

Alabaster Jars

...giving our best to God

WELCOME TO ALABASTER JARS...

...a new periodic update from the North American Brethren in Christ Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership. The purpose of this update is to celebrate the many women serving God in ministry and leadership positions across the denomination and to keep you informed of the Council's activities. The name, "Alabaster Jars," has historical and biblical significance. About 30 years ago, when the Brethren in Christ Church in North America was beginning to formally recognize and credential women in ministry, the fledgling movement had a small newsletter called "The Alabaster Jar." The title was taken from the story of Mary Magdalene, who used precious ointment from her alabaster jar to anoint Jesus' feet; she gave him the best she had.

SAVE-THE-DATE 2010 BIC General Conference

The gathering at General Conference is one of the Council's signature events. The Council sponsors a luncheon for anyone interested in issues related to women in ministry and leadership. We are planning to host another gathering at the 2010 General Conference in July 2010 at Messiah College. The gathering will include a brief business session during which Council members will confirm new appointees to the Leadership Team, as well as a speaker who is still to be determined. Anyone is welcome to attend. Watch for details when you register for General Conference!

The Council's other signature event is the biennial retreat, held in odd years at Kenbrook Bible Camp in Lebanon, Pa. The next retreat will be held in early spring 2011. Brochures for the retreat will be available at General Conference.

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S STORIES

Rev. Christine Sharp, Executive Director, Brethren in Christ World Missions



Chris writes, "It has been a privilege to serve in professional ministry in the Brethren in Christ Church since 1996. Following many years as a lay leader in my local church, I considered it a great honor to be asked to serve as a leader and pastor at Mechanicsburg (Pa.) BIC for six years, followed by a call to serve at Pequea (Lancaster, Pa.) BIC for seven years. I love serving the Church, and my passion is to raise up people to be fully devoted followers of Christ and encourage every person to pursue God's call in their lives.

"Since beginning as executive director of BIC World Missions in April 2008, I've had opportunity to expand my passion to raise up leaders to follow the call of Christ. In my role, I am asked to cast vision for global outreach for the denomination. I'm privileged to work with a staff of 12 in the Grantham (Pa.) BICWM office, five regional administrators, and an international team of more than 65 global workers. My passion is to empower a strong team that focuses on call, gifting and the pursuit of carrying out God's vision for our global ministry. The BICWM staff and the board are seeking new regions in which to begin ground-breaking global outreach. I also give administrative oversight to finance, mobilization, communication, and team development.

"In addition, I am honored to serve as a part of the Leadership Council and General Conference Board, the leadership teams for the denomination. It is a privilege to serve with my brothers and sisters in casting denominational vision and carrying out the management responsibilities of the wider Church. God has blessed me with many ministry opportunities over the years as an ordained pastor, through ministry in the local church and now denominational administration."

Rev. Doris Barr, Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church



For the past 15 years, Doris Barr, pastor of the Mechanicsburg (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church, has led a Healing Prayer Ministry that addresses the spiritual and emotional brokenness of people's lives. Everyone carries the effects of life experiences that are often not addressed in sermons or typical discipleship programs. As a result, many Christians struggle with guilt about their lack of discipline or disillusionment about the "abundant life" in Christ. Through prayer, a caregiver brings the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the places of wounding, and as a result, people are healed and set free to be the person God originally created them to be. While Doris attended Ashland (Oh.) Theological Seminary, she was introduced to the teaching of Dr. Terry Wardle on Formational Prayer. She invited Dr. Wardle to McBIC and they now host his seminar every year. Doris also leads a growing network of caregivers throughout the area who have been trained in Formational Prayer. Her passion is to see churches equipped to minister to hurting people within their congregations and in their communities.

