo.com or (512) 327-2504.

November 14, 2015 – Unity of the Brethren History Symposium Commemorating the 600th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Jan Hus. *Details coming soon.*

Does your church/organization have an activity that you would like to include in this listing? Please send activity information including a contact name, phone number and/or email address to the Brethren Journal Editor at: editor.brethrenjournal@gmail.com. Information must be received by the first day of the month immediately preceding the month of publication.

In God's Hands Ministry

P. O. Box 321
Caldwell, TX 77836
979-574-7134

Everyday Ministries to Meet Everyday Needs
A Home Mission Work to Cade Lake and Burleson County

To communicate with the Hus Encampment...

... regarding scheduling* of meetings or events there, contact:

Dawn Marie Baletka
600 Benchmark Drive
College Station, TX 77845
(979) 777-9940 or (979) 693-2710
DMBaletka@gmail.com

**This must be done well in advance.*



Fayetteville Brethren Church
"Site of the First Czech Protestant Preaching in Texas – 1855"

1022 Kramr Rd at Ross
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P.O. Box 11
Fayetteville, TX 78940

Come join us!
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 10:45 a.m.

Pastor: Rev. Kay Polasek
Home: 979-567-1999 Cell: 979-220-1289
Email: revkaypolasek@yahoo.com

www.FayettevilleBrethrenChurch.org

Schedule and Details of Upcoming Unity Activities

September 12-13 – BYF Fall Retreat at the Hus Encampment. Registration forms and \$30 fee are due by AUGUST 30. T-shirt orders for \$10 (optional) will be submitted August 31, no late orders accepted. Retreat Focus: “ALL or NOTHING” You can’t pick pages out of the Bible to make up your faith. You either hold on to Jesus with all your heart, soul, and mind, or you don’t. Heaven or Hell? The choice is yours. Scripture Focus: 1 John 3:4-10. Registration forms are available on the youth website at www.unityofthebrethrenyouth.com. For alternate check-in time or questions, contact jennchervenka@farm-market.net or text/call (254) 913-1244.

September 13 – Vsetin CMB Church annual picnic beginning at 11 a.m. Stew and sausage plate lunch \$9. Country store, fishpond, cake walk, bingo, raffle. Address: 6059 FM 2314, Hallettsville, TX 77964. For more information contact the church at (361) 798-5722 or Dr. Mark Labaj at (254) 774-8179.

October 9-11 – Annual Primetimers’ Retreat at the Hus Encampment. Bible Study and Discussion on Enhancing Prayer Life. Cost for the entire weekend including food and lodging is \$45 per person, or if you can only come for the day on Saturday the cost is \$25. Registrations should be available at your church or by contacting Kimberly Kennard at (254) 931-5657.

October 24, 2015 – Fall Synodical Committee Meeting at the Hus Encampment – 9:00 a.m.; refreshments served at 8:00 a.m. A light lunch will be served at noon. The newly elected officers for 2015-2017 will be installed and the results of the referendum votes from the 66th Biennial Unity Convention will be canvassed. All congregations are kindly asked to please return the Referendum Results and the name of the Representative that will serve their church for the next 2 years by the designated deadline to Liz Ripple – outgoing Secretary. The agenda will be sent out soon. Please share this information with your church members. If you have any questions, contact Kent Laza, kent.laza@verizon.net or 979-690-7608, or Angie Hairrell, Hairrell@gmail.com.

world pick out a Brethren today, like the early church reformers said they could back in the early days of our denomination?

God has preserved the followers of Hus and The Unity of the Brethren for 600 years now. Surely, God has a purpose for this denomination, but any revival or lasting impact will almost surely include a spiritual revival of individual Brethren. Our heritage (Christian and denominational) requires that we be different from the world. While other Christians are concerned about their rights as citizens in this ever-changing world, may we be more concerned about our responsibilities to this world and to our Savior whom we serve. I recently heard a preacher on television say as Chris-

tians we are slaves to Christ and therefore have far more responsibilities than we do rights.

If we want to grow, if we want people to know who the Brethren are, we’ve got to leave our pews and get out there and do something! The world is dark and in need. We can choose to be demoralized by its condition and lament the fact that things aren’t the way they used to be or we can seize the opportunity that the darkness provides for us as Christians to share the love of Christ with all people – even those we don’t like. What people say about us 100 years from now will be determined by our decision to actually be Brethren or to simply go to church in a building that bears the name.

OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

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Worship 10:15 AM

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Rev. Ron Winsman
3112 W. Ave. R, Temple, TX 76504
(254) 742-0827
ronwinsman@hotmail.com

Elder Board President

John Brinkley
119 CR 3000, Lott, TX 76656
(254) 721-3196
wphalia@yahoo.com

Youth Director

Jennifer Chervenka
9494 Big Elm Creek Road
Rogers, TX 76569
(254) 983-1002

Cemetery

Sharon Marek
23383 Milam Road
Burlington, TX 76519
(254) 869-2845

Thoughts about giving...

Remembering the Unity of the Brethren or any of its ministries is a fitting testimony of your belief. Your gift in a will can be a legacy that continues to affect the Christian values, mission, and ministry that is important to you.

You can give without restrictions and let us use the funds for the most pressing needs or you can specify how, when, or where you want the funds used.

You can require that we hold the principle as an endowment and use only the earnings each year.

You can give in memory or in the honor of someone.

Your gift can be contingent. The funds go to someone if they survive you and if not, then to the Unity.

You can tell us now that you have named the Unity in your will and allow us to express our gratitude...or you can let it be known later.

There are many other ways to give. Contact any Board of Grants and Bequests member about what you can give and how you can give.

