

# Diakonos

Summer 2007

News & Resources for BIC Women in Ministry & Leadership

## In this issue...

- Servant in Focus: Karen Durbin
- Reflections on the 2007 Retreat
- Come to the Water Conference

*Diakonos is published quarterly by the BIC Council for Women in Ministry & Leadership, an affinity group of the Brethren in Christ*

BIC COUNCIL FOR  
WOMEN IN MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP  
**VISION**

ENCOURAGING DIVINELY GIFTED  
WOMEN TO FULFILL THEIR CALL TO  
MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP

## Servant in Focus

### Karen Durbin: Worship & Music

BY RACHEL PETERSON

"It's been my experience that God knows the desires of our hearts better than we do," says Karen Durbin, Minister of Music & Worship at The Grantham Church. "Discovering that is an exciting journey." In her own life, this journey has taken Karen places she never anticipated.

As a young woman, Karen's life revolved around her dual passions: music and her Christian faith. During her years at Messiah College, she majored in Music Education and participated in almost every ensemble on campus. "My hand was constantly in the air to volunteer for things," remembers Karen. But having grown up in a tradition that didn't allow for women leaders in the church, it never occurred to her that she might be called to integrate her love of music with her love for the Church on a vocational level. Instead, she planned to teach.



When Karen graduated from Messiah, however, she was unable to obtain a position teaching music. Despite her excellent credentials and dedicated effort, she was forced to accept the disappointment of putting her dream on hold. In the meantime, she got a job at a bank in Lebanon, met and married her husband, David, and started a family. Throughout this period Karen continued to find outlets for her musical gifts, participating in community music groups and teaching lessons privately. When, after returning to Harrisburg, the Durbins found a church home at Grantham, Karen discovered further opportunities to share her talents: she sang in the chancel choir, taught clubs, and ended up directing the junior choir for ten years.

One day, Karen learned of a job opening for an elementary music teacher in her children's school district. "It seemed like a dream come true," she recalls. "I had always wanted this type of position, and the timing seemed perfect." A short time later, however, Grantham's minister of music suddenly resigned to move to California. To her surprise, Karen received two separate phone calls urging her to fill the church's vacant position on an interim basis. Convinced that she would soon be starting a new teaching job and lacking any frame of reference for imagining women in ministry, Karen met with the senior pastor to inform him that she was not the person for the job.

"I went in to the pastor's office in my 'mom clothes,' and realized half way through that it was an interview," laughs Karen. By the end of the meeting, she had agreed to fill the position. "As soon as I started working at the church," she says, "I found my heart."

Since taking this step of faith, Karen has been amazed to see the myriad ways in which God has affirmed her decision and equipped her for this position. "Almost as soon as I started, I got a flyer in the mail for a church music certification program at Lebanon Valley." Over the next two years, Karen attended classes part-time to obtain her certification, providing her helpful resources in topics ranging from liturgy to children's choirs. She has since obtained a masters degree from the Institute for Worship Studies (IWS), and is currently pursuing her doctorate. "The whole mission of IWS is to nurture renewal not just in individuals, but in congregations," explains Karen. The transformation she has experienced in her own life through her involvement with IWS, as well as the renewal she witnesses at the Grantham Church, continues to affirm Karen's sense of calling, and gives her a clear sense of purpose in her ministry. "My vision is that we as a congregation will experience God among us—not just as a concept we talk about, but as a real presence among us as we worship together."

*Rachel Petersen is a 2005 graduate of Messiah College, works at Paxton Street Ministries in Harrisburg, PA, and attends the Grantham Church where she is active in music ministries with Karen.*

## Retreat Reflections...

Three women with different ministries, from different churches, and at different stages in life share some of their reflections on the Women at the Well Retreat held this past March at Kenbrook Bible Camp in central Pennsylvania.

### MARTHA STARR

is an ordained Pastor at Lancaster BIC Church in the Atlantic Conference serving as the Minister of Christian Education.

