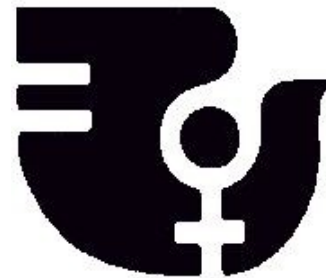


Femailings



Womæn's Caucus, Church of the Brethren

@wcaucus follow

One Woman, All Women June 2018

Denomination

Caucus Events at Annual Conference

This year we are continuing our presence at Annual Conference. This year is important to us as it marks the 60th year of women's ordination.

We'll be sharing recipes for strong women, friendship, good bread, and everything in between at our booth in the exhibit hall. Join us at the business hall before the ballot vote as we pray for the women who will be voted on, Thursday, July 5th, at 1:45 p.m. With the sponsorship of On Earth Peace, we will be presenting an Insight Session on Thursday, July 5th, from 8:30—9:30 p.m. entitled "Witnessing, Listening: For Gender Justice in Leadership". We will be exploring ways to listen, witness and build better practices to support women in ministry.

Then on Friday, July 6th, at noon, we will have our annual luncheon and silent auction. We appreciate donations to the auction, as this is how the majority of our budget for the year is raised. You may bring donations to our booth or mail them ahead of time to Jen Scarr. Our luncheon will feature a panel of Brethren women who will talk about how they cope with oppression within the church. Come support caucus and our panel: Dana Cassell; Sara Haldeman-Scarr; and Carol Waggy.

Mail donations to: Jen Scarr, 105 Whispering Dr., Trotwood, OH 45426.

"We need women who are so strong
they can be gentle,
so educated they can be humble,
so fierce they can be compassionate,
so passionate they can be rational,
and so disciplined they can be free."

— Kavita Ramdas

SILENT AUCTION

As usual, we will be having our silent auction at our luncheon this year. This event is where Caucus raises most of our money for the working budget throughout the year. Last year this money went to help support Femailings, our mid-year retreat, sending Steering Committee members to conferences and our Annual Conference activities. If you would like to send something for the auction ahead of your arrival, please send to **Jen Scarr** at 105 Whispering Dr., Trotwood, OH 45426. Items that sell well are: pottery, art, handcrafted items, and books. Thank you for your continued support!

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Ordination Saga

by Patricia Roop Hollinger

"You will return someday, but not as a patient." This was my still small voice giving me this information while I was hospitalized for a major depression at Brook Lane Farm, Hagerstown, Maryland. When attending church one Sunday I heard the pastor say, "people with mental illness were not good Christians." These words were grist for the mill during my therapy session on Monday morning.

My college education had been aborted by this hospitalization. A marriage proposal came my way and I accepted. My husband and I were employed by Church World Service which gave me a sense of being a part of the solution in the world and not the problem. We had two children for I desperately wanted to be a mother.

"When the year is up just go and seek a divorce." These were my words upon learning that my husband was having an affair. His mixed messages regarding the possibility of returning to the marriage could no longer be tolerated. Definitely not an easy decision for me to even consider since I had been brought up to believe that divorce was right up there with the unpardonable sin. I needed time to ponder what my role may have been in the demise of the marriage as well as believing that I could be forgiven and possibly remarry in the future.

Forgiveness came as I read these words from *Divorce Problem* by C.S. Lovett. "The pastor who can marry the ex-murderer and the wire-tapper,

admitting them to church office, can, with equal conscience marry and even remarry, divorced individuals."

I began to pursue my college while also attending the Center for Biblical Studies with the intention of becoming ordained to ministry for a position as a Chaplain.

My second husband appeared at a Parents Without Partners event. I made it quite clear to him that no man would stand in the way of my education. His response was, "So, why not seek a Masters as well." Whoa! That was not even on my radar screen.