Leroy Parthum, Chair – Westheimer; betty.parthum@yahoo.com
Roger Runnels – Cy-Fair – 281-469-4302, rogerhr@swbell.net
Harvey Treybig – Industry – Unity Treasurer and Synodical
Committee Liaison, 512-327-2504; htreybig@austin.rr.com
Ron Tyson – Houston – 281-373-4376 (home),
rdtyson1@hotmail.com
Alan Tomasek – 512-859-2197, amtomasek@thegateway.net
Dewyan Weise – Wall – Unity Treasurer and Synodical
Committee Liaison – 325-651-8550, hdweise@zipnet.us
Eugene Haisler – Ocker – 254-985-2316, dmheeh@msn.com

#4: Jesus is beside you always.

This one works two ways. On one hand, Jesus is there to help you. It may be that you are nervous during a test or confronting a bully. Remind your child that Jesus is there for them. It is not God's job to protect them from all tribulations. What He's there to do is grow a relationship between Him and your child, in which there are more perks than anything on planet earth. He's there to build character and strength and reliance upon Him. Jesus said in John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation. Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Jesus wants to mold those who can overcome, not those who can simply avoid. But Jesus is also there when your child is tempted to do wrong. Sometimes Jesus needs to be a bit discomfiting, just like Mom and Dad. And this is the type of prayer to which God will respond by becoming your best parenting mate. Have your child visualize Jesus with them on the bus, in the cafeteria, on the playground, on the football field, etc.

#5: Pray hard!

Pray for your kids while they are in school. Pray that your kids will use the "Jesus Beside You" imagery when they are tempted or in need of comfort.

Pray that God will provide a means for them to escape if they are tempted to get into trouble, such as is promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Pray that God will give you discernment. It is hard to tell when our kids are troubled by something when all they say about their school day is "It was fine." But God can give you the ability to see in a look, a twitch, or a minor change in behavior that something is wrong. He will sharpen your gut instincts, and after being in prayer about this, you can rely on your instincts with more confidence!

Do not pray that God will protect your child from all volatile or potentially stressful situations. It is hard as parents to watch our children struggle; however it is in times of struggle that He builds their character and strength. Pray for character and strength in your child, and you can rest assured God will answer that with a resounding yes!

What we really want is for school to brighten minds, cultivate good relationships, and provide tools and knowledge needed in adulthood. However we don't live in a perfect world. Help your kids understand that Jesus is there all day every day, and He looks forward to watching out for our kids in noise as well as silence, in frustration as well as joy, in stress as well as peace. As Jesus promised His disciples in Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age..."

Packing God in the Backpack

#1: But it's HARD!

Thinking about God and keeping Him first is hard in school. It's hard to think about God in the noise and chaos of the playground, lunchroom, or hallway between classes. Talk with your child about the challenges and how it can be hard for adults, too. Jesus experienced that, too, when the crowds pressed in. He turned to His Father and His will (John 5:19, Jesus said, "...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does") and we need to do the same. Explain that school is a place to practice making Godly decisions. They don't have to act like monks in monastery, but we don't want them acting like monkeys in a zoo!

#2: There are reasons why it's hard!

Talk to your child. Let them know they are not a bad kid if he/she is not thinking of everything you told him about being a Christian while six people are talking to him/her. We have to trust when we teach our kids that the information will stay in their hearts. It may not surface every day, or even every week, but it should surface when they need it. *However, they should have an alarm bell in their hearts.* When they are faced with a choice between gossiping or keeping silent, cheating or taking a test the honest way, or accepting or declining an after-school invitation they know is wrong, that alarm bell should ring loudly. Encourage them to respond to that alarm!

#3: Jesus is just as strong inside of school as He is outside of school.

Kids may think it feels like Jesus gets left at the school door. Help them to realize that just because they can't sense the presence of the Lord as well in crowds, He can hear them just as well as He can when they're alone in their bedrooms. Tell them, "He hears all and wants to help you out in school, because it is your most challenging stomping ground due to the amount of time you spend there. Imagine Him standing right beside you all day, because that is essentially true."

For
comments/questions/
information, contact:

Angie Hairrell

Hairrell@gmail.com



Report of the 66th Biennial Convention of the Unity of the Brethren

- by Liz Ripple, Outgoing Unity Secretary

As outgoing Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren, I bring this report. First I would like to thank James Marek as out-going President, the Executive Committee, Delegates, Synodical Lay members, Chairs and the Ministers for their attendance and participation with the 2015 Convention.

It was an excellent convention with all business being completed in a cordial manner. The attendance was a little lower than in previous years and ranged from 80-130 daily. The Sunday service at Wesley was attended by about 200 people. Bro Mike and his congregations at Nelsonville and Wesley did an outstanding job as hosts for this convention! They were very helpful, and the food was outstanding.

My term as secretary will end with the fall meeting and I will take over as the Financial Secretary for the next 2 years. Angie Hairrell was elected to be the new Secretary and will soon take over the duties of the office. The Referendum (including motions, financial matters, and bylaw changes for congregations to vote on) has been sent out by email, and I ask that each minister and/or Synodical representative from each congregation please share this with your president or secretary of your congregation to be voted on as soon as possible and to be returned by the designated deadline date to me. At your meetings for the referendum vote, you will also be electing your Synodical represen-



Front l to r: M. Groseclose, K. Polasek, J. Polasek, N. Strickland, T. Tallas. Back l to r: L. Zabcik, J. Hejl, L. Koslovsky, L. Junek, J. Heckman

tative to serve for the next 2 years. The current Synodical representative email list will be used until new information is sent. Also, I will be emailing the minutes for the 2015 Convention and ask again that the ministers and Synodical representatives please share with your congregation.

