

PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT OF
THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Another Way

DISTRICT CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2026

Pacific Northwest District
Church of the Brethren

Table of Contents

District Conference schedule....2
Our PNWD District....4
PNWD Leadership Structure....5
Map of District Congregations....6
Consensus Decision-Making Model....7
Minutes of 2025 PNWD District Conference....10
2027 Budget Proposal....15
Financial Report—Profit & Loss....16
Financial Report—Balance Sheet....18
District Disaster Response Report....20
Church of the Brethren Annual Report....21
Mennonite Insurance Services....40
Eder Financial Report....41
On Earth Peace Report....43
McPherson College Report....45
Brethren Volunteer Service Report....46
Brethren Disaster Ministries Report....48
General Secretary Letter (English)....51
General Secretary Letter (Spanish)....53
Annual Conference Moderator's Letter....55
Annual Conference 2027....56
Office of Ministry Letter....57
Bethany Theological Seminary Report....60
Calls to Action—Annual Conference Resolutions....64
Notes....67



FRIDAY

5:30 PM: Dinner, Main Lodge
Zoom room will be open for fellowship

7:00 PM: Evening Gathering, Another Way
Meeting Hall & Zoom

SATURDAY

8:00 AM: Breakfast, Main Lodge

9:30 AM: Morning Gathering & Business
Meeting Hall & Zoom

10:45 AM: Break

11:00 AM: The Evergreen Way: Structure
Evergreen Association of American Baptists, Rev. Doug Avilesbernal
Meeting Hall & Zoom

12:00 PM: Lunch, Main Lodge
Zoom room will be open for fellowship

1:30 PM: Afternoon Gathering & Business
Meeting Hall & Zoom

3:15 PM: Break

3:30 PM: The Evergreen Way: Decision making
Meeting Hall & Zoom

5:30 PM: Dinner, Main Lodge
Zoom room will be open for fellowship

7:30 PM: Evening Gathering, Firecircle

SUNDAY

8:00 AM: Breakfast

10:30 AM: Worship with Sunnyslope Church of the Brethren,
In-person in Wenatchee, or on Zoom from camp or wherever you are

Business Agenda*

September 25-26, 2026 | Camp Koinina

Consensus Model Decision Making

Review 2025 District Conference Minutes

2027 District Budget

2027 District Leadership

Reports

- Treasurer
- District Board
- District Executive Team
- Ministry Team
- Mission & Ministry Board
- Standing Committee
- COB Mission Advancement Team
- Eder Financial
- Everence
- Mennonite Insurance Services
- Brethren Disaster Ministries
- Other denominational reports

District Response to Annual Conference Business, Resolutions and Calls to Action

- Annual Conference Webcasting - Update
- Walking Together: Immigration, Peacemaking, Conscience, and Supporting Our Neighbors
- Resolution on Weapons Transfer

*We reserve the right to adjust the order at will or as needed.

Our PNWD District

Our District comprises the Church of the Brethren congregations throughout Washington and Oregon, as well as the online congregation, Living Stream Church of the Brethren. All who are members of any of these congregations form the body of our District—the District is not separate from us, but rather we are the District in our collective body.

The District serves to administer and coordinate the religious and business activities of the Church of the Brethren within the bounds of the District. As enumerated in our District constitution, there are four directives that further guide our District activity:

1. Facilitate connection among member congregations and camps within the district.

2. Support member congregations and camps in building denominational connections.

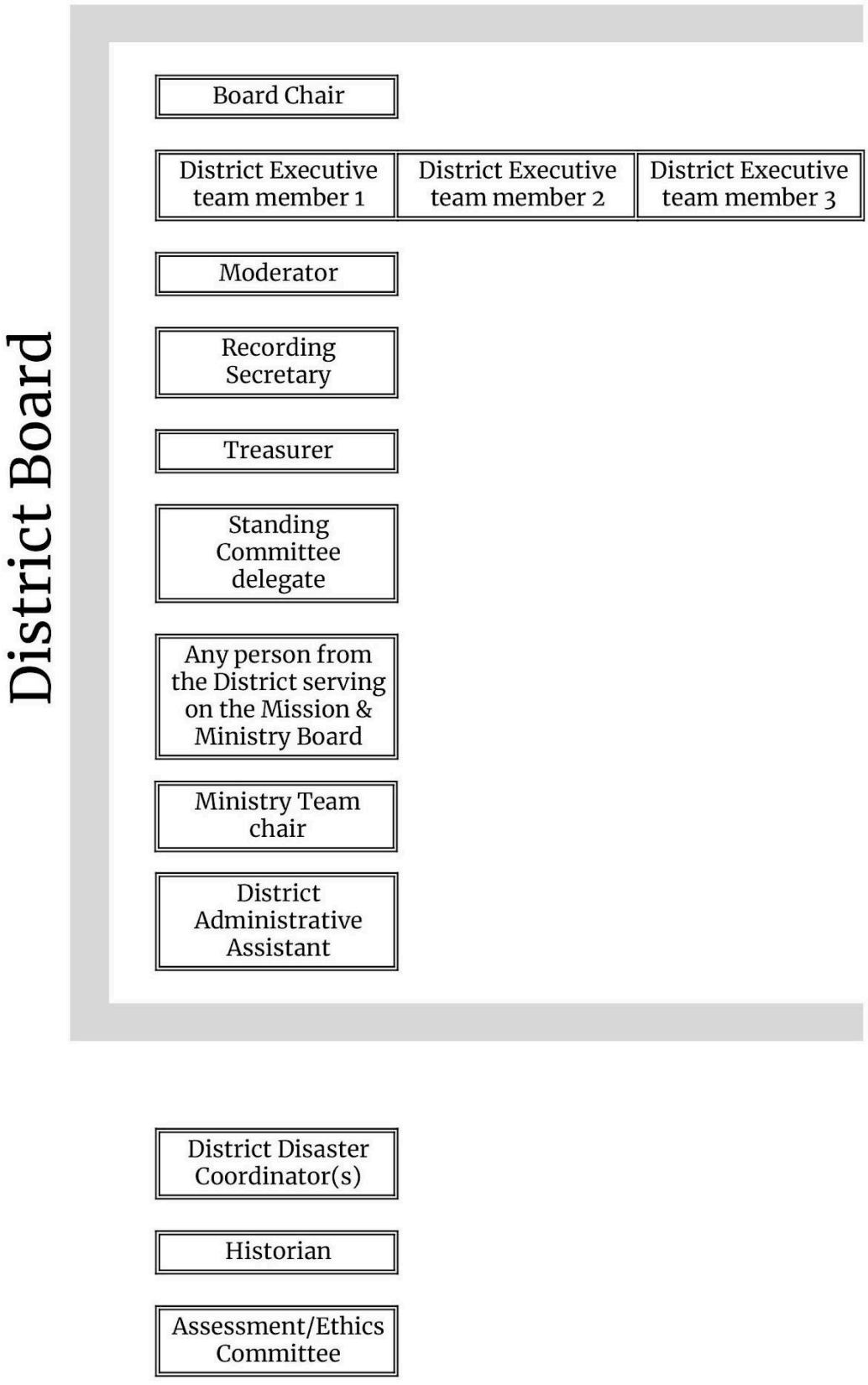
3. Organize district-wide materials and program options for spiritual and community edification.

4. Support member congregations and camps in their individual ministries and operations.

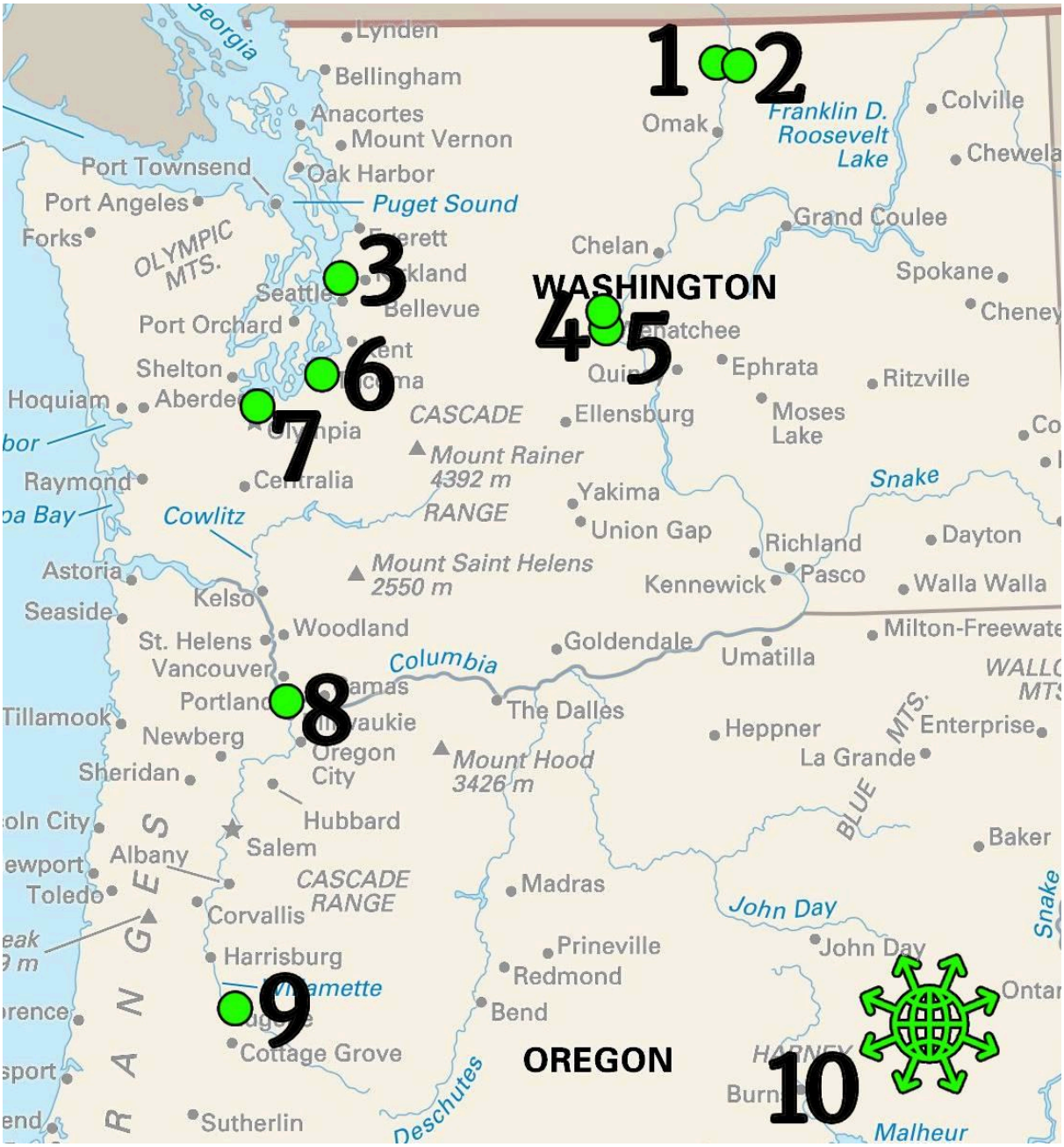
Our annual District Conference is a meeting to which attending members from the District congregations come in order to give implementation to District purposes. District Conference is the final authority of the District on polity, program, and procedure. Additionally, our District Conference offers an opportunity for us to gather together in fellowship, worship, and discussion.

Our District Board serves to manage and administer the work of the District throughout the year. The Board is the legal agent of the District and is empowered to act on behalf of the District Conference between annual gatherings, except for those actions specifically reserved for the District Conference. This work is also supported by additional positions working to further specific purposes and functions of the District.

