

## A cloud of witnesses

More often affectionately known as “The Bean” due to its kidney-like shape, the now-famous sculpture officially titled “Cloud Gate” sits majestically in Chicago’s Millennium Park.

Designed by Anish Kapoor and installed in 2004, it quickly became one of the most iconic and most photographed sites in the city. Covered entirely in stainless steel, the 33-foot-tall artwork reflects not only the clouds above it, but also the striking skyline that surrounds it—as well as the many faces of all the eager tourists that flock to it.

One can walk all around it, as well as under it, seeing ever-changing angles along the way. It’s surprisingly simple, but also undeniably beautiful. In it, the whole city becomes a work of art.

The “cloud of witnesses” described in Hebrews 11-12 holds a similar, powerful draw. In the faces of all these saints who have gone before us and all those who continue to encourage us along our way today, we see reflections of ourselves and the landscapes we travel. Seeing them from a new perspective and in a new light, we can find community, inspiration, and renewed hope.

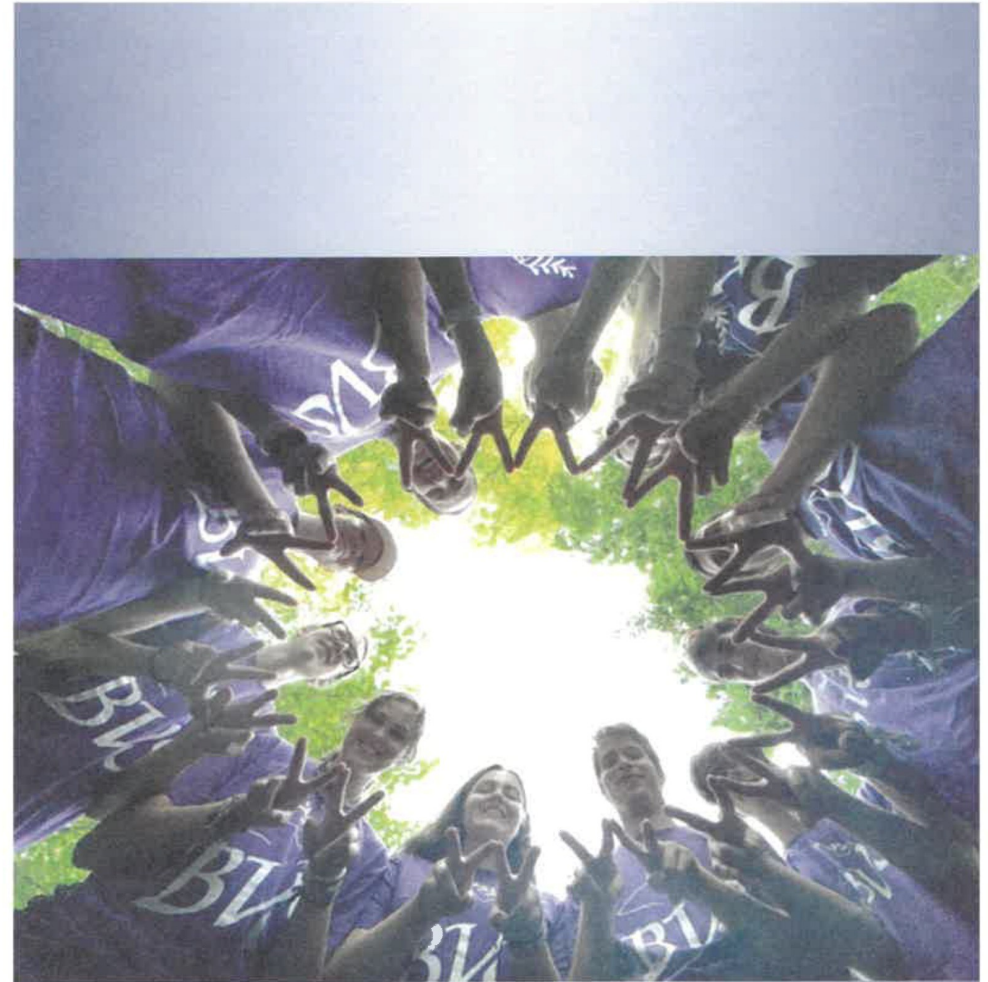
In our Brethren setting, that cloud includes people like those who have served in Brethren Volunteer Service—now more than 7,000 of them over nearly eight decades. It includes short- and long-term mission workers in places across the globe. It includes disaster response volunteers and pastors, Sunday school teachers and deacons, youth advisors and camp counselors and countless others.

As we gaze upon that artful expression of who we have been, who we are, and who we can be, how might we see ourselves differently?