Martha has attended the retreat before and came with “a desire to connect with other women in leadership. It was especially good to interact with young women new to ministry.” She continues saying, “I didn’t come really looking for anything for myself but rather wanted to be an encouragement to others,” but adds, “Of course, I did receive inspiration for myself too.”

Attending a workshop on The Ministry of Administration, Martha was struck by the “similarity between my experience and that of others.” In a *Conflict & Gender* workshop, she learned the “importance of understanding the role of personality in resolving issues.”

Martha also enjoyed the musical part of our worship saying, “The music was excellent—God exalting and uplifting.”

**ANGELA FICKES** is the Christian Ed Director & Youth Leader at the Fairview BIC Church in the Susquehanna Conference.

The retreat featured three preachers in our worship times and Angela shared that “each speaker brought something specific to me and I enjoyed them all.” She also attended our biennial workshop *Biblical Foundations for Women in Ministry & Leadership* taught this time by Jean Keller-Thau (*Associate Pastor, Dillsburg BIC, PA*). Angela commented that “Jean really did her homework with that one. The insight that she brought about the scriptures (especially Paul’s letters) was encouraging and helpful. My fears on not doing what I’m supposed to do were put to rest with her encouragement.”

Overall Angela “found it very inspiring to be among women who took the call and went with it. Most of the women appeared to truly have a servant’s heart to do the Lord’s work and I look forward to meeting them again in two years when hopefully I will be closer to being licensed myself.”

*continued on page 3*



## One Woman at the Well

PEGGY MUMPER GIVES A NEWCOMER’S VIEW OF THE MARCH 2007 COUNCIL RETREAT

Another women’s retreat, ho-hum. The brochure said it was geared toward women in ministry *leadership*. Okay, that piqued my interest. But I don’t have an official title. I just do lots of things around the church. And I like to see women using their gifts and finding their callings. So was this retreat intended for me? And if it were, did I really need another guilt-inducing trip down the how-to-do-better at studying/leading/being organized, blah, blah, blah path?

I noticed that Pastor Cedra Washington (*Associate Pastor, Harrisburg BIC, PA*) was one of the speakers—okay, I am more hopeful that this is worth both my time and my money. Another speaker, Mirta Colloca, is from a Latino BIC church (*Vida Abundante, FL*) and I want to know more about relating to all of my sisters in Christ. I hemmed and hawed and refigured my schedule and I signed up for the retreat. And I saw then that Karen Durbin (*Minister of Music & Worship, The Grantham Church*) would be leading worship so I knew that would be good. I believed God was encouraging me to go. I just like a little reassurance.

You have figured out by now that I have been to some bad women’s retreats (honestly, nothing done by the BIC) and that this retreat turned out to be an excellent experience for me (why else would I be asked to write this article?). Cedra was her usual fired up, loving, exhorting self that I get to hear at my own church in Harrisburg, PA. She and Pat Oldham (*Chair, Council for Women in Ministry & Leadership*) both spoke on the *woman at the well* passage in John’s gospel—a challenge for two speakers at the same conference. But they were both creative and fresh and inspired. Mirta went a different route and spoke on *the woman with the alabaster jar of perfume*—another woman who followed God’s call. She asked us to open ourselves in prayer. Not one iota of guilt-inducing stress in any of their talks.

The teaching was superb. The opportunity to chat with and get to know some very interesting women was also worth the money. Being reminded of God’s desire to use the gifts He has given His daughters was a needed nudge. But most of all, my life was deeply touched by the ministry of Debby Bentch (*Pastor, Hanover BIC, PA*) who uses drama and her own openness and Christ’s healing teachings to reach out to the woundedness of other women.

I am in a time in my life when my five children are leaving home and my heart has been a little battered in the process. While in a prayer time with Debby and Doris Barr (*Associate Pastor, Mechanicsburg BIC, PA*) and a few caring women, none of whom I had ever met before, God gave me a picture of hope and encouragement, even reassurance that his calling on my life as a mother was real and He has honored my insufficient abilities and efforts.