PNWD Leadership Structure



Map of District Congregations



1 Whitestone Community Church of the Brethren

2 Ellisforde Church of the Brethren

3 Olympic View Community Church

4 Sunnyslope Church

5 Wenatchee Brethren Baptist Church

6 Larchmont Church of the Brethren

7 WildWood Gathering

8 Peace Church of the Brethren

9 Springfield Church of the Brethren

10 Living Stream Church of the Brethren *online*

Consensus Decision-Making Model

Consensus Decision-making
for the Pacific Northwest District

Consensus decision-making is the official rule of order of the Pacific Northwest District and will be used in deciding the business before District Conference and District Board. While the consensus model was adopted as the rule of order many years ago, we are all still learning. This writing attempts to offer reminders and insights into the process as practiced by the District. The model in use is grounded in the work of C.T. Butler and Amy Rothstein as presented in their booklet, *On Conflict and Consensus: a Handbook on Formal Consensus Decisionmaking.*

Our practice of making decisions by consensus is fueled by a deep desire to make decisions that offer the best results for the whole body. Therefore, in our practice, consensus decision-making is a group process; it is a collaborative exercise that thrives in a climate of trust and respect. As stated by Butler and Rothstein, "It requires a commitment to active cooperation, disciplined speaking and listening, and respect for the contributions of every member. Likewise, every member has the responsibility to actively participate as a creative individual within the structure." By its nature, the consensus model resists the notion of choosing one option over another or pitting one idea against another; it seeks the best path forward for the entire body. This communal effort is what makes consensus decision-making meaningful and effective.

Part of what we, as people of the Pacific Northwest District, have learned and continue to develop is the process of consensus decision-making. In District context, the process has evolved in its own way and flows in a prescribed order. Undergirding the process are the guiding principles and values of the District; decisions and processes used are measured by their consistency in relation to those statements.

With that in mind, the process begins with the introduction of a **proposal or issue**. This is a written plan or action presented as business to the whole body for their discussion and acceptance. The introduction is followed by a time for asking **questions of clarity** about the proposal as stated. With clarity, the process moves to a period of **broad, open discussion**. This discussion looks at the proposal in its broadest scope inviting statements expressing why it is a good idea, or there seem to be problems that need attention. This is a time for statements only; addressing comments or finding resolution to concerns comes later in the process.

At this point, it is possible for consensus to be present. At its simplest, **consensus** is reached and decisions are made when all members present consent to a proposal. Butler and Rothstein put it this way, "Decisions are adopted when all participants consent to the result of discussion about the original proposal. People who do not agree with a proposal are responsible for expressing their concerns. No decision is adopted until there is resolution of every concern. When concerns remain after discussion, individuals can agree to disagree by acknowledging that they have unresolved concerns, but consent to the proposal anyway and allow it to be adopted (this is called standing aside). Therefore, reaching consensus does not assume everyone must be in complete agreement."

Pattern for the Pacific Northwest District
Consensus Decision-making Process

Step 1: Presentation of Proposal or Issue
- Questions of Clarity about the Proposal

Step 2: Broad, Open Discussion
- Test for Consensus; if present, proposal is adopted.

Step 3: Identify Concerns
- Group any Related Concerns

Step 4: Resolve Concerns
- Discussion to Resolve Grouped Concerns
- Discussion to Resolve Remaining Concerns, one at a time
- Test for Consensus; if present, proposal is adopted.

Step 5: Closing Options: Stand Aside, Send to Committee, Declare Impasse

Pacific Northwest District
Stated Principles and Values

We as a District: Hold the New Testament as our guide in faith and practice. We value the interpretation and inspiration which springs from its study and shared experiences as guided by the living Christ.

In that spirit, we: Conduct our business by discerning the "sense of the meeting."

Seek the mind of Christ through formal consensus decision-making.

Empower and respect congregations and foster our inter-relatedness.

Support each other, respecting and embracing diversity, while seeking unity.

Nurture a sense of wholeness and possibility in everyone we meet.

Continue the struggle of growth and change.

Affirm the Brethren genius of holding in tension community and obedience with individual conscience and Spiritual discernment.

Celebrate!

Strive to be God's stewards in the world, continuing Jesus' work; Peacefully, Simply, Together.

At the end of each step of the decision-making process, the facilitator, in PNWD work the moderator or board chair, will ask, “Are there any unresolved concerns?” or “Are there any concerns remaining?” After a period of silence, if no additional concerns are raised, the facilitator declares that consensus is reached and the proposal is adopted.

If any concerns are expressed in the broad, open discussion, the process moves to **identifying concerns**. This is a brainstorming type exercise in which concerns are expressed and publicly recorded. Here, stating concerns is the goal, whether they come as reasonable or unreasonable, well thought out or vague feelings. This phase, like before, is just an expression of statements; there is no discussion, comment, or attempt for resolution. After concerns are recorded, there is time to reflect on them and look for patterns and relationships between them.

The next step is to, as a group, address and try to **resolve the concerns**. If some concerns seem related, they may be resolved as a group. If, after discussion, the concerns, grouped or otherwise, are resolved, the facilitator may check for consensus as described before. If concerns remain unresolved, they are to be discussed individually in an effort to creatively bring resolution. It is important to note that once a concern is expressed, it becomes an issue for the body to address; attention for addressing the concern is focused on the concern not the individual who offered it. If, after reasonable effort, a concern cannot be resolved, the facilitator may ask those persons holding the concern if they are willing to **“stand aside”** recognizing that if they do, the concern will be recorded in the minutes along with the adoption of the action taken. If a concern remains unresolved and standing aside is not offered, the facilitator must declare an **impasse** and the proposal is not adopted. In this case, with the agreement of the body, the proposal can be **referred to a committee** to study the concerns further seeking possible new resolutions that can be brought to the next meeting of the body. If an impasse is declared, the meeting moves on to the next agenda item.

Some basic rules that apply throughout the process are important to practice: 1. Once a decision has been adopted by consensus, it cannot be changed without reaching a new consensus. 2. In general, only one person has permission to speak at any moment. 3. A concern must be based upon the principles and values of the group.

Minutes of 2025 PNWD District Conference

Minutes of Pacific Northwest District Conference

Held Online and In Person at Camp Myrtlewood

October 4, 2025

Liz Ullery Swenson called the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m., and offered the opening prayer. Steve Kinzie presented us with two songs for the gathering.

I. Review consensus decision-making model

We took some time to review the Pacific Northwest District Consensus Decision-Making Process, the grounding of the process in our stated values, and putting the process into practice with an exercise in choosing a pasta dish.

II. Review minutes of the 2024 District Conference

The minutes of the 2024 District Conference were adopted with the addendum that the conference was held on line and in person at Camp Koinonia, respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Patrick Fiegenbaum.

III. Reports

A. Standing Committee

Patrick Fiegenbaum submitted a written report from this year's Standing Committee (page 11 of the conference packet) and recapped the highlights.

B. Treasurer

Daniel Klayton said the supporting documentation for the treasurer report begins at page 13 in the Conference packet. In summary, he outlined differences in spending between last year and this year. Expenses for 2025 were about 20% higher than in 2024. The bulk of the increase came from expenses for District activities, and Annual Conference fees. Income was lower, mainly through the one-time contribution from the Olympic View Church in 2024. Our net operating income was -$27,000 for the year. We continue to receive payments from the sale of the Salkum building. Assets on hand total about $750,000.

The proceeds from church building sales are being deposited to the general fund for the District. We don't have a formal mechanism for moving funds from the District checking account to Eder Financial.

Kent Verbeck again asked about Balance Sheet line 11410 Camp Koinonia, money which his father made as a designated contribution many years ago. The Board decided to send those funds to Camp Koinonia to fund a scholarship account. Daniel said he will get in touch with the administrators at Camp Koinonia to arrange that transfer.

C. District Executive

Debbie Roberts reported that the Executive has been working on three major areas: The situation at Columbia Lakewood; getting District information out to the congregations; and transitioning the Executive's mission to equipping the ministers of the District. Lani Wright expressed her enthusiasm for working with Debbie and Howard Ullery. Howard said that in his attendance at the Council of District Executives shows that our current structure is not fully serving our congregations. It may be that upon resolution of the Columbia Lakewood situation, anticipated to be done today, it will free up the time and energy of the Executive to be better able to serve the District.

Majeska said that the Springfield congregation needs some direction for how it should interact with the District.

D. Board

Peggy Liley reported on behalf of the District Board. She thanked Enten Eller for his work on tech support and issues. The Board has been in touch with the Larchmont congregation, and they hope to establish closer ties with them going forward.

The Board has also been working on the closure of the Columbia Lakewood congregation and church, and that process continues. Peggy also thanked the Board members for their commitment and joy in their work.

E. Ministry Team

Enten Eller reported that the Team has been working on the five-year process of maintaining current credentials for ordained and licensed ministers in the District and provide individuals with assistance for their personal situation. Lani Wright also recognized that October is the month we recognize Clergy, and asked those in attendance to identify themselves for recognition.

Howard Ullery reported that Carol Mason's son was killed in an auto accident late last month. He called Carol to express our support for her in this terrible time, and he plans to meet with Carol in person in the coming week.

F. Mission & Ministry Board

Harriet Koscho reported from the Standing With People of Color Committee (SWPCC), and she will spearhead their efforts to create a new group and bring the committee's work and priorities to the larger denomination. Their first task is to publicize SWPCC's work, and motivate congregants to participate and become Racial Justice Advocates. Harriet shared a pamphlet that will be appended to the District Conference

packet about Racial Justice Advocates. There are also plans to create a Care Group, a Core Group and an On Fire Group for different levels of interest. More information can be found at brethren.org.

Barbara Daté reported that Sarah Mason from Kansas and Pastor Eric Ramirez from the Lancaster congregation have joined Mission and Ministry Board.

Barbara also detailed the creation of the Deportation Defense Response Team to provide legal assistance to Church of the Brethren members who have run afoul of the government's crackdown on immigrants. See more about Matt's presentation of the DDR below.

Finally, she said that Mission and Ministry Board hold its annual meeting in Elgin later in October. They have a crowded agenda, including the state and future of the denomination and to discern whether to extend the General Secretary's term. The District extends its gratitude to Barbara for her work

G. Camp Koinonia

Rick Verbeck reported that the Camp is thriving, with a full schedule of activities. Kevin recounted some of that the camp served about 14,000 campers over 310 camper days this year. Rick said that Camp Koinonia would like to negotiate an extension of the Camp's lease with the District, and that would be a matter to take to the Board.

H. Eder Financial

Daniel Radcliff reported on the mission and work of Eder Financial and its programs to support congregations and clergy. More information, including how to access various programs is at ederfinancial.org.

J. Other Denominational Reports

Matt Guynn from On Earth Peace made a presentation on Kingian Non-Violence, inviting people to learn about the concepts of KNV. The goal of OEP is to train 1,000 Church of the Brethren congregations in its precepts, not as an end in itself, but as a way to build non-violence philosophy toward a self-sustaining movement.

Matt also brought a report about the Deportation Defense Response Team (DDR). Four people are actively working on DDR with congregations that have been affected by the government's work on wholesale deportations. Included in the presentation were objectives, details of Brethren congregants who have been detained, detained and released, and deported. We offered a prayer on behalf of all who have been affected. Also presented were the current initiatives that DDR is already involved in.

On Earth Peace has been working with others to create a Legal and Mutual Aid Fund. At this time, the fund has received almost $60,000 with an additional $40,000 needed to meet their initial goal of $100,000. After discussion, the District Conference

agreed to send an additional $18,000 to the DDR Team, in care of the Atlantic Southeast District.