Following is a report on the 2015 Convention:

The 66th Biennial Convention of the Unity of the Brethren was held on July 10-12. The Convention Theme was "Branches Bearing Fruit" with scripture from John 15:5. Registration began at 8 a.m. at Nelsonville Brethren Church, followed by Worship with Holy Communion. The convention hymn was "To God Be the Glory". Rev Michael Groseclose and Nelsonville Board President Jon Schroeder greeted the Convention. The call to worship was given by Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill, 3rd Vice-President of the Synodical Committee and pastor of Houston Brethren. James Marek, President of the Synodical Committee, welcomed everyone to the service. The morning prayer was given by Rev. Lawrence Junek, 1st Vice-President of the Synodical Committee. Rev. Michael Groseclose, pastor of Nelsonville &

Wesley Brethren Churches and 2nd Vice-President of the Synodical Committee, gave the sermon entitled "Won't Take Nothing but an A." He said to bring the best you have and offer it to God, don't settle for just passing, make an "A". The pianist was Sondra Brau. There were about 110 in attendance.

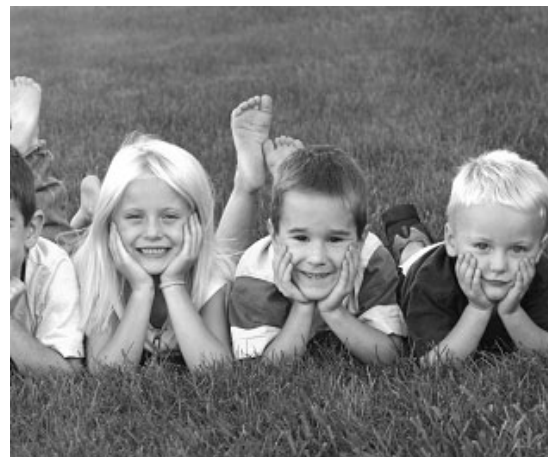
Following the service, the opening session of the convention began. The opening hymn was "Grace Greater Than Our Sin". The convention pianist was Elizabeth Ripple. All Unity of the Brethren churches were presented with gifts to commemorate the 600th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Jan Hus. Gifts from the Unity included a framed painting by Suzanne Huser (Granger Brethren) with Brethren history listed, a book *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*, by Craig Atwood, and a DVD "Truth Prevails – The Undying Faith of Jan Hus." Rev David Guthrie, President of the Elders' Conference – Moravian Church Southern Province brought greetings from the Southern & Northern Provinces. President Marek went over the committee assignments and discussion topics. After lunch, session 2 began. Unity business was conducted and the commit-



And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Luke 2:52

Sunday School Helper



We will continue with children of the Bible, though with a different twist. Jesus was a child in the Bible. Remember when He stayed behind in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)? He stayed behind "in school" to learn and his parents were unaware He was still there!

This month, most parents are busy getting sports physicals, buying backpacks, school supplies, and new shoes and clothing. As parents and grandparents, we want nothing more than to start each year right for our children. We deeply want them to be successful!

As we are packing those backpacks with new crayons, scissors, and glue sticks, let's also pack God with these conversation starters. The peer pressures of school can make it difficult to see God in school and these ideas can be a starting point to address these difficulties. And they might even help us adults in the workplace!

FOREIGN MISSION BOARD

Chairman:

David Miller, dm103157@wcc.net

Unity Representatives:

Joyce Baletka (2013), 2505 E. Villa Maria Rd. Apt. 101, Bryan, TX 77802. (979) 574-8948; jbaletka@hotmail.com

John Brinkley, (254) 721-3196

Anne Wentrczek (2013), 1901 Meadow Lane, Taylor, TX 76574; aggieanne@att.net

Board of Christian Education Rep.:

Charlie Groseclose (2009), 358 State Hwy. 53, Rosebud, TX 76570. (254) 583-4160; cmrag@aol.com

Christian Sisters Representative:

Ann Sebesta, P.O. Box 115, Snook, TX 77878. (210) 244-3362 (c); bfsinc@tconline.net

BYF Representative:

Mary Jones (2009), PO Box 2112, Wall, TX 76957. (325) 651-4623; gkjones@wcc.net

Synodical Committee Liason:

Rev. Lawrence Juneke, 3316 Lyle Ave., Waco, TX 76708. (254) 714-2622

ADVISORY MEMBERS

Rev. Milton & Jean Maly
Rev. Lawrence & Barbara Juneke
Ray & Laurie Griggs
Jill Miller

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Phil & Eunice Raiford
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Carolyn Groseclose

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(281) 342-3060

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Wednesday Eve. 5:30 PM
Prayer Service and Bible Study

Youth Minister: Position open

HUS ENCAMPMENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Chair: Mark Olsen, 1316 Howard St., Taylor, TX 75674. (512) 630-5153; olsenemcee@yahoo.com

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Member: Debbie Grimm (Chr. Sis. 2010) 1409 Stone Ridge Rd., Taylor, TX 76574. C: (512) 718-2310; mama_dgrimm@hotmail.com

Member: Erin Brinkley (BYF: 2012), 119 CR 3000, Lott, TX 76656; erinbrinkley@yahoo.com

Member: Angie Hairrell (Bd. Chr. Ed.), 11482 FM 2155, Somerville, TX 77879; Hairrell@gmail.com

Member: Todd Snelgrove, 5207 Draycott Ct., Bryan, TX 77802. (979) 229-7524; tsnelgrove@gmail.com

Non-Voting Appointments:

Programming Director: Kayla Marek, 901 Hidden Valley Dr. #9302, Round Rock, TX 78665; kmarek2012@gmail.com

Unity Youth Coordinator: Jennifer Chervenka (Synodical Committee Appointment), 9494 Big Elm Creek Road, Rogers, TX 76569. (254) 983-1002; jennchervenka@farm-market.net

Facilities Manager(s): Jim and Dawn Marie Baletka, 600 Benchmark Drive, College Station, TX 77845; txnfish@aol.com; DMBaletka@gmail.com

Caretakers: Robert and Cathleen Schlechte, 3635 CR 225, Caldwell, TX 77836; (979) 324-5560,

(979) 255-8266; rschlechte@hotmail.com; schlechte86@msn.com

Oversight of Synodical Committee: Rev. Dr. Jerry Lee Terrill, 7 Torch Pine Court, The Woodlands, TX 77381. (281) 364-9865; jerryleeterrill@gmail.com

tees that met were: Home Missions, Foreign Missions, History Symposium, Finance, Motions, Administrative Position, Marketing & Website, and Board of Christian Education.

