



Church of the Brethren

Fall 2020

To the Brothers and Sisters of the Northern Ohio District Conference: Greetings in the Strong Name of Jesus!

What a surreal season we're living in. Significant upheaval shakes the very foundation of life; we're afraid and troubled. Yet, I'm comforted by the words of the prophet Isaiah: "You [O God] have been a fortress-protector...a mighty stronghold...in distress, a shelter from the sudden storm, and a shade from the...heat of the day. For the fury of tyrants was like a winter windstorm battering against the wall, and like the heat of a drought in a desert land; but you subdued the heat under the shade of clouds..." (Isaiah 25:4-5 TPT).

Our current context is troubling and destabilizing, yet God subdues and shades even amid the fiercest threat and fury. That is why we still envision "God's Adventurous Future," claiming that theme once more as we gather in Greensboro, NC, June 30-July 4, 2021 for the 234th Annual Conference. As previously announced, the worship, resourcing, and business for that conference will be the same as envisioned for the Grand Rapids Annual Conference, including our featured resource persons, Tod Bolsinger and Michael Gorman, along with our featured concert artist Fernando Ortega.

I encourage you to plan to be with us in Greensboro! The 2021 Annual Conference takes on heightened importance given the cancellation of the 2020 Annual Conference; we need to reunite and reaffirm our life together as the People of God!

To that end, I'm confident of Christ's ability to "cement" us and be our common bond. The apostle Paul articulates this promise: "So you are no longer outsiders...but fellow-citizens with every other Christian—you belong now to the household of God. Firmly beneath you [is] the foundation...the actual foundation-stone being Jesus Christ...In him each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbor, grows together into a temple consecrated to God. You are all part of this building in which God himself lives by his spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22 PHILLIPS).

Sense how vital you are to the church-life God is crafting. Yes, the times are intense, but God is subduing the heat under his shade, calling us, nevertheless, into God's Adventurous Future, in Jesus!

With Strong Hope,

Paul Munday
2021 Moderator, Church of the Brethren

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.