

Church of the Brethren Beliefs

In 1708, eight people gathered at the Eder River in Schwarzenau, Germany, and were baptized. In 1719, the growing group moved to North America, beginning in Germantown, Pa. Initially the groups was known as the German Baptist Brethren, or, colloquially, as the "Dunkards" because they practiced full immersion baptism. The name, "Church of the Brethren," was adopted in 1908.

Today, the Church of the Brethren has about 100,000 members in about 1,000 congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico; as many as a million people attending services at Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria); and hundreds more in India, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

The central emphasis of the Brethren is not a creed, but a commitment to follow Jesus in simple obedience, to be faithful disciples in the modern world. We hold the New Testament as our guidebook for living, affirming with it the need for lifelong study of the Scriptures.

Brethren emphasize:

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION: A love for neighbors and enemies that leads to forgiveness, sharing, mutual aid, and creative peacemaking.
(Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-38; Romans 12:18)

THE SIMPLE LIFE: A discipline in the use of all good things as trustees of God's earth and all its resources, avoiding waste and hoarding for self.
(Psalms 8, 24; Luke 12:13-21)

SERVICE: A participation in tending to the needs of suffering everywhere so that one's Christian faith bears fruit in an active life.
(John 15; James 1:19-27)

Special services Brethren observe:

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM: When persons have made their personal decision to follow and put into practice the ways of Jesus.
(Matthew 28:19-20)

The threefold vows we use at Wyomissing are:

- *Do you believe in Jesus as the revealer of God's love and purpose for this world?*

- *Will you live in keeping with the example of Jesus as your teacher and guide?*
- *Will you be a faithful member of the church, the Body of Christ, sharing in the power of the Spirit by your prayers and your presence, your substance and your service?*

ANOINTING: for healing and wholeness in time of personal need or trouble.
(James 5:13-16)

DEDICATION OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN: to express the responsibility of parents and the whole community of faith for the nurture of children within the church.
(Mark 10:13-16)

LOVE FEAST and COMMUNION: patterned after the Last Supper.
(Luke 21:7-20; John 13; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)