—Walt Wiltschek  
Lombard, Illinois

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by *so great a cloud of witnesses*, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1, *NRSVue*). **Today’s Bible readings from the lectionary:** Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19; Jeremiah 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Hebrews 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56.

August 17, 2025. Photo of Brethren Volunteer Service orientation by BVS © Church of the Brethren. Living Word Bulletin Series © 2025 Brethren Press. Printed in the USA.



*So great a cloud  
of witnesses*

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
Hagerstown, Maryland

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**MORNING WORSHIP**

**10:45 AM**

August 17, 2025

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN GOD?**

**PRELUDE**      "If You Will Only Let God Guide You"      (Arr. Lowe)

**CALL TO WORSHIP**      Sandy Clipp, Worship Leader

One: God of the school and God of vacation;

*All: God of the hospital and God of the factory;*

One: God of the mountains and God of the beach;

*All: God of controversy and God of peace;*

One: God of dissension and God of agreement;

*All: God of disruption and God of unification;*

One: God of Jesus and God of the church;

*All: God of everything and God of everyone, we gather together to  
worship and sing your praise.*

**HYMN #36**      "God of our strength"

[Verse 1]

*God of our strength, enthroned above, the source of life, the fount of love,  
O let devotion's sacred flame our souls awake to praise thy name.*

[Refrain]

*God of our strength, we wait on thee, our sure defense forever be.*

[Verse 2]

*To thee we lift our joyful eyes, to thee on wings of faith we rise. Come thou,  
and let thy courts on earth ring out thy praise in days of mirth.*

[Refrain]

*God of our strength, we wait on thee, our sure defense forever be.*

[Verse 3]

*God of our strength, from day to day direct our thoughts and guide our way.  
Oh, may our hearts united be in sweet communion, Lord, with thee.*

[Refrain]

*God of our strength, we wait on thee, our sure defense forever be.*

[Verse 4]

*God of our strength, on thee we call. God of our hope, our light, our all,  
thy name we praise, thy love adore, our rock, our shield, forevermore.*

[Refrain]

*God of our strength, we wait on thee, our sure defense forever be.*

**OPENING PRAYER**

Holy God, in this time and place we prepare to meet you as your body, the church. We acknowledge you as our head. We anticipate your Spirit moving among us. We await your Word, knowing that through it our lives and loves will be reordered. Come to us in power to confront, convict and comfort, for we are your people, made in your image. Amen.

**A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE A CHILD**

**SERVICE OF GIVING**

**Call to Giving**

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, people of generations before us who have given their all in faithfulness to God. Much is required of those who make a faith commitment. Much is required of us. We give, however, not out of fear or a sense of duty but because it is a joyful opportunity to express thanks for all we have received.

As we pass the offering plate here in the sanctuary, we also pass a virtual offering plate to those worshiping with us on YouTube Live. We invite you to give by mailing your offering to the church or dropping it off at the church during the week, or by going to the Hagerstowncob webpage.

**Offertory**      "Abide With Me"      (DeCou)

**\*Doxology #119**      "Praise God from whom"

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Let us pray. Gracious God, whose creative energy has filled all heaven and earth with good things for us to enjoy and share, we would honor you with our offerings. May the programs we initiate and the outreach we support bear fruits of justice and peace. We look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, as our model in facing all circumstances and giving ourselves for others. Amen.

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

"Concertpiece"      (H. Painpare)  
Chris Stockslager, Tuba

## SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

*Please remember our worship is also on YouTube and our website.*

*Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.*

*An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.*

## PASTORAL PRAYER

### HYMN #580

*“My life flows on”*

*[Verse 1]*

*My life flows on in endless song, above earth’s lamentation.*

*I catch the sweet, though far off hymn that hails a new creation.*

*[Refrain]*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I’m clinging.*

*Since Love is Lord of heav’n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

*[Verse 2]*

*Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.*

*It finds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?*

*[Refrain]*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I’m clinging.*

*Since Love is Lord of heav’n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

*[Verse 3]*

*What though my joys and comforts die? The Lord my Savior liveth.*

*What though the darkness gather round? Songs in the night he giveth.*

*[Refrain]*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I’m clinging.*

*Since Love is Lord of heav’n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

*[Verse 4]*

*The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!*

*All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from singing?*

*[Refrain]*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I’m clinging.*

*Since Love is Lord of heav’n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 12:49-56

NT 75

“I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against

mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain’; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

## MESSAGE

“Fanning the Flames”

Pastor Twyla Rowe

## HYMN #570

*“We walk by faith”*

*[Verse 1]*

*We walk by faith, and not by sight; no gracious words we hear of him who spoke  
as none e’er spoke, but we believe him near.*