Nancy McCrickard, Mission Advancement Advocate, brought greetings from the national office and energetically outlined some of the events planned in the coming year from the various agencies and program providers for the denomination and some activities of the past year.

Frosty Wilkinson presented his report on behalf of Brethren Disaster Ministries. BDM worked on various projects this year, including projects in Spokane; Elk, Washington; and Ashville North Carolina. BDM has also assisted Mennonite Disaster Relief on some of their projects. There is also a report from Roy Winter in the Conference packet detailing more work by Disaster Ministries.

IV. 2026 Budget

Daniel Klayton reported that the Proposed 2026 Budget is found in the final pages of the Conference packet. He made a correction to the Olympic View Building Sale income (line item 73050), which was received in 2025. The $204,301 on that line should be $4,301, and the total income for 2026 adjusted downward accordingly.

Howard pointed out that the Standing Committee expenses do not show up on the budget. Daniel acknowledged that that was the case, but those expenses were included under Annual Conference. Daniel will separate out from Annual Conference and post that to the Standing Committee expense line.

It was the sense of the meeting to adopt the Proposed 2026 Budget as presented and entrust the adjustments to be reviewed and finalized by the District Board.

V. Columbia Lakewood

Peggy Liley presented the Board's recommendation to the District Conference that the Columbia Lakewood congregation be disorganized and the Board manage the final disposition of the property and the contractual obligations remaining with the child care center and the congregation currently meeting at that building.

The Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity sets a process for dis-organizing, or closing, a congregation. The process includes a committee's examination of the situation and, upon acceptance of the findings, a recommendation by the District Board to the District Conference for final action.

In the fall of 2024, the handful of faithful, dedicated folks of the Columbia Lakewood Community Church reached the point where maintaining the body was no longer viable. Research by the District Board confirmed the reality, so the Pacific Northwest District Board recommends that the 2025 District Conference act to formally dis-organize the Columbia Lakewood Community Church.

The recommendation comes with the Board's recognition of and appreciation for the faithful ministry of the congregation from its formation in 1951. With affirmation of

the recommendation, the Board will proceed with plans to sell the property pending the resolution of issues with groups holding building use agreements with the Columbia Lakewood congregation.

It was the sense of the meeting to accept the recommendation of the District Board to disorganize the Columbia Lakewood congregation and to authorize District leadership to take the necessary steps to complete the disorganization of the Columbia Lakewood congregation.

VI. Annual Conference Webcast Proposal

Enten Eller presented a proposal from the Board authored by himself and the Living Stream Church of the Brethren to contact the Annual Conference Office about webcasting Annual Conference for the next two years, 2026 and 2027. Included in that presentation was the history of webcasting of the conference, the cost of streaming, and so forth. Enten's proposal is to approach the Annual Conference Office with a proposal to stream Annual Conference at no net cost to the Annual Conference Office. The webcast would be available at no charge to people who want to attend remotely.

In addition, the proposal to the Annual Conference Office would also include an offer to assist 10 congregants from the Pacific Northwest District with a stipend ($1,000?) to attend conference in person. This would be designed to allay possible fears at the Annual Conference Office that people would attend virtually rather than in person if the webcast is made freely available.

Living Stream has already pledged $2,000 toward the costs. The District and other interested parties could pick up the remainder of the cost.

The date of the next District Conference will be determined at worship on Sunday.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Fiegenbaum
Recording Secretary

2027 Budget Proposal

Pacific Northwest District Church of the Brethren

2027 budget proposal

Income	2026 budget	Sept 2025 – Aug 2026 rounded	2027 budget proposal
41010 Donations	$1,250.00	$1,100	$1,100
41020 Congregational Giving	$2,200.00	$2,100	$2,400
41030 (CLCC) Lakewood Cooperative Preschool Rent	$0.00	$14,700	$0
71100 Event Income	$3,600.00	$3,200	$4,000
71500 Other Miscellaneous Income - Eder Financial	$29,000.00	$39,100	$35,000
71700 Disaster Preparedness	$0.00	$100	$200
73000 Sale of Properties	$50,000.00	$496,000	$0
Total for Income	**$86,050.00**	**$556,300**	**$42,700**

Expenses	Sept 2025 – Aug 2026	Sept 2025 – Aug 2026 rounded	2027 budget proposal
61010 Postage, Mailing Service	$100.00	$300	$400
61050 Miscellaneous Expense	$300.00	$400	$400
61070 Web Maintenance	$100.00	$100	$200
61090 Legal & Professional Services	$3,000.00	$6,800	$3,000
61100 Office Supplies & Software	$500.00	$2,300	$2,300
61120 Payroll Expenses	$20,000.00	$26,700	$25,100
62030 District Conferences	$4,500.00	$8,700	$4,500
62032 District Events	$7,500.00	$5,800	$6,000
62045 District Compassion Outreach/Giving	$5,000.00	$172,400	$15,000
62050 Annual Conference Assessment	$500.00	$400	$500
62080 Standing Committee Expenses	$1,500.00	$400	$1,000
62090 CoDE Expenses	$1,500.00	$2,900	$3,000
64000 Disaster Preparedness	$2,000.00	$100	$200
Bank Charges & Fees	$50.00	$20	$50
63040 Training Expenses	$250.00	$100	$200
63300 Wildwood Expense	$46,656.00	$46,700	$46,700
61110 (CLCC) Utilities	$0.00	$9,600	$0
(CLCC) Repairs & Maintenance	$0.00	$26,300	$0
(CLCC) Taxes & Licenses	$0.00	$35,500	$0
Total for Expenses	**$93,456.00**	**$345,520**	**$108,550**

Net Income	**-$7,406.00**	**$210,780**	**-$65,850**

Financial Report—Profit & Loss

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Profit and Loss
September, 2025-August, 2026

	Total
Income	
41000 Income	
41010 Donations	1,100.00
41020 Congregational Giving	2,125.00
41030 Lakewood Cooperative Preschool Rent	14,679.00
Total for 41000 Income	**$17,904.00**
Total for Income	**$17,904.00**
Gross Profit	**$17,904.00**
Expenses	
61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	
61010 Postage, Mailing Service	266.00
61050 Miscellaneous Expense	373.87
61070 Web Maintenance	120.84
61090 Legal & Professional Services	6,830.00
61100 Office Supplies & Software	2,305.28
61110 Utilities	9,588.72
61120 Payroll Expenses	$26,659.82
61121 Federal Withholding	-1,893.68
61123 Social Security Employee	-1,354.73
61125 Medicare Employee	-316.82
Total for 61120 Payroll Expenses	**$23,094.59**
Total for 61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	**$42,579.30**
62000 District Expenses	
62030 District Conferences	8,666.73
62032 District Events	5,793.43
62045 District Compassion Outreach/Giving	172,397.40
62050 Annual Conference Assessment	427.70
62080 Standing Committee Expenses	352.50
62090 CoDE Expenses	2,941.58
Total for 62000 District Expenses	**$190,579.34**
64000 Disaster Preparedness	120.00
Bank Charges & Fees	20.00
Repairs & Maintenance	26,299.98
Taxes & Licenses	35,505.46
Total for Expenses	**$295,104.08**
Net Operating Income	**-$277,200.08**

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Profit and Loss
September, 2025-August, 2026

	Total
Other Income	
70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	
71000 Miscellaneous Income	
71100 Event Income	3,242.73
71500 Other Miscellaneous Income - Eder Financial	39,072.06
71700 Disaster Preparedness	145.00
Total for 71000 Miscellaneous Income	**$42,459.79**
73000 Sale of Properties	495,954.59
Total for 70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	**$538,414.38**
Total for Other Income	**$538,414.38**
Other Expenses	
63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	
63040 Training Expenses	122.50
63300 Wildwood Expense	46,656.00
Total for 63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	**$46,778.50**
Total for Other Expenses	**$46,778.50**
Net Other Income	**$491,635.88**
Net Income	**$214,435.80**

Financial Report—Balance Sheet

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Balance Sheet
As of Aug 31, 2026

	Total
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
11100 Checking and Savings	$153,709.18
11120 Cashmere Valley	
11131 Checking	0.00
Total for 11120 Cashmere Valley	**$0.00**
Total for 11100 Checking and Savings	**$153,709.18**
11200 Brethren Foundation	
11300 BF Endowment 1	
11310 Church Development	411,520.82
11320 Endowment	179,571.29
11330 OR Cemetary Maintenance	3,297.22
Total for 11300 BF Endowment 1	**$594,389.33**
11400 BF Endowment 2	
11410 SUSPENSE - pending EDER transfer of funds	2,228.48
11420 Disaster Relief Fund	20,502.76
11430 Endowment	198,946.56
Total for 11400 BF Endowment 2	**$221,677.80**
Total for 11200 Brethren Foundation	**$816,067.13**
Total for Bank Accounts	**$969,776.31**
Accounts Receivable	
12000 Accounts Receivable (A/R)	
12100 Larchmont Receivable	300.00
Total for 12000 Accounts Receivable (A/R)	**$300.00**
Total for Accounts Receivable	**$300.00**
Total for Current Assets	**$970,076.31**
Fixed Assets	
16000 Church Properties	
16110 Mossy Rock	0.00
16120 Salkum	0.00
Total for 16000 Church Properties	**$0.00**
Total for Fixed Assets	**$0.00**
Total for Assets	**$970,076.31**
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Total for Liabilities	

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Balance Sheet
As of Aug 31, 2026

	Total
Equity	
31000 Opening Balance Equity	301,705.69
36000 Retained Earnings	423,927.44
Net Income	244,443.18
Total for Equity	**$970,076.31**
Total for Liabilities and Equity	**$970,076.31**

District Disaster Response Report

Report for 2026 PNW COB District Conference from District Disaster Co-Coordinator:

I have not been active in organizing volunteers this past year. Usually, I am more successful in getting a team together if I go along. My recovery from shoulder replacement is progressing well, and I will soon be recruiting. I keep in touch with Mennonite Disaster Service, which is involved with recovery from recent destructive fires and floods. I am confident that our Brethren volunteers will be welcome to join with them. The national program of Brethren Disaster Ministries is active in the Eastern US in rebuilding from Hurricane Helene. It seems to me that it makes sense to work locally in Washington and Oregon rather than spend our limited funds to fly across the country.

Speaking of funds, we do need to build up the District Disaster fund, to support meals and transportation for future disaster volunteers. Donations are always welcome.

Submitted by Frosty Wilkinson

Church of the Brethren Annual Report

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT OF 2025

PUBLISHED IN JUNE 2026



Church of the Brethren

REPORT OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD

. . . we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other."

— Romans 12:5b, CEB

In 2025, the Church of the Brethren was able to meet more frequently with others in the Global Church of the Brethren Communion, responded to disasters in the US and around the world, and advocated for immigrant church members threatened with deportation. Church members nurtured their faith through an array of resources produced to help them grow and through conferences and gatherings that brought church people together for learning and inspiration.

The organization also experienced obstacles in 2025. Financial constraints affected personnel and workloads. Staff labored throughout the year to recover from a major data breach at the end of 2024, which caused double work for many departments. And the organization said goodbye to a program that for generations helped define the church's commitment to service.

Whatever the times, we are reminded that the church we serve is one body in Christ. Whether we are faced with opportunity or obstacle, we belong to each other.

GLOBAL MISSION

The Church of the Brethren understands that Christian mission is God's mission. Christian mission encompasses all God-motivated efforts to make Christ known, active in human life, loved, and obeyed, so that the good news may result in faithful discipleship in personal lives, in institutions, and in the whole range of human relationships.