Mission presentations and updates were heard from Roy Janek (West Brethren), who reported on how the church was doing 2 years after the fertilizer plant explosion; Phil & Dr. Eunice Raiford (Mexico), Rob Thiessen (Mexico), John Brinkley (Ocker Brethren), who works with prosthetic limbs and eyes in Zambia, Africa; Rev. Jim Heckman (Cade Lake), and Carolyn Groseclose (Ocker Brethren), who serves as a missionary at New Day Orphanage in Zambia, Africa. Rev. Juneke and David Miller (Wall Brethren) spoke about a Kairos Prison Ministry that they are both involved with.

The devotional Saturday morning was led by Pastor Tim Chaplin, pastor of Temple Brethren. Following the devotional, he reported on a "Feed My Sheep" ministry at the church. Other "Faith in Action" reports were from Rev. Linda Chandler (Austin Brethren) who has started a ministry called "Wrapped in the Word" quilt project and Bro. David Johnson (New Tabor Brethren) who leads a Sustain-

ing Food ministry in the Caldwell area. Speakers were Jimmy Pokorny (Taylor Brethren), who gave a Brethren history presentation, and Rev. James D. Hejl (pastor of Taylor Brethren), who read a manuscript written by Rev. Dr. David Schattschneider and acted out as if he were Jan Hus. Rev. Hejl was dressed in a robe and hat similar to what Jan Hus would have worn in the 15th century. Saturday evening concluded with a video presentation of Jan Hus. All meals were catered by Schovajsa Catering.

Sunday morning everyone gathered at Wesley Brethren Church for an outdoor service under a big tent set up next to the first church. A devotional was given by Jimmy Pokorny. Rev. Groseclose gave the welcome and announced that Wesley is celebrating the 140th anniversary of the organization of the Wesley congregation (1864-2014). The first church was built in 1866 and everyone was welcomed to tour the church. Bro. Mike proclaimed the event a family reunion. Pastors present were Groseclose, Juneke, Tommy Tallas, J. Hejl, Nello Strickland, Larry Zabcik, Jim Heckman, Larry Koslovsky, Joseph Polasek, and Kay Polasek. The





pastors who had served at Wesley all took part in the service: Hejl, Strickland, Groseclose. Rev. Milton Maly was the pastor at Wesley from 1986-1998 but was unable to attend. Recognition was given to the oldest member in attendance, Miss Sylvia Vavra (99), who is a member of Houston Brethren and has family ties to Wesley.

Hymns sang included "To God Be the Glory" (convention hymn), "This is the day", "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above" (a hymn of the "ancient" Unity of the Brethren), and "He's Everything to Me". The pianist was Brenda Garrett. Rev. Hejl led in the invitation for Holy Communion. Tallas delivered the message entitled "Playing Right Field in God's Kingdom." Special music was presented by former students of Hus School;

they sang "Hoj Verni v Boj" in Czech directed by Tallas and accompanied by pianist Donna Tallas.

Elected to serve on the Executive Committee for 2015-2017 are: President, Kent Laza (Bryan-College Station); Secretary, Angela Hairrell (Snook); Financial Secretary, Elizabeth Ripple (Fayetteville); Treasurer, Harvey Treybig (Industry); First VP, Rev. Mark Sebek; Second VP, Rev. Mike Groseclose; Third VP, Dr. Jerry Terrill; Ministerial alternate, Rev. Larry Zabcik; Lay alternate, Wiley Marx (Ocker).

In attendance were 37 delegates, 16 lay representatives, 19 ministers, 4 chairmen, and 55 guests. The Sunday service attendance was 200. The next convention will be held in 2017 at the Temple Brethren Church.



Challenger Camp 2015

Peace+Love=Jesus



Front to Back, Left to Right:

Row 1: Layne Outlaw, Andrew McKay, Christopher Poe, Thomas Luna, Reed Olsen

Row 2: Nurse Connie Janac, Director Angie Labaj, Cade Pate, Haley Mitchell, Breanna Kindt, Grace Jungmann, Director Jennifer Chervenka, Pastor Vanessa Mitchell

Row 3: Jenna Snelgrove, Carlee See, Carsen Amos, Pamela Fojtasek, Madison Benton

(not shown: Counselors JP Chervenka and Anna Wotipka)

Challenger Campers were challenged to stop living like Christian Athiests: believing in God, but living as if He doesn't exist. We used *The Christian Athiest* by Craig Groeschel as our Bible study, which focused on when you believe in God... but don't really know Him; don't think He's fair; aren't sure He loves you; trust more in money; pursue happiness at any cost; and don't want to go overboard.

It was an in-depth study, and campers were encouraged to "Rejoice. Change your ways. Encourage one

another. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Cor. 13:11.

We should be rejoicing all the time, giving God praise for each breath we take. We should be willing to change our ways when the Spirit reveals our weaknesses and shortcomings. We should be encouraging one another and correcting one another in love. We should be seeking peace and unity as Christians, not arguing over non-essentials and dividing His body. God is with us, and true peace with true love is only found in Jesus.

