

# The Brethren Baptist Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Representing a Church of the Brethren and an American Baptist Church, March / April Issue, 2023

## A GOD WHO DOESN'T KEEP SCORE

A good friend of mine, who has been a Jesus follower most of his life, still has difficulty reading the Gospels. Jesus sounds angry and threatening to him. He grew up in a church that stressed sin and punishment and hell. It worked, in terms of making him fearful and anxious. Sadly, it didn't help him to know the love and grace of Jesus.

I think grace can be confusing for us because we live in a society that keeps score on many things. Most of us have internalized this scorekeeping and keep a mental tally of how well we're doing compared with others. Do me a favor? Take a moment to stop and consider if there are ways in which you "keep score." In relationships, in finances, in trying to be "right with God." Can you think of any? I'm guessing so. If not, keep reading and pray for the rest of us!

Grace doesn't work by the scoring system. Jesus loves us, period. Not "loves us if..." or "loves us when..." or "loves us as long as...". Unconditional love is hard to wrap our heads around.

What really complicates the issue is that God also tells us to do stuff. Jesus said, "**So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.**" Someone termed this "The Golden Rule"—Jesus didn't call it that—and we react very differently to "rule," don't we? My friend looks at that and thinks, "Oh, no! I'm breaking the rule all the time! How can God stand me?"

In Matthew 7:12, Jesus gave us a way of life, not a rule. When we have rules, some of us tend to think "Okay, what's the closest I can get to breaking this without getting caught?" Others immediately decide, "Hey, *they're* not keeping this rule as well as I am!"

But a way of life is deeper and more all-encompassing. It relates to everything: where you live, how you sleep, what you eat, the air you breathe. Your thoughts.

Imagine following this way of life, "doing to others," in how we think of them: "Think of others as you would have them think of you." That's a new way of life. No one can see if you're following this or not; it's entirely between you and God.

Jesus teaches us to care *especially* for those who are valued least in our society. In fact, Jesus identifies himself *as them*, and tells us in Matthew 25, "what you do to the least of these who are my brothers and sisters, you have done to me." This is a way of life, not a rule. If God kept score on this, we would all be in big trouble. But God *isn't* keeping score; God is transforming our hearts through loving us.

Here is the key: when we love, when we care for anyone around us, when we go out of our way to love and serve people in need, we change. We look a little more like Jesus.

Rules don't change us. God's Spirit transforms us.

God doesn't keep score. Love is infinitely bigger than a scoreboard. And grace changes our hearts, while rules never can.

Pastor Mike

**MARCH 12 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS!**

**(Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour)**



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**AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING**

Each year we collect the America for Christ Offering for the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, 100% of your generous donations to our AFC Campaign support our ministries providing much-needed assistance to communities devastated by natural disasters and the pandemic.



The America for Christ Offering (AFC) 2023 is based on John 1:16-17 (NRSVue) *From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

This year we will collect the AFC offering on *Sunday, March 19*. Please write your check to Wenatchee Brethren Baptist Church with "America for Christ" in the memo line. Wenatchee Brethren Baptist is associated with both the American Baptist Church and the Church of the Brethren. In the fall, we will collect the Mission Offering for the Church of the Brethren.

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**FINAL SCORE OF THE SOUPER BOWL**

Each year, on Super Bowl Sunday, we collect the "Souper Bowl" offering for the food ministries of Serve Wenatchee Valley. Although your team may not have won in the Super Bowl this year, your WBBC team *definitely* won in the Souper Bowl. The final score was \$229.21! Thank you for your generosity! Go team!

**REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

Our Shut-ins:

- Mary Kintner
- Carolyn Storme
- Darlene Uhrich

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**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

- 10<sup>th</sup> Jesse Graybill
- 15<sup>th</sup> Karen Whitley

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Myla Fletcher
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Judi Delabarre
- 18<sup>th</sup> Gary Shaw
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Merry Kay Shaw
- 26<sup>th</sup> Linda Vickery  
Leanne Ford



**MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**

No Anniversaries

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

No Anniversaries

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**HOLY WEEK 2023**

Holy Week is the high point of our yearly church calendar: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday Love Feast, and a joyful Easter worship. For the last few years we have adapted these celebrations because of the pandemic.

Things are still not consistently back to normal with Covid, but be assured, we will worship together on Easter Sunday. Presently we are planning for a bread and cup communion during the Palm Sunday service. Plans for Love Feast are under discussion, so stayed tuned.

Remember, Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and Easter is April 9 this year. However it is that we celebrate, we will be celebrating the resurrection of Christ, and that's good news.





## MAKE YOUR OWN BEESWAX WRAPS

Caring for God's creation belongs everywhere including in your kitchen. You can reduce the use of plastic by using beeswax wraps instead of plastic wrap which can leach chemicals into food. Beeswax wraps can seal bowls, wrap leftover vegetables and fruit, even create "envelopes" for sandwiches. Beeswax is non-toxic and has antimicrobial properties so bacteria doesn't grow on food. The wraps are reusable so you reduce waste. If cared for properly, beeswax wraps will last for years. Wipe them off with a little soap and cold water as warm water will melt the wax. If they lose their tackiness, you can melt more wax onto them and make them as good as new.