*[Verse 2]*

*We may not touch his hands and side, nor follow where he trod, yet in his  
promise we rejoice and cry “My Lord and God!”*

*[Verse 3]*

*Help then, O Lord, our unbelief, and may our faith abound to call on you when  
you are near, and seek where you are found:*

*[Verse 4]*

*that when our life of faith is done, in realms of clearer light we may behold you as  
you are in full and endless sight.*

*[Verse 5]*

*We walk by faith, and not by sight; no gracious words we hear of him who spoke  
as none e’er spoke, but we believe him near.*

## BENEDICTION

*After the Benediction, you may be seated.*

*Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.*

## POSTLUDE

“How Firm a Foundation”

(Harris)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship

Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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Hagerstown  
Church of the Brethren  
15 S. Mulberry Street,  
Hagerstown, Maryland  
21740  
301-733-3565

Office: Tuesday—Friday  
Flexible hours  
(appointments welcome/  
call ahead)

Morning Praise Worship  
at 8:30 AM  
Sunday School at 9:30 AM  
Worship and YouTube Live at  
10:45 AM

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Twyla Rowe  
Pastor

Allyson McPeak  
Administrative Assistant

Burton Young  
Director of  
Music Ministries

Don Rowe  
Interior Esthetics  
Technician

*We welcome you to our church and  
Rejoice in your participation with us in  
worship. It is our prayer that you will  
experience the presence of God's Spirit and  
that it will equip you for service and ministry  
in the week ahead. Our Pastor, Deacons, and  
Cluster Leaders are available after worship  
and during the week to listen and assist you in  
your Christian pilgrimage.*

#### **THE ANNOUNCER August 17, 2025**

**If you placed someone** on the prayer list and they are now celebrating a recovery and would like their name taken off the list, please contact the church office.

**If you or a loved one** has surgery scheduled, is hospitalized, or would like a visit from the pastor, please notify the church.

**"Take A Moment"** Let this be our daily "Take a Moment" prayer for the week beginning with Sunday, August 17 - Great God, I step out in faith today on this adventure called life. I don't know all that lies ahead, but of one thing I am certain; and that is, that you will be with me. Please send your Holy Spirit to guide each action I take and to flow through each word I say. May your Spirit inspire me to take risks when it's necessary...so I can grow more fully into the person you created me to be; and so I can help make the lives of others better. Protect and guide me when the way seems rocky. I put my trust in you, O God, today and every day. With anticipation and joy, I offer this prayer. Amen.

**Attendance.** Please sign the attendance rosters found at the end of your pew, or possibly in the hymnal rack, and pass it down the row so everyone can sign.

**Our thanks** to Sandy Clipp for being our worship leader today and to Chris Stockslager for special music this morning.

**The flowers on the altar this morning** are given to the Glory of God and in memory of my parents Harold and Hilda Brumbaugh. Love, Christine Ellis

**We will be welcoming new members** to our congregation during the late service next Sunday, August 24th. If you have taken the class and are interested in joining, please let Pastor Twyla know by TODAY.

**There will be a brief Congregational Business Meeting** on Sunday, September 7th in the Sanctuary following the 10:45 service. All are encouraged to attend.

**Susan Hughes and Jeremy Springer** are going to have cantaloupes in the west entrance next Sunday, August 24th starting at 9:30 am. She gets them in Shippensburg, PA at a Mennonite farm and they are very tasty. Once again she will be taking donations for the cantaloupes and all proceeds will go to the Good Samaritan Fund.

**Non-Delegate Registration forms** can be found on the credenza in the wing of the sanctuary or in the fellowship hall for those wishing to attend the 2025 District Conference on October 10th & 11th. The church office does not register non-delegates. The deadline to submit your registration form is September 17th.

**Sleep in Heavenly Peace**—Jenny Ferguson is collecting used or new children's books for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Thank you to everyone who has donated so far, please keep them coming. The box will stay under the table in the west entrance. If you could only see their faces when they get a bed and pick a book. Thank you!

**Fellowship Time**—We are in *need of volunteers* to provide goodies for Fellowship Time, held the first Sunday of each month. Goodies may be your favorite recipe or a delicious store bought treat. Suggestions include cookies, muffins, or doughnuts (3-4 dozen of whatever you choose) and may be dropped off in the Mullendore Room (the room behind the wing of the sanctuary) that morning. Beverages and paper products are provided. Please sign up on the sheet located in the west entrance, or contact Kristal Bricker or Amy Hardy. Thank you for helping to make Fellowship Time possible!