COUNCIL COLLABORATES ON IMPACT SEMINAR

In May and June 2010, the Brethren in Christ Equipping for Ministry program will sponsor an Impact Seminar on "Women and Pastors: The Brethren in Christ Perspective." This seminar recognizes that while the denomination has affirmed the licensing and ordination of women since 1984 and many churches benefit from the gifted ministry of women in pastoral leadership, there are still some people who are reluctant to fully accept women as ordained pastors. Featuring Alan Robinson, senior pastor of the Carlisle (Pa.) BIC Church, and Jim Spurrier, senior pastor of the Dillsburg (Pa.) BIC Church, the seminar will review the BIC history of women as pastors and examine the biblical foundations for women in ministry. The seminar will also include the video-taped stories of four BIC woman pastors (Debby Bentch, Janis Heiser, Jean Thau, and Deb Wiles) and opportunity for dialogue. Members of the Council's Leadership Team helped to plan the seminar and the Council organized the creation of the video and paid for its production.

The seminar will be held in seven locations across North America in May and June 2010. Cost is \$50, with discounts for multiple registrations from the same congregation. [Complete program and registration information.](#)

COUNCIL PLANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOR TEEN GIRLS

What's in Your Bucket? A Leadership Conference for Teen Girls

"There are different kinds of gifts...but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Date: March 2010, Grantham (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church

Purpose: To help young high school women study the biblical foundation for women in ministry and leadership roles in the church and explore their gifts.

Who Can Attend: Teen girls in 10th to 12th grades from the Allegheny, Atlantic, and Susquehanna Conferences who are recommended by their youth leaders and/or their chaperones. The number attending may be limited to 25.

JOIN THE COUNCIL, BECOME A DUES-PAYING MEMBER

One of the ways you can support the Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership is by becoming a member. The Council is completely self-supporting and depends on the contributions of its members. We invite both women and men who support our vision and objectives to become members. Dues are \$20 for two years (from one General Conference to the next) or \$10 for one year if you join in a non-General Conference year (renewable at the next General Conference). Dues support the activities of the Council. Members are eligible to vote for the Council's Leadership Team. [Membership form.](#)

CHECK OUT THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Thanks to Nate Bridi, graphic designer and web developer for the Brethren in Christ Church in North America, for helping us maintain our website. We're still developing the content, but we invite you to check out the information and resources there so far. Note especially the collection of sermons and articles, including several by the late Janet Peifer, the Council's founder. Web address: www.bic-church.org/women.

MORE WOMEN TO CELEBRATE

Cedra Washington, associate pastor of Evangelism and Outreach at the Harrisburg (Pa.) BIC Church, was honored recently with the Ella Frazier Award by the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg. She received this award for her efforts to promote diversity and racial justice in Central Pennsylvania. [More about Pastor Cedra.](#)

Judy Fetrow was recently featured in the denominational e-newsletter. Judy is the pastor of two congregations, Hillside Chapel and Tremont, both in the Atlantic Conference. Read the story, ["Dedicated to Discipleship."](#)

NEW WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Ordained in 2009

- Rita Wolf, co-pastor, Bridge@Beans (Morrison, Il.)

Licensed in 2009

- Hope Newcomer, BICWM, London, England
- Renee Kievit, children's pastor, Wainfleet (On.)
- Judy Fetrow, pastor, Hillside Chapel and Tremont (Pa.)
- Marcia Mylin, children's ministries, The Table (Lancaster, Pa)
- Dawn Groff, children's ministries, Pequea (Lancaster, Pa)

Attended New Pastors and Spouses Retreat

- Daleen Charles, associate pastor, Pequea (Lancaster, Pa.)
- Angela Fickes, youth, Fairview (New Cumberland, Pa.)
- Dawn Groff, children's ministries, Pequea (Lancaster, Pa)
- Tracie Hunter, pastor, Western Hills (Cincinnati, Oh.)

COUNCIL SUPPORTS ATTENDANCE AT MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE IN PARAGUAY

We were pleased to provide financial assistance for Fada Luz Perez from the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua to attend a gathering of Latin American and African women theologians in Paraguay in July 2009 as part of the Mennonite World Conference Assembly. [Read more.](#)