

Let us run with  
perseverance  
the race that  
is set before us.

**HEBREWS 12:1, NRSV**

**First Church of the Brethren**  
**730 Church Street, Eden, NC April 27, 2022**

**FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**



**EDEN, NC**

Doug Diamond – Pastor

Last night I was officiating a soccer game between two teams of high school boys that would normally be pretty evenly matched. That wasn't the case last night, though. You see, one of the teams played a game last week that ended in a bench clearing brawl. Six players from the team were red carded which results in automatic suspension from upcoming games. Those suspensions left the team shorthanded so the coach did what he had to do and recruited some new players who were athletes but that played other sports – basketball, track, etc.

Now as you might imagine, being an athlete does not necessarily translate into being a soccer player. In fact, at one point toward the end of the game, I heard one of these “replacements” comment, “I don't think this is for me. I'd better stick to track!” About halfway through the second half of the game, with the team down a whole bunch to nothing, the soccer players started to get on one another's cases, blaming each other for what was happening. After one play that was almost a goal, a midfielder yelled at the goalkeeper, suggesting that he needed to do better.

That is when one of these fill-in players piped in and yelled, “Hey, he's a teammate!” He's a teammate. Don't tear him down. Don't discourage him. Don't blame him. We are a team. We work together. We encourage one another.

Sometimes in the church we need this reminder, too. We are a team. We work together. In fact, a common motto of the Church of the Brethren is Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. **Together.**

I have been in churches where this is a significant issue (I have not seen it to be so at First). At one church I can remember a “dear sister” who was always on the sideline ready to let those who were doing the work of the church what they were doing wrong, why we’re losing because of them, what they should be doing that they weren’t. And like that midfielder chastising the keeper, her words were seldom helpful.

Brothers and sisters, we are teammates. We are together to win souls for Christ, to serve those around us, to bring Jesus into the neighborhood. May we encourage one and help each other to accomplish all that the Holy Spirit calls us to do.

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up,  
just as in fact you are doing.  
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

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“If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded.”

—Maya Angelou

# FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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## **Pray Without Ceasing**

Eugene Barton, Lucy Bradford, Carolyn Combs,  
Melissa Dalton, JT Hale, Barbara Janney, Tania Martin,  
Salem Nelson, Marie Priddy, Aaron Roach, Jutta  
Shelton, Roger Shockley, Patsy Underwood, Leon &  
Gail Walker, Danny Whitley

## **Thinking of You**

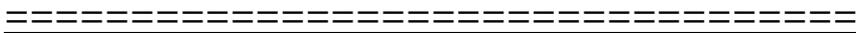
Sharon Tudor

## **District Prayer Request**

Pray for the youth of the Church of the Brethren as we observe National Youth Sunday throughout our denomination including virtual resources. Let us look forward with excitement and enthusiasm to the greater works of God to be revealed.

The Nurture Commission would like to recognize all graduates of the class of 2022 on Sunday, May 15th. If you have a graduate that you would like to recognize please send pictures and a short write up to the church office no later than Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>.

This Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, is the last Sunday to submit your donations and list of names for the Mother's Day bulletin. You can put your donations in the offering plate on Sunday or you can donate via PayPal! We look forward to recognizing all of the amazing ladies on Mother's Day!



How will they know?

A well-known 1960s song by Peter Scholtes answers an implied question: How will others know we're Jesus' disciples? Not by how we understand family values. Not by our politics or theology. Not by how many Bible verses we've memorized, how often we attend church or how much offering we give.

Rather, the song's title and refrain say it all: "They'll know we are Christians by our love." Jesus put it this way: "Everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35, NIV).

Sometimes love involves words — teaching, proclaiming, bearing witness to God's presence. But if words aren't backed by actions, they soon fall flat. We can, as the song says, "spread the news that God is in our land." But if we don't live like that, no one will believe it.

When we declare God's reality but withhold kindness from neighbors, observers rightly question whether we follow the God whose presence we announce. But "if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12).

Upcoming Birthdays

May 3: Sarah Carter

May 6: Dan Barton

May 7: Dempsey Bradford, Jr.