Alpha Camp 2015 Sailing with the Savior



Front to Back, Left to Right:

Row 1: Amelia Farris, Lacie Elkins, Faith Freeman, Karsen Stephens, Joanna Chervenka

Row 2: Nurse Connie Janac, Easton Fulton, Nathaniel Drees, Kyler Caldwell, Ryan Dusek, Shepard Emery, Josiah Koite, William See, J. Carlos Quezada, Carsyn Sebek, Trevor Wuensche

Row 3: Momma Dee Winsman, Arielle Emery, Audrey Corporon, Bailey Krcha, Allie Snelgrove, Kerrigan Hooker, Crystal Heckman, Jazmin Guerrero, Massie Toney, Melanie Morehead, Director Taylor Brinkley

Row 4: Bro. Ron Winsman, Miss Madison Benton (CIT), Miss Taylor Krcha (CIT), Miss Grace Jungmann (CIT), Mrs. Sandy McAdams, Miss Jaycee Johnson, Miss Krystal Dusek, Mrs. Tamela Paddenburg, Mrs. Jennifer Chervenka

Row 5: Mr. Layne Outlaw, Mr. Ben Wilde, Mr. Matt Wilde, Mr. Cameron Wilt, Mr. Zachary Fojtasek, Mr. JP Chervenka, Mrs. Pam Benton

Campers were all aboard for Alpha Camp Sunday, June 14 - Thursday, June 18. We went Sailing with the Savior as we learned: we are God's Treasure (1 John 3:1); we have treasure in our hearts (Matt. 6:21; 1 John 2:6); Jesus is the greatest treasure ever (1 John 4:10); and treasure is to be shared (1 John 4:12).

Although it rained most of the day

for each of our days at camp, campers were still able to enjoy many fun activities such as fishing, archery, painting, parachute games, and so much more.

I would like to thank each of the Alpha Staff and Hus Encampment Staff for such a great week. It couldn't have happened without you!

Giving and Stewardship Corner

The Giving and Stewardship Corner is a small way of reminding us what the Bible has to say about giving and stewardship. Generosity is not only an act of worship but an expression of our gratitude to God our Father and provider. Giving is also a spiritual discipline that promotes spiritual development and maturity. What is God prompting your heart to give?

Leviticus 27:30

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the tree, belongs to the Lord. It is holy to the Lord."

Ephesians 2:10

"For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

"Giving to God is a grace – but not giving to God is a disgrace."

– Colonel Sanders, Founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken, 1890-1980



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Conventional Wisdom

- by Jim Pokorny

I must begin this article by thanking all of the wonderful people I met at this year's convention at Nelsonville and the worship service at Wesley. Words cannot adequately describe the amount of love I was shown that weekend.

One of the ways God expresses His love for us is through the love of others. The love God expressed to me through members of the Unity is unlike anything I have ever experienced before.

The phrase "church family" is at times tossed about rather casually. God has blessed me with a rather unique set of circumstances. As a result the phrases "church family" and "family" are for me virtually interchangeable.

I knew in advance that I would thoroughly enjoy sharing my passion for our history as speaker. What I

could not possibly have foreseen was the number of individuals who would seek me out and give me one of the most precious gifts one human being can give another – the gift of his or her time.

Many of you asked me about my passion for our history, and there really is no simple, cookie-cutter explanation for it. Passion is a journey not a destination.

To be completely honest, I never did extremely well in history class. For me, the study of history is far more than knowing what happened and when it occurred. My interest in history flourished once I was able to study it on my own. I wanted to know who was involved and also what motivated them. History then ceases to be just a mere collection of points on a timeline. A dimension of depth is needed to really make it come alive.

Encounter Conference 2015

"Giddy up with God"



Howdy y'all! We cowpokes had a rootin' tootin' time at Encounter 2015! We had 30 cowboys and cowgirls learn how much God loves us and how to talk and listen to God.

These 7 and 8 year olds participated in Bible lessons, vespers, a butterfly release, prayer walk and scavenger hunt. Fishing, riding bikes, playing kickball, golf, Hungry Hungry Buffalos, crab soccer, a rodeo roundup, and pillow fight were among the recreational activities enjoyed by these energetic buckaroos.

But... probably their favorite activity was FEET OFF THE FLOOR! They had no idea how hard it is to be at Cowboy/Cowgirl camp.

It was a blessing for us to work with these children and our hard-working ranch hands. Our camp pastors led the 4 learning modules. Thanks Preacher Mark and Preacher Jimmy

for sharing with the kiddos how to pray.

Each of the 4 lessons included a science experiment (some worked, some didn't!), games, crafts, and singing. The lessons included God Loves You, What is Prayer/Talking with and Listening to God, Parts of a Prayer, and The Lord's Prayer. The students made a journal to include the 5 parts of a prayer that include thanksgiving, confession, praise, praying for others and praying for ourselves.

Our goal is for the children to continue praying at all times. Thanks Deputy Angie for setting up the prayer walk and scavenger hunt so the children could practice praying. Also, thanks to all our counselors, CIT, nurse, and helpers for being partners in this roundup of Encounter kids.

Vernell Labaj and Peggy Hejl



CALDWELL BRETHREN CHURCH

401 South Main Street
(979) 567-7203

Sunday School
9:30 AM

Rev. Vanessa Mitchell, Pastor
lajoiededieu@gmail.com
(979) 574-0268

Children's Choir Practice, Sundays
10:15 a.m.

Sunday Worship
10:30 AM

Church email: lifeatcbc@gmail.com

Wednesday Family Night Gathering:
1st & 3rd Wednesdays each month

www.lifeatcbc.org

Come as you are ...

Friend us on Facebook!

Please pray for the following:

- That Caroline will tolerate the Taxol and the other CP medicine well – no stomach pain or side effects.
- That the kids can adjust to their new schools well.
- That the Woos can begin to cook and change their eating, exercise, and life habits (de-stress).
- That May can share with others at the kindergarten.
- That the D church can grow wider and deeper in JC.

By the way, October is pray every day for the SD people. Please think how you can get your church to participate in this. More to come about this later.

Thanks for everything you have done for us,

Caroline and the
Woo boys and Salem



History is then transformed into a story which its very name implies.