The ultimate objective of the Global Mission office is to redeem, heal, and lift all of life to God's intended purpose for all creation. Recognizing the increasing dominance of insular and nationalistic tendencies throughout the world, the church must heed the Christian call to be a global community. Church of the Brethren mission philosophy statements have long called for this; it is now time to live more fully into being the global church.

Global Church of the Brethren Communion

After pauses in 2024 due to staff changes, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion (GCBC) met almost monthly in 2025. To succeed previous moderator Joel Billi, the GCBC elected Pastor Santos Terrero of Iglesia de los Hermanos, Una Luz en las Naciones (the Church of the Brethren in Spain). Terrero has led meetings and helped the group get organized for the anticipated gathering of the GCBC in Gijon, Spain, in April 2026.

The GCBC is working on the process of inducting new national churches into membership. In 2025, the Communauté des Églises des Frères au Burundi was invited to apply for membership, and that application is being processed.

Partnerships

The Global Mission office, led by executive Sharon Norton, partners with colleagues handling emergency disaster relief on the international side, particularly with the Church of the Brethren in Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and South Sudan. Staff also participate in the quarterly meetings of Brethren World Mission.

Haiti Medical Project is finding solid management through a working group that meets regularly to discuss various projects and workflow. That has led to improved funding accountability and transparency, a commitment to use funds as designated, and the training of Haitian bookkeepers in best practices.

The Global Mission office secured membership in Mission Flights International, a long-standing Christian group that flies personnel and supplies in and out of northern Haiti. With commercial flights not currently available, this membership allows people in the US to visit the Haiti Medical Project and the Church of the Brethren in Haiti. One trip to Haiti was taken by Haiti Medical Project volunteers.

Travel

Norton, who began her position just before the year began, took her first trip in February. The two-week trip to South Sudan with four other travelers, was an intense time of learning the context and history of the Church of the Brethren in Sudan and South Sudan and getting to know mission worker Athanasus Ungang, who has served sacrificially there for many years.

In May, Norton traveled with Roy Winter and Roger Schrock to Kampala, Uganda, to consult with Ungang, a peace worker, and community development people about developing a strategic plan to strengthen the church's presence in South Sudan at this precarious time politically and socially. The group decided it was time to build a headquarters that would position the Church of the Brethren to carry out church planting, relief, and community development, and to purchase land in Nesitu, just outside the capital of Juba. Funds were delivered for initial building-related costs.

While in Kampala, the group had the opportunity to meet the founder of the Church of the Brethren Uganda, Pastor Bwambale Sedrack, who came by bus from Kasese in western Uganda. The group also met his brother and local pastor, Bwambale Hezekiah, and worshiped with the Shalom congregation just outside of Kampala. Later that month, when significant violence broke out in South Sudan, Pastor Sedrack and the Uganda church helped evacuate South Sudan leaders and their families.

Norton traveled to Nigeria in June with General Secretary David Steele to visit the Kwarhi headquarters of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and meet national leadership. The group enjoyed a lively worship service in Garkida to belatedly celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren there. They marveled at the tamarind tree, still standing, where the first worship service was held, and took a trip through time at the adjacent museum of the Garkida church. The group traveled to Yola and surrounding areas to learn about different ministries and income-generation projects.

In September, Norton visited Jos and Abuja to learn about the churches, ministries, and schools related to EYN. She also brought Bishop Expert Bukene, founder of the Communauté des Églises des Frères au Burundi (Community of the Churches of the Brethren in Burundi), to Abuja to learn more about him and the church in Burundi. It was a fruitful time of sharing and blessing.

Bukene recounted how someone gave him the Brethren Press book *A Dunker Guide to Brethren History.* After reading it, he decided to become Brethren and start the denomination in his country. He was particularly drawn to the church's emphasis on service in the name of Christ. The Methodists in Burundi ordained him to plant Church of the Brethren congregations and gave him the title of bishop so that he would be invited to official meetings in Burundi with other denominational leaders.

The Global Mission office sponsored a peace conference in Tanzania with the emerging Church of the Brethren there. Pastor Rhobinson Baiye hosted the event in Mwanza. The conference included presentations by Global Food Initiative manager Jenn Hosler and Nathan Hosler from the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, remarks from the Rev. Esther Muhagachi from the Tanzania General Council of Churches, and greetings from Pastor Bwambale Sedrack, Bishop Expert Bukene, and Bishop Amos Muhagachi of the Mennonite Church Tanzania.

Global Mission sponsored travel for a number of people: Bukene's visit to the emerging Church of the Brethren in Kenya, a visit by Pastor Roger Moreno Padilla

of Venezuela to Cuba to visit an emerging Church of the Brethren in that country, and travel by several Country Advisory Team members to visit the countries with whom they relate. In February, Dava Hensley, moderator of the US Annual Conference, and David Steele participated in the *asamblea* (annual conference) of the Iglesia de los Hermanos in the Dominican Republic.

Connections in the US

With assistance from office manager Carole Davenport, Global Mission hosted nine international guests at Annual Conference: Daniel Mbaya, president of EYN; Anastasia Bueno Beltre, pastor, Comunidad de Fe, Dominican Republic; Arely Cantor, pastor, La Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe, Honduras; Mario Cantor, pastor, La Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe, Honduras; Ashok and Upama Solanky, pastors, First District Church of the Brethren, India; Etienne Nsanzimana, president, Rwanda Church of the Brethren; Brigitte Zawadi, Bethany Seminary student from Rwanda; and Emerson Pierre, physician with Haiti Medical Project.

Global Mission led two equipping sessions at Annual Conference and hosted the annual Global Mission dinner, at which Norton spoke. In her address, "Leaves of the Tree for the Healing of the Nations," based on Revelation 22, Norton outlined her vision of partnership with global churches. Formerly mission had been understood as "from the West to the rest," she said, and now it is understood as mission "from everywhere to everyone," emphasizing every nation's participation in world mission.

Global Mission sends constituents a monthly prayer guide, compiled by Davenport. It is full of updates and prayer requests from global churches and is a resource for informing the US church of needs around the world.

Norton held a workshop on global churches at Northern Indiana District conference and spoke at three congregations.

Budget

The Global Mission program and grant budget for 2025 was $892,760, funded partially by individuals and churches or organizations.

In addition, $234,065 was donated for Haiti Medical Project and $141,403 for other special projects. Some of these restricted donations were spent in 2025, with the balance being used to fund future projects. Grants of $561,781 were given to global partners, with the Haiti Church of the Brethren receiving over $307,000, mostly for Haiti Medical Project, and the South Sudan mission project receiving over $183,000, including staff and travel costs.

Education grants given to individuals from Nigeria, Venezuela, Rwanda, and Honduras totaled $23,199.

Global Food Initiative

Much of 2025, the first full year for GFI manager Jennifer Hosler, was focused on strengthening partnerships with churches in the US and around the world. Visits to Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania provided insight, strengthened relationships with global Church of the Brethren church partners, and provided opportunities for learning and fellowship.

Hosler shared about GFI through communication resources such as Newsline, newsletters, and *Messenger;* at two equipping sessions at Annual Conference; and through international visits.

In April, Hosler traveled to the headquarters of EYN to represent the US Church of the Brethren at the *majalisa* (annual conference). She delivered greetings on behalf of US church leaders whose visas didn't arrive in time, and preached the opening sermon on "Another Way of Living," Jesus' model of servant leadership. Her time in Nigeria included partnership meetings with EYN's Integrated Community-Based Development Programme (ICBDP) and its agricultural staff.

Hosler traveled to Uganda with the denominational FaithX trip, which spent time in fellowship and service with the Church of the Brethren in Uganda. The six-member group visited congregations, toured church ministries, and participated in service projects at a church-run orphanage and elementary school (Radiant Star Orphanage and Junior School).

While there, Hosler and the group also visited GFI-related projects—a grinding mill and farmland. Other highlights included walking through the fields during the maize harvest, seeing dump trucks full of maize brought to the church-run orphanage and school, and eating beans grown on the church's farmland.

In Rwanda, Hosler visited the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda and toured a church poultry farm that later in the year received funding. Designed to address local

food insecurity, the Kanembwe poultry farming initiative builds on years of experience with a pig farming and training operation that was funded earlier by GFI, as well as the church's dedicated ministry to the Batwa community. A second GFI grant in 2025 provided funds to extend a water pipe to a Batwa village, dramatically shortening the distance needed to carry water.

At the ECHO International Agriculture Conference in Fort Myers, Fla., Hosler networked with other organizations and individuals ministering in sustainable agriculture in the US and around the world.

The GFI review panel met four times, discussing how to strengthen projects and ensure project viability and sustainability. The panel's six members bring expertise in agriculture, fisheries, agricultural education, accounting, and church ministries.

The GFI Fund allocated eight international grants in seven countries. These grants supported global Church of the Brethren partners in Burundi, Ecuador, Honduras, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Venezuela. Projects included grain mills and storage containers for subsistence farmers, a clean water project, agricultural extension training, school garden and nutrition education, and support for church-based agricultural projects. Grants were also given to nongovernmental organizations in Ecuador, Honduras, and South Africa. International allocations totaled $95,286.

The year saw a significant increase in interest from congregations in the US, following a year of staff transition. A communication push via Newsline and outreach with district offices prompted many congregations to apply for grants in 2025, following a year with no applications.

In the US, grants supported churches as they seek to be "Jesus in the neighborhood" through community gardens, food pantries, blessings boxes (or Little Free Pantries), community meals, and more. Small grants ($2,500) supported food purchasing to supplement emergency food programs. Other grants built local capacity to grow food and to help community members learn to garden. Nine churches in four states received grants totaling $35,078.

Each year, GFI expands the scope of its ministry through administrative grants to US-based organizations focused on advocacy, food justice, and food security. GFI made contributions to Bread for the World, Growing Hope Globally, and the National Farm Worker Ministry, with these allocations tallying $8,000.

Total income to the GFI Fund in 2025 was $278,136. The sum of all funds given as international, domestic, and administrative grants was $138,364.

SERVICE MINISTRIES

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24 NIV).

At the heart of Service Ministries programs is a desire to "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2) and the recognition that "it is the Lord Christ [we] are serving" (Colossians 3:24). Colossians also speaks of an inheritance from the Lord. Many who participate in and support these ministries find at least part of that inheritance in the blessings they gain (often unexpectedly) when they serve others.

As Brethren Volunteer Service volunteer Lieketseng (Keke) Phooko remarked, "I have learned that service is not just about giving; it's also about receiving. You may just find that in giving of yourself, you receive far more than you ever expected."

Leadership for Service Ministries is provided by executive director Roy Winter.

Brethren Disaster Ministries

The programs of Brethren Disaster Ministries are committed to supporting survivors of natural and human-caused disasters, working with and walking alongside them on their journey toward recovery. BDM brings hope and healing by mobilizing and working

with volunteers, partners, and supporters as they live out the call to serve others in the United States and around the world, often many years after a disaster has devastated a community.

In 2025, the call to serve took volunteers from the Rebuilding Program and Children's Disaster Services to 10 locations in the US. BDM's Global Response provided funding to partners serving people in need in 12 countries. Six staff members managed this ministry under the leadership of Roy Winter, including administrative, communications, and international projects support from office manager Sharon Franzén. Darlene Hylton provided database support.