I obtained my BS in Sociology in 1985 and my MS in Pastoral Counseling in 1987 from Loyola College. While pursuing these I also was active with the Association of Brethren Caregivers and Pathways to Promise which were both increasing the awareness of the mentally ill in churches. During one of those meetings, the CEO of Brook Lane Health Services, which was formerly Brook Lane Farm, was in attendance. He learned of my desire to work in a mental health setting. While eating my lunch a note appeared by my plate which said, "Would you be interested in a position at Brook Lane?" Shivers went up my spine as I recalled those words telling me I would return someday.

Upon graduation in 1987 I was also ordained to ministry in the Church of the Brethren, and I began my 23-year career as Pastoral Counselor/Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Ordained Minister at Brook Lane Health Services.

A strong woman
stands up for herself.
A stronger woman
stands up
for everybody else

A strong woman loves,
forgives,
walks away,
lets go,
tries again,
and perseveres...
not matter what
life throws at her.

**I am proud
of the woman
I am today,
because I went through
one heck of a time
becoming her.**

SHE
who is clothed in
STRENGTH
and
DIGNITY,
and who
LAUGHS
without
fear of the future,
is a **WOMAN** of
STRONG FAITH.

Letter to those coming behind me, who I welcome to walk beside me

by Erin Matteson

Sometimes I find it fascinating to imagine any variety of contemporary letters that might be appropriate for an ongoing canon. One from women in ministry to others coming would be lovely. The following is some of what I might write:

Beloved Sisters,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our sweet Jesus the Christ, whose fully human and divine being included both the feminine and masculine, the fullness of humanity and divinity. As we celebrate 60 years of women's ordination in our communion and you begin your formal ministry into the next sixty, may you look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith who indeed, gathered both men and women around him. Particularly as women, may you be inspired and encouraged by His earthy, relational, authentic and compassionate way of being, finding there a mirror and affirmation for your ways of being in the world with others.

Sisters, no matter where you begin in ministry, may you

constantly remember to hold your call gently as a living, breathing thing. Remember that it is as an infant, something that will develop and grow, likely shifting in what it looks like and how it wants to walk around in the world. This means it will take various shapes and forms, perhaps require you to accept it desiring to embody a different look or support it's travel to a new place or way of being in the world. Our call greens and grows in ways that remind me of Hildegard of Bingen's coined phrase "viriditas", "*the greening power of Christ or sap of God.*" As we mature and grow our faith grows. Like vines we become more and more alive in Christ in ways that deepen our color and carry us out to new places in ourselves and the world to explore, take hold of and allow to transform us and those around us.

Oh, how excited I am for you, dear sisters. I move into the last legs of my ministry journey having been called and carried in ways and to places I could never have foreseen and wouldn't trade for all the peppermint tea or chocolate in the world. Like a flower, let your

own vocation of love and compassion, justice and peacemaking unfold. Be your own authentic, beauty-full self, trusting and being true to who and how you alone have been created to be. Cherish your female ways of knowing and being as holy gifts purposefully given for intentional, critical work in the world. Wear them and live them as offerings of beauty and grace for holy healing and kin-dom building in the name of all that is good. You will not be alone. A whole legacy of women of faith from scripture, your heritage, and those of us who started out on the road before you that yet remain to travel with you will all whisper words of encouragement into your heart or use all of social media to nurture your soul. Because that's what women do. We sing endless forms of the timeless song of courage and conviction, compassion and collaboration to one another, keeping the feminine fire alive that feeds not only our souls but fuels the world. Blessed be your journey. All thanks and glory to the Giver of life, who blesses all creation with your seed.

Recipe for Happiness

1 c. common sense

1 1/2 c. love

1/2 c. justice

Sift in 1 heaping teaspoon of mutual confidence and 2 large portions of humor, beaten separately. Spice with wit and non-sense. Bake in moderate oven of self-approval and ice with general appreciation.

From *Country Cooking: With The Bowen Creek Amish School*

Called Two Times

by Cindy Weber-Han

In 1973 there was a drop in enrollment in schools across the country. It was the end of the baby boomer era. As high school Art teacher I was offered 2 classes to teach in the coming year. Not enough to live on. I decided to move to Minnesota to live with a friend and hopefully find work as an art teacher.