When it came to our church history, I knew about the life of Jan Hus and his example as we celebrate his life every year. As for the other people and events in our history, that was another matter entirely and a closer examination of my journey may be in order.

I am an avid reader. In 2012 I read a modern English translation of John Bunyan's allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*. I have a fascination with allegories as they provide a unique opportunity of allowing one to see the truth but from a different perspective. I devoured this modern translation of Bunyan's classic in a matter of days and was so moved by it that I used it in my Sunday school class.

It was a joy to see the class having the same reaction to it that I did. One day I commented to Brother Jimmy about how well our study was going. In response he told me about an alle-

gory that was written in the Czech language by John Amos Comenius, who also played a very prominent role in our history. That allegory was entitled *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart*. He also told me about the life of Comenius, and I knew that I simply had to read this book.

I purchased an English translation of the book, which also included some excellent biographical information on Comenius. I was so impressed with it that I ordered additional copies for my class. We then studied both the life of Comenius and his allegory. This allegory has stood the test of time and it remains just as relevant today as it was when Comenius published his first edition in 1623. To this day I remain enamored with the book and have read it a number of times. I was also quite impressed with Comenius and consider him to be not only a man of extraordinary faith but a genius in every sense of the word.



WALL BRETHREN CHURCH

12 miles east of San Angelo, Loop 570, Wall, Texas

P.O. Box 195, Wall, Texas 76957

Phone: 325-651-4444 ~ Fax: 325-651-5100

Pastor: Rev. Thomas Tallas

Home: 325-949-7543 Cell: 325-656-8558

Home: rev.tjt@gmail.com

Church: rev.tjt@zipnet.us

www.wallbrethrenchurch.org

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. Worship: 10:45 a.m.

President
Board of Elders
David Miller
325-651-7597

Pastor/Director of Youth
and Young Family Ministries
Ryan Volkman
325-213-0671

Church Office
Secretary
Johnie Smith
Tu-F-8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

In January 2013, Dr. Mark Labaj came to our church to present a one-day seminar on our history. I still have the notes I took down during his presentation. I have always felt a sense of belonging when it came to the Unity of the Brethren. After attending Brother Mark's seminar, I really understood why I felt that sense of belonging.

In 2014, my class was midway through the study of another classic of Christian literature, *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis. At this point I knew I needed to begin the process of selecting our next study.

This is where events took a most interesting turn.

There was a particular theologian and scholar whom I have always held in very high regard. I went to Amazon's website and keyed his name into the search window just to get a listing of his works. As I scanned through the list of results, one book stood out because it had absolutely no connection with this individual whatsoever.

That book was entitled *A History of the Moravian Church* by J. E. Hutton (1909).

Logically speaking, this made no sense at all. Intrigued, I previewed the

first chapter. I was so moved by what I read that I immediately ordered enough copies for the class. I remain convinced that coincidence had absolutely nothing to do with this book turning up in that search.

When the shipment arrived I began to read my copy. I told Brother Jimmy how much I was looking forward to our study, and he recommended yet another book entitled *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* by Craig D. Atwood (2009). I ordered a copy for myself and began reading it as soon as I completed Hutton's book.

A marvelous thing happened as I laid Atwood's theology on top of Hutton's history. That wonderful element of depth emerged. Through Hutton I was able to piece together the events and the people who were involved. Through Atwood I was better able to understand their motivation. My class is currently studying these two works in tandem. I was delighted to learn that the Executive Committee made it possible for every church within the Unity to receive a copy of Atwood's book as part of the commemoration of the martyrdom of Jan Hus.

month of October. After that she will need a treatment of an organic-type chemotherapy every three weeks until early April (that she has been getting almost since the beginning). She has been doing reasonably well, though far more tired and forgetful than she is used to. She was well enough to visit her parents and sister in Florida while I was here in Texas (we join up tomorrow in Washington, DC, on our way to Buffalo). We had hoped to host them all in Canada in early July, but her father had some medical issues that made that impossible.

Anne continues to write prolifically on her blog (annietmovingtooz.blogspot.com) as well as working on a book-length endeavor that puts on paper the ideas she has been teaching for years in her week-long seminar on church planting. I have travelled twice to Oaxaca (last time in early June) to catch up with our team, and also helped with some MBMission activities in Ontario. I do some writing, as well, with another article accepted in the Anabaptist Witness.

Thank you all for your love, prayers, and support.

Robert

From the Woos...

August 14, 2015

Greetings friends,

We are back from Boston. We are so thankful that all of us got to go to Boston for a month. We went to Michael's sister's wedding. Hung out with Jason and Rene Club for a day. Went to an amusement park. Saw the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock. Went to family camp in New Hampshire. The two older boys went to a week-long camp. We hung out with my sister, Salem, and her family for a day. Went to Lexington/Concord to see the area where "The shot was heard 'round the world, start of a revolution."

Of course I didn't do lots of these things, but I did get to do most. I FINISHED my last dose of A/C medicine in Boston at Mass General. Thanks to Dr. Saylor for all his help. I also started my Taxol medicine. I did

my second dose of that today at Baptist. I will continue with this for the next 10 Fridays, then I will be done with chemo.

So far the Taxol medicine is so much easier than the AC. I do have stomach pain a bit. Next week they will add another medicine that could have some bad side effects.

We are happy to be home, and are trying to stay at peace with all the craziness of getting ready for school. Samuel will be in 7th at Redeemer School and starts this next week. Ian (5th) and Zach (1st) at Whitaker. Isaac at Ardmore Baptist preschool. Salem is 15 months and super fun and cute.

We talked with our ladies back in Target City. May has a job at a D kindergarten. She works every day, all day, with no time to go out. Pray she has opportunities to share with the families of the kids and her co-workers.



Temple Brethren Church

2202 Birdcreek Drive
Temple, Texas 76502
(254) 778-8759
tbc@hot.rr.com

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Worship: 10:45 a.m.