The year provided opportunities to focus on the larger picture. A conference in May brought together staff and district disaster leaders to exchange ideas and experiences, learning from each other and encouraging communication and collaboration. Later in the year, a strategic planning process provided an invaluable opportunity to gather a broad range of information about current work and impact, and to envision how it can be improved and extended in order to serve more disaster survivors. The process was enabled by a $50,000 Lilly Endowment planning grant, which included an invitation to apply for a larger three-year implementation grant.

Rebuilding Program

The Rebuilding Program supports long-term recovery from disasters by providing volunteer labor to repair and rebuild homes. The primary location was in Eastern Kentucky, repairing homes and building new houses on reclaimed mining land in a higher ground community to help families affected by flooding in 2022. This work was carried out in partnership with HOMES Inc., with additional support from the UPS Foundation through National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

Short-term responses brought relief to survivors of 2024's Hurricane Helene. These projects were two weeks in the spring in Spruce Pine, N.C., and two months in the fall in Johnson City, Tenn. Local construction work, supported with Emergency Disaster Fund funds, was carried out in York County, Pa., through a collaboration with Southern Pennsylvania District.

In December, a new construction assessment team was formed after the initial team training was held in Allegany County, Md., in an area that experienced flooding in May. This team of five is now equipped to perform damage assessments on homes to determine the work and cost needed to complete repairs.

These responses were coordinated by program assistant Kim Gingerich and BDM director Jenn Dorsch-Messler (who concluded her service with BDM shortly after the end of the year). Crucial volunteer leadership consisted of 65 monthly disaster project leaders; long-term office managers Lynn Evans and Mary Mueller; long-term construction leaders Steve Keim, Rex Miller, and John Mueller; and BVS volunteer Lieketseng (Keke) Phooko. A disaster project leadership training took place in January with four participants and six trainers.

Serving in the love of Christ, 676 volunteers gave 40,376 hours. This labor served 42 families, providing a cost savings to the families and local partners of $1,404,681.

Children's Disaster Services

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) responded to seven disasters in 2025, sending 61 volunteers to care for 759 children.

After wildfires devastated large areas of the Los Angeles region, multiple teams cared for 515 children over five weeks. CDS also responded to a terrorist attack in New Orleans, La.; catastrophic flooding in Texas; and tornadoes in Missouri. Local teams responded to a fire in Sonora, Calif., and flooding in Washington state.

Five entry-level and one project manager trainings were held, resulting in 73 newly trained potential volunteers and eight new project managers. A training manual update retreat was held in February.

Carolyn Neher is associate director, and support was provided by program assistant Michael Scalzi, who retired Dec. 31.

International Response

For many years, the Church of the Brethren international disaster response has been concentrated on support for global churches and partners in conflict areas. In 2025, nearly 16 percent of global EDF grants ($163,350) were in response to natural

disasters. This included flooding and storm damage in Venezuela and Uganda.

When Hurricane Melissa brought extensive damage in the Caribbean in the fall, a unique opportunity emerged to support churches in Cuba with emergency relief through their relationship with the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela. An EDF grant also supported agricultural recovery programs of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti following the storm, in areas that received little international attention.

The majority of international grants in 2025 supported relief and recovery programs in response to conflict affecting Global Church of the Brethren Communion members in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren Mission in South Sudan. Conflict in DRC between the national army and the rebel group M23 has created destruction, chaotic conditions, economic hardship, and food insecurity, which have spilled over to the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Burundi, with the latter receiving many refugees.

EDF grants have helped Brethren leadership in DRC and Burundi to serve church members and neighbors. In South Sudan, BDM has partnered with the Global Mission office on strategic planning, while concentrating on humanitarian relief to support families affected by flooding and by escalating conflict between the two major power groups in the government.

The Nigeria Crisis Response, a partnership between the Church of the Brethren and Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) since 2014, has supported relief and recovery programing in response to violence by the terrorist group Boko Haram, and, more recently, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

The program has provided food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, distribution of seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, and home repairs for the most vulnerable.

Originally scheduled to be completed by 2023, the response was extended until the end of 2026 because violence has delayed the ability of some EYN members to fully resettle and become self-sufficient. Some are still living in one of four camps for internally displaced people, and others are slowly being resettled from camps in Cameroon.

The additional years of funding and support from the Church of the Brethren have strengthened EYN's capacity to minister to members who are navigating the challenges of rebuilding lives. The strong partnership between BDM and EYN will continue, but future responses will be based on specific disaster events rather than on a multiprogram and multiyear response such as the Nigeria Crisis Response. EDF funds of $185,000 supported the crisis response in 2025.

Brethren Volunteer Service

Brethren Volunteer Service bears witness to a different way of living—one grounded in relationships, hope, and faithful service.

As volunteer Josiah Esch reflected, "Though the world certainly seems chaotic currently, even these few months in BVS have given me hope and shown me the sheer incredible number of people who are working toward making a more just world where everybody looks out for their community and everyone has enough." This hope is sustained through relationships between volunteers, staff, placement partners, and communities.

Orientations were held at Camp Colorado in Sedalia, Colo., and at Camp Mardela in Denton, Md. At these gatherings, 19 volunteers (10 of them international volunteers) built community, shared stories, and attended sessions that prepared them for service.

Throughout the year, 43 volunteers served across eight states and three countries in nonprofit organizations committed to meaningful, community-centered change.

Building relationships is a fundamental aspect of what makes BVS unique. From the earliest stages of discernment through completion of volunteers' year of service, staff walk alongside volunteers and projects.

This relational work takes many forms. For example, volunteer coordinator Virginia Rendler supported BVSers through regular check-in calls; Europe coordinator Sara Cook cultivated strong partnerships and community connections for new and existing projects; and director Chelsea Skillen engaged with supporters and future volunteers at Church of the Brethren events. Through these relationships, BVS created space for experiences that foster growth and belonging.

Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX)

The 2025 FaithX theme "Living with Purpose" invited participants to explore the unique ways that Christ calls them to serve and love others. Grounded in Ephesians 4:1-3, 165 youth and adults reflected on how their passions, their gifts, and the needs that they see in the world shape a call to live with intention and create positive change.

Ten week-long trips were held in the US and one in Uganda. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 70 and came from 26 Church of the Brethren congregations, with 36 percent being first-time attendees.

"The knowledge that these trips bring is astounding," said one youth. "A lot of it is getting to know what goes into serving people and understanding what people are going through. It is very interesting and eye-opening."

Another remarked, "I think FaithX was something that I needed to get out of the house. It made me realize that sometimes you just have to help out and be nice to others and care about others before yourself."

The program was organized by Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred, coordinator of short term service, and Rachel Johnson, a BVS volunteer serving as assistant FaithX coordinator.

Material Resources

In 2025, the Material Resources program marked 81 years of leading the way in collecting, processing, and shipping blankets, clothing, medical supplies, medicines, and goods for humanitarian assistance. The program emerged out of the processing of relief goods in 1944 on the campus that became the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Based on an October 2023 decision of the Mission and Ministry Board, the Material Resources program ended at the close of 2025. Committed staff kept the ministry going through the time to close down operations and clear out inventory.

During the year, they facilitated shipments totaling 902 tons of donated hospital supplies, quilts, health kits, school kits, baby kits, cleanup kits, and other supplies valued at over $15.5 million. The program also received more than 318,500 pounds of donations on behalf of Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service, which were processed and shipped out.

Loretta Wolf directed the program, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operations, respectively. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Melissa Fritz, and Brenda Giles packed items for shipping. Ed Palsgrove drove the commercial trucks to deliver shipments and pick up donations. Medical supplies were sorted and prepared for shipment by Sam Carter. These employees' roles ended in 2025, with most having served for decades with the Church of the Brethren.

By the end of December, the remaining inventory had been shipped to locations needing aid or sent to other warehouses of the program partners. The equipment and vehicles were sold or donated to other organizations by mid-January 2026, officially bringing the program to a close.

DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION

Discipleship and Leadership Formation sponsored events for different age levels, hosted sessions on topics such as intercultural competence, and provided congregations with a variety of resources.

Executive director Nate Polzin revised and expanded his evangelism curriculum, *For My Neighbor's Good,* based on suggestions from users.

The L.E.A.D. planning team offered a series of webinars to continue momentum between conferences. Keynote speaker Dennis Edwards was featured in the first webinar, and Paul Mundey was interviewed by Brian Messler in the second.

New guidelines for the Health Care Education Scholarship (formerly the Nursing Scholarship) were approved by the Mission and Ministry Board, expanding access to students beyond nursing. Seven Brethren received scholarships.

Discipleship and Leadership Formation compiled a list of coaches, consultants and other experts available to help Brethren pastors, congregations, and districts. Funds are available to provide ministers and congregations with coaching or consulting as they work on ministry priorities, strategic planning, goal-setting, or leadership challenges.

Stan Dueck, director of Organizational Leadership, retired in July. Prior to concluding his service, he worked with a district visioning committee, coached pastors and leaders, and . arranged a partnership with We Rise International, a group that trains congregational leaders to better serve those with mental health struggles.

In June, program assistant Randi Rowan retired and Mishael Nouveau, office manager for the Ministry Office, resigned. New employees are Jazmín Góngora, administrative assistant, and Bethany Kasten, office assistant.

Discipleship and Identity

National Older Adult Conference, coordinated by Christy Waltersdorff and a volunteer planning team, brought together 502 Brethren (plus online participants) for worship, presentations, service projects, and insight sessions. The theme "Alive in the Spirit," based on Romans 5:13, shaped the messages of preachers Rebecca Dali, Greg Davidson Laszakovits, Samuel Sarpiya, Audri Svay, and Herb Smith; keynote speakers Cole Arthur Riley and Dominique Gilliard; and returning artistic favorites Ken Medema and Ted Swartz.

With a new title of director of Discipleship and Identity, Josh Brockway increased emphasis on producing videos for churches to use in Sunday school classes and small groups. The first was "Learning to Wash Feet," available at www.brethren.org.

Brockway led insight sessions and coordinated the attendance of several Brethren at Christian Community Development Association's annual conference in Grand Rapids, Mich. Through denominational membership, Church of the Brethren congregations have access to tools to help churches better engage their community. Brockway preached and presented in several congregations and led sessions at district conferences.

Intercultural Ministries

Intercultural Ministries carried out 16 intercultural and educational gatherings in collaboration with districts, congregations, agencies, and ministry partners across the Church of the Brethren. These initiatives engaged approximately 500 participants representing diverse cultural, linguistic, generational, and theological backgrounds. The languages represented were English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

Directed by Founa Badet and grounded in the gospel call to love God and one's neighbor, Intercultural Ministries focuses on strengthening the church's capacity to live as the family of Christ across differences. The ministry emphasized intercultural competence, discipleship, immigration justice, antiracism, leadership formation, and holistic well-being, equipping faith leaders and congregations to respond faithfully to the

realities of a diverse and changing world.

Intercultural Ministries was deeply engaged in supporting immigrant communities and equipping the church for faithful advocacy. Through multilingual education, public witness, and collaboration with justice-focused partners, ICM affirmed the dignity and worth of all people.

ICM worked alongside On Earth Peace and four districts—Atlantic Northeast, Atlantic Southeast, Pacific Southwest, and Virlina—to support the Deportation Defense Response program. This collaboration has been one of the best opportunities to serve the denomination and make a significant difference in serving Brethren during this difficult time.

Several events focused on developing intercultural awareness, humility, and skill within the church. These gatherings provided participants with theological grounding and practical tools to engage across cultures with respect and understanding. These efforts strengthened congregational awareness, empowered immigrant families, and fostered compassionate and informed responses to the challenges of immigration.

ICM facilitated sessions on discipleship and dismantling racism within church and community contexts. These gatherings emphasized education, spiritual formation, and faith in action. Notable sessions included Spanish-language equipping in the discipling church, finding creative ways to dismantle racism, and a Ventures course at McPherson College.