That night I attended a prayer meeting. I was a bit late and was attempting to silently sneak in. The woman I sat next to said in a loud whisper, "what's this I hear about your becoming a pastor?" I quietly whispered, "you have the wrong person". She kept insisting and getting embarrassingly louder. I was becoming irritated by her disrupting the prayer meeting. Responding to the commotion, the leader of the prayer service said, "It's true!" I said, "No, you must have me confused with my brother who is in seminary". I was informed that the church board had just discussed giving me a call. Not having been brought up Brethren and new to the faith, I stated, "No one has called me!"

The next day I decided to visit the Seminary. Was this the Holy Spirit? I'd better check it out.

The seminary offered a big open door with a scholarship for my coursework and the opportunity to live on campus. I decided to try it out.

In 1973, there were only 5 women students at Seminary; 3 in peace studies and 2 of us undecided. My second year I decided to pursue a M.Div. degree as did the other undecided woman. Together, we 5 women approached the administration stating we wanted to have a female professor. Later, Nancy Faus was hired as an adjunct professor.

My third year, more women enrolled in seminary. For several years, the number of women students continued to increase and as did the number of female faculty. I met my husband while in seminary. When we graduated in 1976, we were ordained and became one of the first couples serving as co-pastors in the denomination.

A few years later while attending Annual Conference, I heard a noted Brethren Revival Fellowship minister talk against women serving as ministers. I decided to discuss this with him. I pointed out that I had been called by the church into the ministry. He stated, he "believed I was called but I misunderstood what I was being called into. I was called into the ministry of church education or music but not as a pastor." His remark upset me. I contacted my home church and asked if I was called to be a pastor. I was informed that "Yes, the 100% congregational vote was for the pastoral ministry". My second call! A reaffirmation! I co-pastored for 12 years.

Self care at AC 2018

by Kathy Gingrich

Ever experience negative stress at Annual Conference?

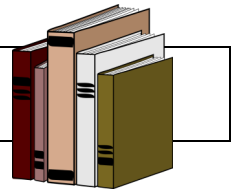
Stress can be our response to change, a perceived threat, a challenge or physical, psychological or spiritual barrier. Stress can also be experienced when "demands" exceed our capacity or resources to respond.

It makes sense that attending Annual Conference can be stressful. Travel, changing time zones, two or more co-occurring activities that we would like to attend if only we could clone ourselves. Real or imagined conversations with persons holding beliefs or practices different from one's own, whether they be organizational, philosophical, theological, or programmatic differences, can trigger a stress reaction.

Early morning breakfast meetings, pre-conference events, a full schedule, intense business meeting agendas, worship and late night insight sessions can test our physical wellbeing. Learning of "life events" (births, deaths, divorces, marriages, graduations, retirements, career changes . . .) experienced by friends we connect with at Annual Conference can trigger a range of emotional and compassionate responses.

Reports, business items or conversations around the listening tables can highlight intense theological, programmatic or organizational differences resulting in spiritual distress or compassion fatigue. Perhaps you

Continued on page 5



have your own list of “identified” stressors or stress triggers.

One way to manage adverse stress is through the practice of self-care. How will you practice self-care while attending Annual Conference? Self-care is a gift you give to yourself. Here are a few ideas - please add your own!

Eat healthily and mindfully; stay hydrated. Maintain as normal as possible sleep routines. Using black out shades, eye masks, or ear plugs can help block out unwanted light and sounds. Supplement with naps, meditation and other activities that help promote calm, restful responses. Exercise — simple stretching, slow deep breathing, walking, jogging, swimming or full blown workouts — releases toxins, reduces stress and restores balance. Change your “view”. Sit at a different place during worship or business sessions, walk outside, stroll through the booth area, walk a different path.