These wraps can be pricey. Fortunately, making your own beeswax wraps is simple. You need 100% cotton fabric cut with pinking shears to the size you want. Cut circles, using a bowl as a guide, making the cloth circle slightly larger than the bowl or simply cut squares. Line a cooky sheet with parchment paper, lay the fabric on the cooky sheet, and spread beeswax pellets or grated beeswax over the cloth. Put the cooky sheet in the oven at 300 degrees for 1-2 minutes to melt the beeswax (do not walk away from the oven since the wax could ignite if forgotten). Using a clean paintbrush, spread the wax evenly. Lift the wrap and allow to cool and dry which doesn't take more than a few minutes (I use exam gloves to keep the wax off my fingers). Then the wraps are ready to use! Simple and effective.

Creation Care Team

## HOW DO WE DO CHURCH IN TODAY'S WORLD?

Rev. Sam Kim lead seven board members in an Evergreen virtual leadership retreat February 4. He spoke about Holy Innovation in a time when increasing numbers of younger people are not attending church. Jesus told us it's not about old versus new, but it's about staying true to God's revelation. We are called to both renew and transform. And we all need reforming (Holy Innovation in action), all the time.

The mindset of Holy Innovation is to be hopeful, to try things and learn, reflect on our learning, change what needs changing, and keep going! Reform, Renew, and Resurrect. Our team of seven chose to think about how we might provide ways for seniors to interact intergenerationally. The guidelines were observe, listen, empathize, gather insights, and plan an action. The action we chose to experiment with was interviewing each other in pairs, asking questions such as what is most important to us in worship, how do we identify denominationally, how frequently would we choose to have communion, how important Love Feast is, and what are our gifts. Our interviews should be based in curiosity, non-judgmental, clarity about what we need, open-ended, empathetic, and information gathering.

The board members will try out this prototype, and later we could do this as a congregation. Some ideas were to imbed these paired interviews into worship, blending into a potluck meal and a time of sharing our insights. That may change or maybe not. If something does not work, we learn from it, tweak it, and try again.

Be hopeful. Try things and learn. Reflect on what we learn and change what needs changing. Repeat. Keep going! That's how we Reform, Renew, and Resurrect. *Semper reformanda.* Always reforming.

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# Happy Easter!

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FROM BRETHREN BITS FOR FEBRUARY 18, 2023



Calling All Needle Artists!

PLEASE POST

# Celebrate 2023

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE QUILTING BEE

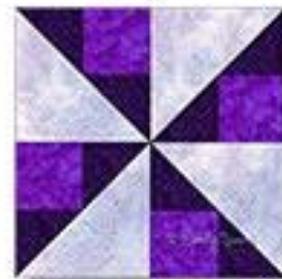
*Your finished 8 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch block must begin at the bottom of this sheet, meeting this line and matching the width of this paper.*

Viviendo el amor de Dios  
Viv Lanmou Bondye A  
Rayuwan Kaunar Allah  
Living God's Love

**Your congregation is invited to  
create a block  
for the 2023 Conference quilts.**

Please follow instructions on the next page.

**ALL Quilt Blocks should be  
postmarked  
by May 15, 2023**



**Mail your quilt block and a dollar (or more) donation  
(checks payable to AACB)  
to offset the cost of quilting materials to:**

**Margaret Weybright  
1801 Greencroft Blvd. Apt. #125  
Goshen, IN 46526**



Quilt tops are assembled before conference.  
No blocks can be accepted at conference for this year's quilts.  
All blocks delivered at conference will be considered  
for next year's quilts and wall hangings.

## PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR QUILT BLOCK

### TYPE OF FABRIC

- Pre-shrunk cotton or cotton blend.
- If you use stabilizer,  
Please use only water soluble,  
very soft or easily removed backing.

**Do not use:** double knit,  
counted cross-stitch on canvas,  
liquid embroidery, padded blocks,  
or heat-applied designs or photos.

**PLEASE: NO GLUE**

### PATTERN

- Use your own creativity to make your design.
- **Important:** Identify your block with your congregation's name, state, and/or district.  
This makes the quilts more valuable!  
(Second blocks from your congregation need not be identified.)



### SIZE OF BLOCK

- **Outside border:** Not less than 8½ square  
*AFTER* it is worked.
- **Inside design:** Not more than 8" square  
with nothing in the seam allowance.

**Cut the block to size AFTER it has been  
pieced, embroidered, or appliquéd.**

Accuracy is important.  
Blocks less than 8½ inches will not fit;  
larger designs will be obscured.

**See you all in Cincinnati!  
July 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>**