Large-scale gatherings created space for celebration, storytelling, and shared witness across cultural lines. These events strengthened relational bonds and affirmed the joy of intercultural community within the denomination. Key events included an intercultural gathering in Atlantic Northeast District, National Junior High Conference, and the Intercultural Luncheon at Annual Conference. Through worship, testimony, and mutual learning, participants experienced the church as a diverse yet unified body in Christ.

Recognizing the increasing demands on faith leaders, Intercultural Ministries prioritized holistic care and sustainability in ministry. A session at the end of the year focused on faith leaders' mental health around the holidays.

Ministry Office

The Ministry Office oversees the process of ministerial credentialing renewal for all ordained and commissioned ministers every five years. Required ministerial ethics sessions were held in the 23 districts during 2025, with districts reporting renewal data toward the end of the year.

Director Nancy Sollenberger Heishman guided district search teams in Middle Pennsylvania, Southern Pennsylvania, and Shenandoah districts.

As part of its consideration of the 2002 paper on Guidelines for Sabbath Rest, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory committee, launched a survey in three languages to ascertain ministers' experiences and perspectives on sabbath renewal. The committee also produced a brief video featuring committee member Angela Finet, author of the new Covenant Bible Study *Sabbath: God's Call to Peace*. The committee's recommended cost of living increase of 2.6 percent for 2026 was approved by the 2025 Annual Conference.

The Ministry Advisory Council is reviewing the 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper by examining the interaction between current best practices within districts and the paper's expectations for calling, training, and credentialing. Working with the Council of District Executives, the Ministry Advisory Council recommended two adjustments for consideration by the 2026 Annual Conference.

Statistical information regarding the ministerial body that is normally provided in this report was unavailable due to an interruption in the collection of data as a result of a breach of the organization's data.

Funds to support ministers seeking advanced ministerial training and continuing education were disbursed through Leadership, Development, and Training grants of $7,782.

The Ministry Assistance Fund provided financial support of $6,961 for five ministers experiencing unexpected emergency expenses. Donations to the fund included approximately $3,517 from individuals and congregations and $3,500 from the Robert C. Wenger Trust.

The Ministry Office supported Bethany Theological Seminary students with a scholarship grant of $7,500.

The Ministers' Association pre-Annual Conference continuing education event featured Jeanne Davies, executive director of the Anabaptist Disabilities Network, speaking on "A Place for Every Body: Disability, Accessibility, and the Church."

The grant-sponsored program Part-time Pastor; Full-time Church, which began serving multi-vocational ministers in 2019, transitioned to a smaller sustainability budget. Ryan Braught was hired as an independent contractor. Former program manager Richard Wehrle shifted to managing a new Rural and Small Town Churches Initiative, in partnership with Ashland Seminary.

The Part-time Pastor; Full-time Church program supported ministers and districts with grants totaling nearly $40,000. The program's cohorts for ministers offer continuing education and peer support, grants for sabbath renewal, leadership for district conference events, and mentoring and coaching relationships with one of the five circuit riders, who are able to serve in the three languages of Brethren ministers.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary, equips leaders through programs in English and Spanish and oversees continuing education for the denomination.

In 2025, Training in Ministry (TRIM) engaged 18 students. The congregationally based training program, Education for a Shared Ministry, and its Spanish-language counterpart involved eight congregations, with a combined 11 ministry students. Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano de la Iglesia de los Hermanos (SeBAH-COB), which the academy offers in partnership with Hispanic Ministries for Mennonite Church USA, supports 16 students.

Additionally, there are six Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) that serve 11 districts. ACTS are district-based programs with oversight from the Brethren Academy. ACTS leadership meets regularly for sharing ideas and mutual support.

As of December, nine international students were enrolled in SeBAH-COB, five from Venezuela and four from Honduras. Three have completed coursework and are fulfilling requirements for supervised ministry. The Church of the Brethren of Venezuela (ASIGLEH) and the Brethren in Honduras (VAG, Viviendo en Amor y Fe) have worked with the academy to adapt SeBAH-COB to their settings.

As part of Bethany Theological Seminary's initiative Building Bridges Across Ideological Divides, the academy has offered a series of TRIM-level courses to help clergy recognize and meaningfully address division in their congregations and communities.

The academy hosted two Strength for the Journey cohorts and the Clergy-Tax Seminar.

Janet Ober Lambert is director of the Brethren Academy, and Arlyn Morales is coordinator for Spanish-language programs. Tabitha Rudy became coordinator for English-language programs, succeeding Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey.

Youth and Young Adult Ministries

In preparation for National Youth Conference in 2026, a first-ever NYC preview event was held in October to introduce youth advisors to the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. The three-day gathering was led by Becky Ullom Naugle, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, and NYC volunteer coordinators Rachel Johnson and Anna Schweitzer. The 28 participants from 14 districts toured the campus, met advisors from across the country, and learned from Charles Hunt of the Fuller Youth Institute.

Christian Citizenship Seminar was held in April in Washington, D.C. Gathered around the theme, "Faith for Change," based on Matthew 25:31-46, 16 youth and 8 adults explored how faith can be lived out publicly.

Young Adult Conference, held in May at Camp Brethren Woods, focused on "Hope: Roots and Branches," based on Jeremiah 17-7-8. Participants—12 of whom were first-timers—came from 25 congregations in 10 states. Twenty-one were under the age of 30, and 17 were over.

National Junior High Conference, held in June at Juniata College, brought together 72 youth and 56 adults from 23 districts across 9 states. The youngest participant was 11, and the oldest was 72. The theme, "Let Your Gentleness Be Known," came from Philippians 4:5.

Naugle makes regular video updates for youth advisors. In September, her update was the most viewed video on the Church of the Brethren YouTube channel.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Organizational Resources supports all denominational staff and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. The department includes the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Information Technology. Shawn Flory Replogle is executive director.

Brethren Historical Library and Archives

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives is the official repository for Church of the Brethren records documenting the ministry of the church, including committee and staff agendas and minutes, congregational records, Church of the Brethren-related print materials, and Church of the Brethren historical literature and items. The archives are available to districts, congregations, and individual members for research, historical study and donating items to the collection.

Keith Call began as director in June. Since then, he has catalogued 45 new titles for the non-circulating library, and accessioned 51 unique items, including books, photographs, artifacts and administrative records.

Call has welcomed 45 onsite visitors and researchers, guided tours of the archives for staff and guests, and answered approximately 200 emailed question and 90 phone calls. BHLA has retrieved material from a donor in Oak Park, and visited a closing church in Mount Morris, Ill. Staff have processed six collections and are arranging three large donations for processing.

In November, Call hosted a meeting of the Brethren Historical Committee. This committee stimulates interest and research in Brethren history, encourages study of Brethren history by students and others, and serves an advisory group to the archives. The committee also nominates members of the Germantown Trust, for approval of the Mission and Ministry Board.

Buildings and Grounds

Buildings and Grounds staff maintain the physical spaces where employees carry out many of the ministries of the church. Salvador Campero directs the work at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., assisted by Lee Marsh until his retirement in May. Francie Coale directs the work at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., assisted by Felix Hill.

The General Offices provide office space for staff of the Church of the Brethren and Eder Financial and a warehouse used by Brethren Press for inventory and shipping. Until Oct. 31, the warehouse was also a drop-off location for Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief donations. Living Gospel Church of God in Christ has rented space in the building for over 25 years.

Major projects included repair of the boiler, removal of asbestos from 300 feet of basement piping in order to fix a leak, repair of circuit breakers and time-sensitive lighting following a heavy wind and electrical storm, and repair of a leaking valve underneath the parking lot.

At the Brethren Service Center, there are hopes of finding a new tenant after closure of the Material Resources program, and staff are preparing the warehouse for that possibility. SERRV continues to use one-third of the warehouse as its main distribution center. The center also has offices for several denominational ministries.

The Church of the Brethren owns two other properties. One is Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, where the Germantown Trust maintains the property and helps interpret the history of the “mother church” of the Schwarzenau Brethren groups. The property includes the cemetery that contains the grave of Alexander Mack Sr. and other early Brethren leaders, as well as the 1770 meetinghouse.

The second is in Lybrook, N.M., where the Church of the Brethren worked with Lybrook Community Ministries until it ceased to exist in August. Other partners are being sought to maintain the facilities of a ministry that has been there since 1955. Community outreach includes distribution of clean water and burials in the Lybrook cemetery.

Finance

The Finance team oversees the Church of the Brethren's financial health and liability concerns. The team provides tracking and reporting for financial records, maintains insurance, receives donations and gifts, pays expenses, provides nonprofit, tax-exempt status documentation for districts and congregations, administers grants, and ensures the Church of the Brethren receives the highest ratings our independent auditors can provide regarding the financial health of the organization.

Ed Woolf, director of finance and treasurer, manages estate giving, split-interest gifts, pastors' housing fund accounts, corporate credit card accounts, and corporate insurance policies, and provides financial, budget, and accounting services. Pat Marsh, accountant and assistant treasurer, oversees the annual audit and provides budget support, financial reports, and cash management services.

Other members of the team are Lynn Phelan, accounts payable specialist; Barb Watt, financial operations specialist and payroll manager; and Nancy Watts, donation and accounts receivable specialist.

Due to the December 2024 ransomware attack, the Finance team had to manually rebuild the 2024 financials while balancing their time to keep up with the 2025 financials. The rebuild was completed in September, and the Church of the Brethren received a clean opinion from the auditors on the 2024 financial statements. In early 2026, the Finance team was working to complete the 2025 financials.

Information Technology

The Information Technology team provides computer, telephone, internet, and audiovisual support to keep denominational staff connected and communicating effectively. The team's work includes internet access and security, network management, computer hardware and software, database, phone system, keycard system, support for online registration, and technological support for onsite meetings.

Francie Coale is the director, Joshua Rowan is information technology specialist, and Lauren Bukszar is database specialist.

While the December 2024 ransomware attack affected all employees, the IT team was at the epicenter of the organization's efforts to respond, repair, replace and restore critical networks and staff files.

Financial results

Many of the Church of the Brethren's ministries are in a centralized budget called Core Ministries. In addition, the organization has special-purpose funds that support Brethren Disaster Ministries and the Global Food Initiative. Two ministries, Conference Office and Material Resources, are considered self-funding because they cover their expenses with income from fees.

Combined giving to Core Ministries from congregations and individuals totaled $2 million. This is $65,000 below budget and $109,000 behind 2024. Congregational giving was $1.35 million, a decrease of $117,000, and individual giving was $694,000, an increase of $8,000 from last year. With a transfer of $125,000 in designated funds, total income to Core Ministries ended the year $97,000 above budget.

Director-level expenses finished the year at $5.5 million, which was $214,000 above budget, primarily due to rising costs, inflation, and expenses related to the ransomware attack. As a result of higher expenses, Core Ministries ended the year with a net deficit of $138,000. This lowered the Core Ministries' net asset balance to just under $2 million.

Material Resources charges fees for its services, including shipping disaster relief materials for Brethren Disaster Ministries and other organizations. The program closed at the end of 2025 and Material Resources finished the year with a $225,000 deficit. This expense increased the deficit balance of the program's net assets to $496,000.

The Conference Office budget, self-funded through registration fees, sustained a deficit of $25,000 in 2025. This expense lowered the Conference Office net asset balance to $374,000.

Donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund totaled $2.6 million, an increase of $766,000 from last year. Giving to the Global Food Initiative Fund totaled $278,000, an increase of $19,000.