“Ground” yourself with check in times with family and friends who are part of your network of support; identify a “code” word or signal that lets a trusted friend know you need extra “TLC”. Get comfortable with saying “no”. Grow your gratitude list Withdraw to regroup. “Laughter is an instant vacation” — Milton Berle. Download an app that promotes calmness and wellbeing. Use as needed! Listen to music that soothes and comforts. Avoid over-analysis.

Remember who you are, and whose you are. God’s love and grace abound; the Holy Spirit is astir. Remember, self-care is a gift you give to yourself!

The Mother of all Questions and Men Explain Things to Me by Rebecca Solnit

by Shirley Kirkwood

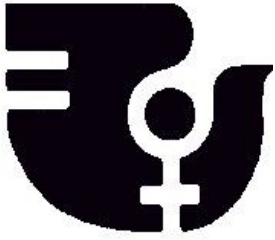
These two books are certainly ingredients in a recipe for a discussion by Caucus members. Both books contain essays that feature current topics and issues that relate to women’s lives, but are not likely to be addressed by Circles or Sunday School classes. Some of the topics may be completely foreign to our personal experiences – yet they are accounts of actual happenings in women’s lives, and perhaps we need to be mindful of these realities.

In one essay she describes how women disappear – their names and genealogy are lost. Using records of actual historical events, she illustrates how the patriarchal culture dismisses women’s experiences and knowledge. The book is not a put down of all men, yet it does acknowledge the cultural framework in which we live. For some the books may be an eye-opening experience, while for others it will remind them of stories in their own lives. Current political scandals and the #metoo movement have uncovered many examples of male dominance.

In referring to the books as “ingredients” in a recipe, it leads to an introduction to Leaveners, a group that began in Bridgewater, Virginia, when several women in

the Church of the Brethren wanted an opportunity to engage in discussions beyond the time allotted in Circle meetings where business, food and event planning occurred. One woman suggested we call the group Leaveners – that which causes the lump to rise. Initially it met twice a month over lunch near the college snack shop. Then it moved to a college library room and eventually to the local library in town. The schedule changed to once a month and it met from September through May with summer months cancelled. Members sent their program suggestions to a leader who prepared a ballot for the September meeting to vote for programs for the year. Each idea had to have a presenter responsible for the topic to be named. This enabled the program to be assigned and scheduled for the year. This group began in 1981 and continued until 2017 as participants aged and leadership and participation declined. It was a great group with many excellent discussions.

A list of programs may be received by requesting that Shirley Kirkwood send such lists. Contact her at kirkwoodshirley@gmail.com and include your mailing address.



Womæn's Caucus Needs Your Financial Support to Continue

With your continued support Womæn's Caucus can do so much to help further our mission of decreasing prejudice within the Church, empowering women and advocating for people on the margins. This year we have put a lot of energy into being an advocate for SCN members and creating a safe space at Annual Conference. We are thinking about tangible ways in which we can live out our mission and build our community and also interact with the community that Caucus has built over the past 40 years. We appreciate your support!

Options: complete the form below, visit our website at www.womaenscaucus.org and use the donate button, and/or select Womæn's Caucus to receive 0.5% of your purchases at smile.amazon.com.

Make checks payable to: Womæn's Caucus  Cut & mail to: Womæn's Caucus, 818 SW 3rd Ave., #E1299, Portland, OR 97204

Name _____	Contribution	Membership
Address _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> I am already a member
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership — \$25/yr
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Student member — \$15/yr
Email _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	Femailings
Phone _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Already receiving
District/Home Church (if applicable) _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Send by mail
_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Send by email

Editor Position

Job Description: We are looking for someone to solicit articles, curate images and proofread *Femailings* for the next year or more. No layout work needed. You will work closely with the Steering Committee during the month the issue is released. This will require a phone or video call. We expect to create at least three issues per year, with a possible fourth issue.



You will coordinate the gathering of all the materials for our layout person. You need to be proficient in editing skills, prompt in responses by email, and have a passion for Womæn's Caucus. This position will be paid an honorarium per issue.

Please contact us for more information: womaenscaucuscob@gmail.com

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them,

because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’ ”

(Matthew 9:35-38)