**MUSIC PROGRAM** – Music rehearsals will begin on September 4th with Praise Band at 5:30, Brethren Bells at 6:30 and Temple Choir at 7:30. If you're thinking about joining, or have a musical gift to share, this would be a great time to get started! See Burt with any questions.

**The 55th Annual Dunker Church Service** will be held Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 3:00 pm. The Dunker Church is located on the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland.

**Widows/Widowers Luncheon**—You are invited to attend a luncheon for the Widows/Widowers at Hagerstown COB. The luncheon will take place on Thursday, September 18, 2025 in the Fellowship Hall. We ask ALL that attend to bring a pot luck dish to share. We will provide paper goods and drinks. A sign up sheet will be placed in the west entrance for everyone to please sign up so we can get a head count. If you have questions, please contact Robin Davies, Ann Platou, Suzie Wolfe or Mary Means.

**ARE YOU GOING TO BE HUNGRY** on Saturday, Sept. 20? If so, how about filling up with an \$8 foot-long cold-cut sub, a \$6.50 fresh turkey and provolone sandwich, a \$5 country ham sandwich and/or a quart of chicken noodle soup for \$9 -- all to benefit Growing Hope Globally?!!! In this year's project, youth in Sierra Leone and Liberia are going to help grow a food reserve for their communities. See Arn for order forms!! **Order deadline Wednesday, Sept. 10.**

**The Service & Outreach Team** will once again be having our large community event—Fall Festival & Trunk or Treat—on Saturday, October 18th from 1 to 4PM. We need many helpers. We will have bingo, children's games, and crafts for the children. We will have hotdogs, baked beans, chips, popcorn, water, snow cones, and cotton candy. There will be a cake walk. We will have a costume parade for the kids and of course, Trunk or Treat. Do you love to meet new people and share the good news about our Lord and Savior? Here's your opportunity. We also need adult and children's prizes for bingo. If you have any appropriate items, you no longer use, please donate them for this event. We also need cakes for the cake walk, and cookies and candy. If you would like to participate in the Trunk or Treat, let us know. There are sign-up sheets available in the west entrance. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Service & Outreach Team.

**GriefShare®** Our fall session of GriefShare will begin on Wednesday, September 17, and continue each Wednesday evening through December 17, from 6:30—8:30 in the Mullendore

**Room.** There will be no class on November 26 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. You may join at any time during the 13 weeks, but we ask that you commit to attending at least 3 consecutive weeks. Cost is free, but we gladly will accept a \$10 donation towards materials.

The grief journey after losing a loved one is very painful, difficult, and lonely. Since everyone grieves differently, there is no magic endpoint to the grieving process. Fortunately, HCOB offers GriefShare, an international, faith-based 13-week seminar offering support after the death of a spouse, child, family member or friend, no matter how recent. The GriefShare ministry team provides a safe, welcoming space where people understand the heavy emotions of grief. As a participant, you will receive valuable tools to help you navigate your personal path, as well as gain support from others also in their grief journeys. If you or someone you know has lost a loved one, please share this information with them and consider attending. We encourage you to bring a family member or friend so they can better understand your loss and become a greater support for you.

Register at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). If you have any questions about the program, see Pastor Twyla or Debbie Nycum.

\*We also will offer two special 2-hr evening seminars:

1. *Loss of a Spouse*—Wednesday, August 13, 6:30—8:30 pm (*already passed*)
2. *Surviving the Holidays*— Monday, November 3, 6:30—8:30 pm

**We are now streaming our services through YouTube!** If you have not done so already, subscribe to HCOB's YouTube Channel and share it with others. You can do so by going to: [www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob](http://www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

## **CALENDAR**

### **Sunday, August 17**

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall  
 9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms  
 10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube  
[www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob](http://www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

### **Monday, August 18**

Church office closed

6:30 pm Deacon Meeting/Mullendore Room

### **Tuesday, August 19**

12:00 pm Mary Martha Group/Mullendore Room or Altruistic Room

### **Wednesday, August 20**

Administrative Assistant/Work from home

12:00 pm Deadline for bulletin announcement submissions

### **Friday, August 22**

8:00 am Bulletin prep/Church office

1:00 pm Islamic Center/Use of Parking Lot (1-3pm)

### **Saturday, August 23**

Pastor Twyla's day off

### **Sunday, August 24**

Junior Church/Welcoming New Members

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall

9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms

10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube

[www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob](http://www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

*Remember our weekday schedule is subject to rapid change.*

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 15 S. Mulberry Street,  
 Hagerstown MD 21740  
 OR  
 you can make a secure offering  
 donation on our website using  
 Breeze [www.hagerstowncob.org](http://www.hagerstowncob.org)

The church calendar is online at  
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 Click the calendar tab.