Tim Chaplin, Interim Pastor
(254) 718-3898

In Christ's Love . . . from the Foreign Mission Fields

From the Thiessens...

July 12, 2015

Dear friends,

I am writing from Texas, in the quiet Sunday afternoon after a busy three-day convention here among the Unity of the Brethren. The last time I wrote that name in a letter, many wanted to know who they are.

They are a small group of less than 2000 now, with big hearts, and come with a rich 600-year history tracing back to John Hus, a Czech reformer who paid the ultimate price at the stake in 1415. He prepared the road for the Reformation with other greats like Wycliffe, and was mightily used by God in middle Europe. The Moravian churches also trace back to him, albeit from a later date (1727). Their common forbears formally organized in 1457, and suffered long stretches of persecution and marginalization throughout the Czech lands. Many took advantage of the opportunities opening up in the United States, and there was a large migration of them in the mid 1800s. Many came to Texas, where they flourished mostly in the center of the state, initially as farmers. Today our closing celebration was in Wesley (which my GPS device could not find), at the first church building of this group, built 150 years ago.

Our history with them began when Anne lived on the eastern coast of Honduras working among refugees from the Nicaraguan conflicts of the early '80s. There she came to know several missionaries working with the Moravian churches that had been

established almost a century ago. A couple of them were from the Unity, working under the auspices of the Moravian church. When Anne and I first traveled to Mexico in 1992, we drove through Texas on our way down and stopped in Temple, TX, to visit Ray and Laurie Griggs. They hosted us for a few days, and introduced us to their church. That individual congregation soon began to support us, and a couple years later began to send short-term teams to visit. This all led to significant support from the whole denomination in 1998 and us formally joining the Moravian mission board in 2001. They are still our single biggest supporter by far.

Dozens from here visited over the years, even one who stayed a year and a half! They went to Tlapa, and Ometepe, and Oaxaca; the three significant stages of our journey in southern Mexico. They also began supporting our teammates a few years ago, the Raifords. We have attended these conventions every two years since 1999 as well as traveling throughout Texas to visit individual congregations. I am very glad that I could make it to this convention now, even if without Anne, in order to visit again with old friends, make new ones, and thank them for their constant support of us, especially now during this next phase of our journey.

Speaking of which, Anne has completed five of the six initial treatments, the last one coming July 20th. She will have a mastectomy on September 1st, and then most likely radiation for the

In May of this year preparations were made for Vacation Bible School. Normally I share the responsibility of teaching the adult class so that I can take photographs on the evenings I am not required to teach. This year I must admit to being selfish. When I was informed that the adult class would focus on Jan Hus, I insisted on teaching every evening.

We have been blessed by God with a rich history and a remarkable heritage. I often compare the study of our history to the act of peeling an onion. As each layer is peeled away, you discover that there are many more layers hidden beneath. Some of the accounts are remarkably sad and, to continue the onion analogy, a few tears are to be expected.

Then, of course, the journey for me took an abrupt and unexpected detour to Nelsonville and Wesley. The Rev. Dr. David Schattschneider was scheduled to be our speaker at this year's convention. Due to circumstances beyond his control he was forced to cancel. I received an email from James Marek the day after we were informed. Understanding the spot we were in, I offered my services. I have always considered James a good

friend. Friendship aside, the level of trust James placed in me speaks volumes about him, and that trust is something I will always treasure.

As I prepared to leave Wesley, I recalled one particular evening in 2014. It was then that I realized that the 600th anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus was on the horizon. I remembered thinking at the time, "I hope we can find some special way of commemorating Hus on that anniversary." I had no way of knowing at the time that I would be the one presenting the devotional about Hus at an outdoor worship service at a place as historically significant and special as Wesley. God must have interpreted my thought as a prayer because it could not possibly have been any more special for me.

Things do not always work out the way we plan them, but with God's help they always work out.

Such was the case in July 1917 when an American private named J. Robert Conroy found a puppy while training for combat. Conroy decided to keep the dog and named him Stubby because of his short tail.

Conroy was attached to the 102nd



Seaton Brethren Church

12561 State Highway 53

Temple, TX 76501

Church Phone: 254-985-2694

seatonbrethrenchurch@yahoo.com

Rev. Denise Mikeska, Pastor –

sbcpastordenise@yahoo.com

Charles Amos Sr., Board of Elders Chair

Infantry, 26th Yankee Division. Conroy taught Stubby a number of things including how to salute by placing his right paw on his brow.

Conroy smuggled Stubby aboard his troop ship bound for France. Far out at sea, Stubby was discovered, but he quickly won over the affection of the sailors on board. When the ship arrived in France, Conroy smuggled Stubby ashore. All went well until Stubby was discovered by Conroy's commanding officer. Perhaps sensing the trouble Conroy was in, Stubby saluted the commander as taught. As a result, the commanding officer made Stubby the Division's mascot on the spot. An Army blanket was sacrificed and converted into a uniform for Stubby.

When the Division was sent to the front lines, Stubby accompanied the men. Surprisingly, he grew accustomed to the loud noises of battle. Stubby was injured in a gas attack. He was taken to a field hospital and treated for his injury. He recovered, but the experience made him extremely sensitive to gas. As a result, Stubby could smell approaching gas well before it reached the trenches. During such attacks, Stubby would alert the men both by barking and tugging at their uniforms. This allowed them more time to raise the gas alarm and this undoubtedly saved many lives.

Stubby also developed the skill of locating wounded Allied soldiers and alerting the men in the trenches as to their positions. Stubby was even credited with helping to capture a German spy who was mapping the Allied trench layout. According to the report filed, the spy assumed Stubby was friendly and called him. Stubby

apparently reacted to the spy's unusual accent and began barking furiously. American soldiers investigated and captured the spy. This action resulted in Stubby being promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Stubby thus became the first dog in the U.S. Army to receive a rank. Sergeant stripes were then sewn onto his uniform.