Investments totaled $37.2 million at the end of 2025, up $1 million from 2024. The investment gain in 2025 helped total net assets increase $1.4 million, resulting in a year-end balance of $44.4 million.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2025 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren, Inc., audit report published in June 2026.]

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

The General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren, David Steele, serves as staff for the Mission and Ministry Board, overseeing the employees and ministries of the Church of the Brethren and representing the church in its various ecumenical commitments. Shannon McNeil Smith is executive administrative assistant of the General Secretary's Office.

Mission and Ministry Board

The Mission and Ministry Board is the board of directors of the Church of the Brethren, carrying out the direction set by Annual Conference. The Board met at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., in the spring and fall; prior to Annual Conference in Greensboro, N.C.; and virtually in November. Meetings included reports on finances, ministry areas, committees, and denominational agencies, along with time spent in worship, prayer, training, and fellowship.

The Board's Strategic Plan supports the denominational vision to be "Jesus in the neighborhood." Mid-term and short-term goals guide progress toward that vision. The final report of a committee working on "Foreground Vision 6: Each in Our Own Language (Plan for Recognizing Injustice)" was approved in July. The work has been passed on to a newly created group, the Revelation 7:9 Committee.

At the end of the year, the church completed closure of the Material Resources program, a legacy program of the Church of the Brethren based at the Brethren Service Center. The decision to close the program was made in 2023.

Board statements and resolutions issued this year addressed concerns about immigration, weapons transfers, and gun violence.

- A statement and call to prayer was issued out of concern for "immigrant, migrant, refugee church members, who may be under threat of deportation following presidential executive orders. These renewed threats of deportation are already affecting the lives of many in the denomination's congregations."
- A resolution on weapons transfers called on the Church of the Brethren to examine and respond to the impacts of the arms industry and reiterated the denomination's long history of opposition to war and militarization. The resolution said it was important to once again "affirm the Church of the Brethren's commitment to peace as God's will and the call of Christ, and in that context to recognize the transfer of US weapons as a form of participation in war." This resolution is being sent to the 2026 Annual Conference for adoption.
- A statement "Renewing the Call to Prevent Gun Violence" reaffirmed the 2018 statement "Lukewarm No More" and called the Church of the Brethren to "recommit its members to work to change this devastating pattern."

The Board merged the Audit and Investment Committee and the Sustainability Committee, forming a Finance and Sustainability Committee.

The Board authorized appointment of a committee to work on the assignment from the 2025 Annual Conference as recommended by the "Breaking Down Barriers" study committee. In October, the Board extended David Steele's contract by two years, until August 2028. In November, the Board approved a 2026 Core Ministries budget of $5.45 million, with a net deficit of $260.

Approval of $960,000 in Emergency Disaster Fund grants included $185,000 for the Nigeria Crisis Response and $259,600 to Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in Democratic Republic of Congo) to support a six-month emergency humanitarian aid program for families affected by war in the eastern part of the country. The Executive Committee approved

an additional $53,000 in grants for international and domestic responses.

The elected membership of the Mission and Ministry Board consists of 10 women and seven men. One member is Japanese American, one is white and Hispanic/Latinx, one is Dominican, three are African American, and 12 are white.

Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C., represents the Church of the Brethren in coalitions, working groups, and at related events based on denominational policy. The office equips church members to engage in policy issues and supports the broader ecumenical and interfaith community in D.C. in addressing areas of concern to people of faith.

The office convened and contributed to nine policy working groups in Washington, including groups focused on Nigeria, US-Asia policy, immigration, environmental concerns, and the US weapons trade. Staff publicly endorsed 22 letters to Congress and the presidential administration and sent out five action alerts to engage members of the Church of the Brethren. The office produced writing and policy analysis for *Messenger* and other audiences.

Marcia Sowles joined the office in January as a legal advisor. She assisted the denomination in joining as a plaintiff in Mennonite Church USA v. DHS relating to the Department of Homeland Security's rescission of a policy limiting immigration enforcement at sensitive sites including churches. Sowles also engaged in interfaith policy advocacy on immigration issues.

At the end of January, Cornelius Raff completed a term with the office through Brethren Volunteer Service. Hannah Nelson continued as BVS associate, focusing on US weapons transfers, US-Asia policy, and creation care. Brigitte Zawadi, a student at Bethany Seminary, joined the office as an intern. Volunteer Mary Abraham represented the office at Creation Justice Ministries board meetings in May.

The office worked with Doris Abdullah, the Church of the Brethren representative to the United Nations, to assess current and future UN engagement.

Director Nathan Hosler convened the Nigeria Working Group, the Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare, and the Asia Policy Working Group, and represented the denomination on the boards of National Farm Worker Ministry, Heifer International, Churches for Middle East Peace, and the National Council of Churches.

In August, Hosler visited the emerging Church of the Brethren in Tanzania and co-led workshops at a peace conference with Jennifer Hosler.

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy convened the Brethren Creation Care Network and produced four issues of the newsletter "Rooted," sharing creation care information and ideas with congregations and members.

The Death Row Support Project continued with a dispersed network of volunteers.

In partnership with Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the office hosted Christian Citizenship Seminar with the theme "Faith for Change." Youth learned practical ways to engage on issues they are passionate about and met with their elected officials.

The office collaborated with Intercultural Ministries to bring information and workshops on immigration issues and advocacy to Annual Conference in July and National Older Adult Conference in September.

Annual Conference

The author of Hebrews encourages the early church to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up on meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV). Taking this call to heart, members of the Church of the Brethren met in Greensboro, N.C., July 2-6, for the 238th recorded Annual Conference.

"Faith Working Through Love," the theme chosen by moderator Dava Hensley, rooted in Galatians 5:6b, amplified this call. Together, Brethren built and renewed relationships, attended to business, raised voices in song, joined hearts in prayer, and worshiped God, as they explored this theme guided by the moderator, who led with grace, humility, and humor.

The Conference included equipping sessions, Bible studies on the Conference theme, programing for children and youth, a trip to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, a vigil honoring victims of gun violence, and a concert from the Rockingham Male Chorus. New this year was an opening dinner designed to help attendees get acquainted.

The 1,342 registrants included 409 delegates, 881 non-delegates, and 52 non-delegates participating virtually. Virtual registrants could observe business sessions, the concert, and selected equipping sessions. Worship was livestreamed at no charge.

Conferencegoers donated 116 units of blood to the local blood bank. They also supported the Witness to the Host City Project—Backpack Beginnings—contributing $16,967 and several pallets of backpacks, school supplies, and other goods to benefit children and their families in and around Greensboro.

Participants gave $35,183 through offerings to support Annual Conference and core denominational ministries. A silent auction raised an additional $13,790 to support Annual Conference and efforts to expand accessibility.

Onsite coordinators were Dewey and Melissa Williard from Virlina District, who were serving in this capacity for the fifth time. Other volunteers assisted in tasks as varied as registration, ushering, staffing the onsite office, age-group activities, first aid, Spanish and Haitian Creole translation, and Bible study leadership.

Annual Conference continues to experience financial challenges. Attendance has been affected by the financial struggles of many smaller congregations, as well as conflict and division in the church. The year ended with a small deficit that can be absorbed by the Annual Conference contingency fund. Staff collaborate with various committees to address concerns about the future of Annual Conference.

In addition to planning the annual meeting itself, Annual Conference director Rhonda Pittman Gingrich and Conference assistant Debbie Noffsinger provided administrative support for the Annual Conference officers, Program and Arrangements Committee and Worship Committee, Standing Committee and its subcommittees, Nominating Committee, Leadership Team, the Annual Conference study committees that completed their work at the 2025 Annual Conference, and the newly called Review and Evaluation Committee.

Brethren Press

Brethren Press published *Between You and Me,* a volume of poetry written by Audri Svay. Since the publishing house publishes little poetry, this put her in a small and distinctive group of poets published by the Church of the Brethren—including William Stafford, Julia Esquivel, Kenneth I. Morse, and Ken Gibble.

Brethren Press devotionals were *Take Up Your Cross,* by Tim Harvey (for Lent), and *Word Among Us,* by John Fillmore (for Advent). New titles in the Covenant Bible Studies series were *Sabbath: God's Call to Peace,* by Angela Finet, and *Martha and Mary: Friends of Jesus,* by Frank Ramirez. Through a collaboration with Pacific Southwest District, *Samuel: Leader for a Different Tomorrow,* by Gene Roop, was published in Spanish.

The four quarters of *A Guide for Biblical Studies* were written by Herb Smith, Mary Jessup, Calvin Park, and John David Bowman. Brethren Press published four quarters of the Living Word Bulletin Series. Editorial oversight for these publications is provided by managing editor Heidi Gross.

The Shine Everywhere project, a Lilly Endowment-funded effort of Brethren Press and MennoMedia, surveyed congregations and families to learn more about what those groups need most in order to help families grow faith in their children. Shine Everywhere also led groups that met together to dig deeper and tested new resources with them. Learnings gained through the project are informing the development of each quarter of the Shine curriculum, and there is increased emphasis on at-home resources.

The Shine partnership developed a new youth curriculum, *Reach,* that was field-tested in several congregations in the fall and then rolled out to all customers at the end of the year.

On behalf of the Shine partnership, Brethren Press handles order fulfillment for customers outside the original audiences of the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites. Project customers come from dozens of other denominations.

Warehousing, shipping, and customer service are

overseen by Sarah Radcliff, who began in November as manager of Brethren Press operations. She is assisted by Karen Warner, half-time customer service specialist, and Dan McFadden, who does shipping on a part-time basis. Jeff Lennard retired in March as director of marketing and sales.

Wendy McFadden is publisher of Brethren Press and executive director of Communications, and Karen Stocking is production and finance assistant for both areas.

Communications

With the July/August issue, *Messenger* magazine launched a year of observing its 175th anniversary. *The Gospel Visitor,* one of the several publications that were part of the current magazine's lineage, published its first issue in April 1851.

In 2025, the magazine took readers to Honduras, Haiti, South Sudan, and other places around the world; covered major denominational events; published various perspectives on the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism; explored timely questions such as artificial intelligence and how to share church buildings; and published a collection of reader-submitted writings on hope.

The magazine received three awards from the Associated Church Press for material published the previous year: an award of excellence for "The Holy Family," art by Paul Grout; award of merit for "Healthy Planet, Healthy People," by William L. Miller; and honorable mention for "What Do We Spend on War?" by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford.

Messenger is produced by the Communication team. Diane Stroyeck is half-time subscriptions specialist.

News Services communicates up-to-date news and information about the Church of the Brethren, covering not only denominational ministries but also congregations, districts, Annual Conference agencies, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion, ecumenical partnerships, and more.

The main vehicles for this communication are Newsline, the church's free email news service; the news section of the Church of the Brethren website www.brethren.org; the Newsline Digest pages of *Messenger* magazine; and social media.

News Services director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford was aided by a cadre of skilled volunteer writers and photographers and many others on staff and across the church who contributed articles, stories, photos, and news tips. In-depth coverage was provided for Annual Conference, National Older Adult Conference, the Clergywomen's Retreat, and meetings of the Mission and Ministry Board.

Website producer Jan Fischer Bachman and website developer Russ Otto supported the work of the church through web page updates, bulk email messages, online forms and surveys, online photo storage and sharing, online video, social media posts, and music playlists.

In 2025, Otto developed a new technology setup for conferences, making it much faster to process and upload thousands of photos.

The www.brethren.org website had 673,782 views over the year, up 5 percent from 2024.

Over one million email messages went out during the year. The Church of the Brethren has around 25,000 email subscribers; subscribers can choose which messages to get by going to www.brethren.org/intouch.