I went to the retreat to grow in my ability to minister to other women. Instead, God brought a sweet healing to my hurting heart through these women. But it’s not really *instead*. It is only by allowing God to heal me and my wounds that I am able to minister at all to others. Not so ho-hum after all.

*Peggy Mumper is an active member of the Harrisburg, PA BIC city church. She is an enthusiastic supporter of the arts and this was her first BIC Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership retreat.*



## Gifts...

In the past, the Council has received some generous monetary gifts most often designated for scholarships to our biennial retreat. These gifts have allowed many women to attend the retreats where they found solid teaching, support for their call, and rejuvenation.

If you would like to support the work of the Council with a special gift designated for scholarships or for general expenses including retreat expenses, travel needs to functions like General Conference, or administrative costs, the Council would benefit greatly and would certainly appreciate your generosity. Gifts can be sent to Brethren in Christ Church, PO Box 290, Grantham PA 17027.

# Brethren in Christ Council for Women in Ministry & Leadership

## VISION STATEMENT

*Encouraging divinely gifted women to fulfill their call to ministry and leadership.*

## OBJECTIVES

*Proclaim biblical truth about the call to ministry and leadership in the body of Christ.*

*Provide support systems and opportunities for networking among women in ministry and leadership.*

*Promote education and resources related to women in ministry and leadership in the church.*

## Join the Council—Support the Work

Membership in the Council is your opportunity to support the work of proclaiming biblical truth, providing support and opportunities, and promoting education for women in ministry within the Brethren in Christ Church.

We invite you to join the Council and become a voting member at the next BIC General Conference in 2008. Because the Council is not funded by the BIC budget, members are asked to financially support the work with dues at \$20 per biennium. Joining now will allow you to vote for the Leadership Team and to hold an elected position yourself. Both women and men are invited to join and serve. To join one must be an active member of a BIC church, agree with the Core Values of the BIC, and agree with the vision and objectives of the Council.

Send your check for \$20 US to Brethren in Christ church, PO Box 290, Grantham PA 17027 with a note that it is for membership in the Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership. It would also be helpful to email Lois A. Saylor at [lawsaylor@comcast.net](mailto:lawsaylor@comcast.net) that you have sent in your dues.

## Reflections... continued from page 2

**FAITH ZERCHER** is Director of Older Adult Services at Philhaven, a mental health facility, and attends the Harrisburg BIC Church where she serves as a deacon.

Faith attended the retreat for our one-day-only option. Faith attended a workshop which had a new focus for us—ministry in the secular workforce. "Linda Worman's (*hospital administrator, Fayetteville, AR*) workshop, *Ministry in Professional Life*, was full of practical ways to keep ministry-focused while working in the secular world." Faith also attended a conflict and gender workshop by Lorraine Stutzman-Amstutz from MCC. Faith says, she "made me think about my own ways of dealing or not dealing with conflict and how to learn more about how to use conflict to bring about growth and understanding."



During the day Faith also had some free time and the chance to meet with a small group whose members were selected at random. "I loved the small group time for getting to know the stories of other

women and to feel a close bond with others. I took a walk during the free time and enjoyed the closeness of God in the beauty of nature there at Kenbrook."

Reflecting on past retreats Faith shares that "having attended the previous ones, I have always come away feeling refreshed and encouraged and wish to be a supportive part of this important ministry for the church."

## Join us for the Eighth International *Come to the Water* Conference

Sponsored by Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy, Inc.

**Come to the Water**  
2008

... sit at Jesus' feet

**Marriott Nashville Airport**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**April 10-13, 2008**

The Brethren in Christ Church is a sponsoring partner of the Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy's biennial conference *Come to the Water*. The 2008 theme is "...sit at Jesus' feet." The web site says, "As Scripture tells the stories of the disciples, of the crowds and of Mary, each finding a place at the feet of their Lord, listening, learning and being loved, so you also can come and find that same sense of intimacy and connection with the Christ."

A number of BIC women and men have attended this conference.

If you would like to know more, go to [www.cometothewater.org](http://www.cometothewater.org)

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