Stubby was eventually injured by shrapnel. After recovering from these wounds, he spent the remainder of the war visiting troop hospitals and boosting morale. Sergeant Stubby received numerous medals and awards during his tour of duty.

Both Stubby and Conroy survived the war. Sergeant Stubby died in 1926. He was stuffed and mounted and then dressed in his uniform and medals. He was presented to the Smithsonian in 1956.

As I stated before, things do not always work out the way we plan them, but with God's help they always work out. I have no way of knowing what God has in store for me down the road. For now I am simply enjoying the journey wherever He takes me. Just promise me that when my time comes, you won't have me stuffed and mounted.

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Westheimer Community Church Observes Jan Hus Sunday



*Pictured from left to right:
Carolyn F. Beseda, Rev. Nello Strickland,
and Jackie Blackmon*

On Sunday, July 5, 2015, Carolyn Beseda gave the history of Jan Hus to the members of the Westheimer Community Church. Holy Communion was served in

memory of Jan Hus. Carolyn Beseda and Jackie Blackmon are pianists for the Westheimer Community Church.

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Ocker Brethren Church Confirmation 2015



Ocker Brethren Church celebrated confirmation on Sunday, May 24. After a year of study under the teaching of Bro. Ron Winsman, 15 students were confirmed. They are:

Back row, l-r: Kolton Benton, Trevor Glaser, Troy Glaser, Hannah Naivar, Ty Sebek, Brandon Wilt

Second row, l-r: Evan Daskocil, Grant Jungmann, Shea Sebek, Kristan Hoelscher, Emma Ranly, Jessica Chervenka, Katelyn Erskine

Front, l-r: Savannah Sebek, Elizabeth Schiller

GRANGER BRETHREN CHURCH

1903 *Where it all began*

306 WEST BROADWAY STREET, GRANGER, TX 76530

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship Services 10:15 a.m.

Pastor, Rev. Larry Zabcik
(903) 265-2277



"Good Luck?"

- by Rev. Vanessa Mitchell

Serendipity.

Good fortune or luck.

Many accredit the best moments in life to serendipity.

The truth is that we know deep within our minds...

The truth is that we know deep within our hearts... that "good luck" is too small a perspective on what transpires in this beautiful life. Even when we reach dark moments that seem to be dragging us downward and suddenly a burst of joy comes forth due to a change in events we had no idea were coming, "good luck" is much too small an author for the good that comes in our lives.

Jesus is God and human.

Jesus has always existed... from the beginning, as the Holy Spirit hovered over the dark waters of the earth.

Jesus is real and active in your life if you invite Him into your thoughts, into your schedule, and into your heart's pain.

We face weakness with life decisions and feel as if all the balls that we juggle are part of a Bingo game when we live in depleted hope and diminishing trust in Jesus Christ's true and ever-present power to draw our lives into glorious syncopation with His best and most beautiful plan for us. Rather than hoping in the dark for "good luck," there is this glorious variety of rhythms and unexpected events and seasons in life that Jesus brings to us to create the intricate song that is our life.

Paul writes while imprisoned, to the Christians in Ephesus, a letter of assurance that **it is Christ who accomplishes the beauty in our lives as we cling to Him rather than "good luck."** Ephesians 1:3-12:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him in love. He

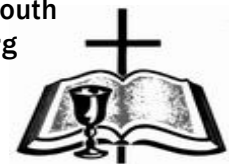


BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION BRETHREN CHURCH

2650 Earl Rudder Freeway South
www.unityofthebrethren.org

Rev. Mark Sebek

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 9283
College Station, TX 77842



Church 9:00 A.M.
Sunday School 10:45 A.M.
Off: 979-693-3606
email: papasebek@gmx.com

destined us for adoption as His children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight He has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of Him who accomplishes all things according to His counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of His glory.

The truth is that we know deep within our minds...

The truth is that we know deep within our hearts... that "good luck" is too small a perspective on what transpires in this beautiful life. Even when we reach dark moments that seem to be dragging us downward and suddenly a burst of joy comes forth due to a change in events we had no idea were coming, "good luck" is much too small an author for the good that comes in our lives.

Jesus is the author of all the good that we could ever dream of and He is calling us to allow the flood of His heavenly syncopation to reign in us and in our circumstances.

Rather than wishing you "good luck" today, I pray for your and my surrender to Jesus in every matter under Heaven. Let us shout together with joy: "Jesus, have Your way today! I trust You! Have your way! Amen."

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 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. – Church Service 10:30 a.m.

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Dorothy Hinson
President
 7331 Misty Morning Lane
 Humble, TX 77346
 (281) 620-0480

John David Skrivaneck
Secretary
 P.O. Box 1605
 Bellaire, TX 77402
 (713) 626-0522

PRIMETIMERS' 21st Annual Retreat Invitation

It's that time again! Senior Camp, better known as PRIMETIMERS'; for Ages 40+; Friday, October 9-Sunday, October 11. Like a good prayer life; PRIMETIMERS' gets better each year!

Austin Brethren's Rev. Linda Chandler will serve as Camp Pastor & lead a short Bible Study & discussion on enhancing PRAYER life. Lots of fun, good food & fellowship. Proceeds support Hus Encampment.

Registration flyers were mailed out to congregations in August. Call Kimberly at 254-931-5657 if additional are needed.

If you haven't come before, come join the fun Saturday for a day filled with fellowship, food, entertainment, games, prizes and study. We look forward to another great retreat.

**Weekend: \$45.00
Saturday Only: \$25.00**

Camp Hosts:

Genevieve Bowman, Rosenberg; Kimberly Kennard Marx, Ocker; and Dorothy Milberger, Nelsonville



Primetimers 20th Annual Retreat October 10-12, 2014