This year the web team added a translation widget so the website can be read in Spanish, Haitian Creole, French, Portuguese, and Arabic. To translate the site, users find the small word "English" at bottom right and click to choose a different language.

The Communication team produced annual reporting in four formats—the full written report, a magazine-style version, an exhibit at Annual Conference, and a video that premiered at Annual Conference. Titled *Take Heart,* the 2025 video highlighted three powerful stories representing Global Mission, Brethren Disaster Ministries, and Intercultural Ministries.

Human Resources

The Human Resources office, staffed by manager Shamek Cardona, oversees recruitment and hiring processes, onboarding and training, benefits administration, employee relations, and the organization's employment policies and services, while ensuring legal compliance.

Employees hired in 2025 were Keith Call, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives; Jazmín Góngora, administrative assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; Jon Lucas Keller, Mission Advancement advocate; Bethany Kasten, office assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; and Sarah Radcliff, manager of Brethren Press operations.

A number of people ended employment because of the closure of the Material Resources program: Melissa Fritz, packer; Sam Carter, sorter and packer of medical supplies; Richard Best, baler; Deborah Black, donation pickup assistant; John Black, truck driver; David Davis, driver and warehouse assistant; Sara Wanionek, sorter and packer of medical supplies; Brenda Giles, packer and sorter; Wesley Senseney, forklift operator and warehouse coordinator; Loretta Wolf, director; Glenna Thompson, office assistant; Harold Kline, truck driver; Jeffrey McKee, donation pickup assistant; Brenda Palsgrove, warehouse assistant; and Kevin Rice, donation pickup assistant.

Other departures in 2025 were Jaqueline Claire Flowers, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives; Lee Marsh, Building and Grounds assistant at the General Offices; Randi Rowan, program assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; Jim Miner, Yearbook specialist; Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales for Brethren Press; Stan Dueck, director of Organizational Leadership; Michael Scalzi, program assistant for Children's Disaster Services.

Total regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs: 49. As requested by Annual Conference, the report of ethnic/racial composition of these employees is the following: Asian–1; Black or African American–2; Hispanic or Latino–3; White–43.

The organization also has contract, shared, and casual employees, as well as program volunteers.

Mission Advancement

Mission Advancement staff educate and equip individuals and congregations about the needs of the organization and how their financial gifts are used to carry out the ministries of the church. The team builds relationships through visits, interpretation, and education, and provides ways for donors to support those ministries.

Mission Advancement welcomed a new advocate, Lucas Keller. He and Nancy McCrickard communicated regularly with donors, focusing on "stewarding relationships" as a means of keeping donors educated and informed about the work of the denomination in the United States and internationally.

Matt DeBall, Mission Advancement communication coordinator, managed quarterly congregational offerings, eBrethren email communication, and monthly direct letters. He represented the Church of the Brethren on the ecumenical One Great Hour of Sharing committee, where he was convener.

Traci Rabenstein, executive director, visited with congregation, pastors, and lay leaders to provide insight into the work of the denomination. She also worked with data management for the organization.

The team hosted the annual Faith Forward Donor Circle dinner at Annual Conference to thank donors who have planned to leave a sustaining contribution in their will or estate plans or contributed planned distributions from various trusts or IRA accounts.

Early in the year, the Yearbook was moved into Mission Advancement. With the organization's data breach in December 2024 and Yearbook specialist Jim Miner's retirement the next June, the Yearbook was not able to be produced in 2025.

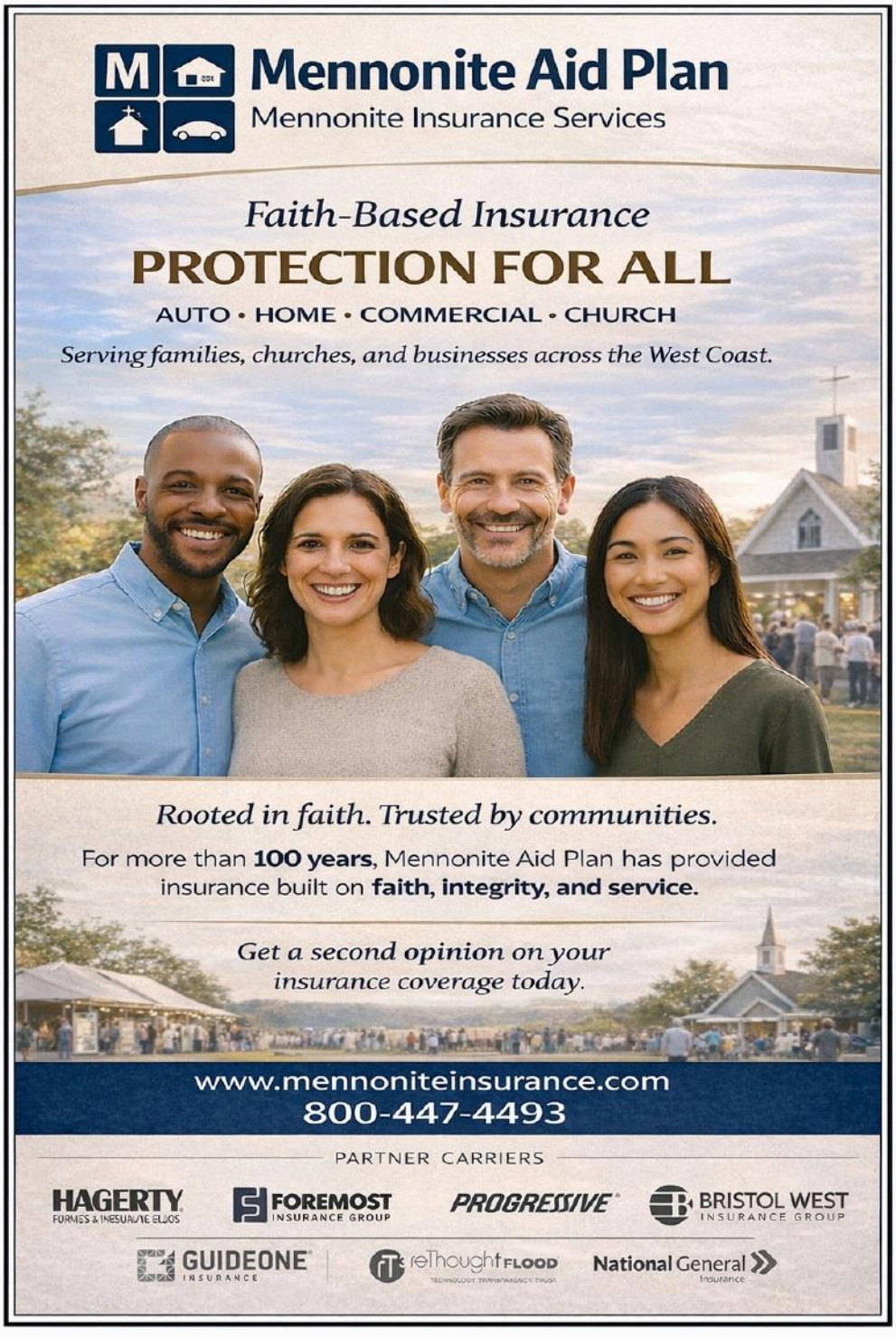
CONCLUSION

In addition to the people named in this report, there are thousands of others across the church who animate the programs described here. The Mission and Ministry Board and its staff are deeply grateful for the many people who bring these ministries to life—giving time and money and participating with vigor.

We offer this report in that spirit of vitality. There are different gifts, but we belong to each other. It is together that we are one body in Christ.

Kathy Mack, Chair
David Steele, General Secretary

Mennonite Insurance Services



Eder Financial Report

2026 Eder Financial Report

Eder Financial provides retirement and insurance services to pastors and church-related employees, asset management services to Brethren congregations and organizations, and deferred gift services to all Brethren members. It also manages benevolent funds that enable entities to provide financial assistance to individuals facing extraordinary hardship during times of crisis. At 83-years young, Eder Financial continues to care for those it serves, evident in 2025 by the many new one-time and ongoing initiatives it launched.

In 2025, Eder Financial issued one-time payments to annuitants as a result of the sale of Eder Retirement Plan annuities to Securian Financial in late 2024. These payments helped augment the retirement income members received. For at least one individual, these additional funds made it possible to remain in their residence rather than being forced to relocate late in life due to financial constraints. Eder's retirement planning specialists continue to help Eder Retirement Plan members prepare for and navigate retirement through one-on-one guidance.

Eder Financial partners with organizations and denominations — such as the Church of the Brethren — to manage benevolent funds with care and integrity. We help establish clear policies and efficient processes to ensure funds are distributed fairly, responsibly, and in a timely manner to those in need.

Eder Organizational Investing fully launched Nonprofit Toolkit, a wholistic resource designed for nonprofit organizations that offers tools, resources, and knowledge to actively and easily help institutions increase the gifts they receive from donors. Nonprofit Toolkit helps churches and nonprofits navigate how to solicit and manage funds to undergird their financial health.

The new initiatives were well received by members and clients, and the longstanding work Eder has carried out through its core ministries continues to be equally valued.

Investment Oversight

Distinct to Eder Financial is the intentional socially responsible investment (SRI) approach it takes to align investment fund offerings with Church of the Brethren values. Known as Eder Values Investing, this approach focuses on screening, positive investment, and shareholder activism to achieve long-term, competitive market returns while supporting ethical, faith-based principles. EVI is an integrated approach that filters companies that do not conform to Eder’s investment guidelines while simultaneously providing competitive returns. Orchestrating EVI within our separately managed accounts is straight forward because managers are hired to construct portfolios exclusively based on Eder’s investment guidelines. Mutual funds, which we utilize when we do not have sufficient

assets to meet balance requirements for a separately managed account, must meet Brethren values and ethical commitments so that Eder can assure members that the Eder Investing Platform is 100 percent compliant with Eder's social screens.

Eder Financial Board and Staff

The 12-person Eder Financial Board consists of people who have knowledge and experience in accounting, finance, investments, law, employee benefits, human resources, pastors, denominational executives, and organizations of like mind with Eder Financial.

Our team works in retirement, employee insurance, organizational investing, finance, investments, client relations, marketing, public relations, IT, data, special projects, and business development. We are a family friendly, faith-based organization that strives to provide concierge level service to our members and clients while also providing a fulfilling work environment in a permanent work-from-home setting.

Conclusion

The Board and staff also believe a strong organization is realistic about the challenges that it faces. Eder understands that tomorrow's church is different from yesterday's church. Given this, the firm must adapt boldly, and as Alexander Mack wrote, "without hesitation or fear." In 2026, Eder has a strong balance sheet, ample reserves, and a steady client base. But our data shows that Eder will face operational challenges in the future if it does not adapt today. Adapting from strength allows an organization to control its decision making and narrative; adapting from weakness means making decisions out of desperation. Eder's practice, no matter how difficult, is to make decisions out of strength. This is why in 2026 Eder entered into an agreement to transfer most of its products and services to Everence Financial, a financial services organization of Mennonite background that serves Anabaptist organizations, by the end of April 2027. Everence has a much larger scale than Eder so that it can offer more products at lower fees to employees, organizations, and all denominational members.

This step, while difficult to make, will ensure that Eder's members and clients will be well served for years to come.

Donna Rhodes
Eder Financial Board Chair

Nevin Dulabaum
Eder Financial President

On Earth Peace Report

A Future with Hope: On Earth Peace's Next 50 Years

"For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." - 2 Timothy 1:7 (NRSVUE)

On Earth Peace's purpose as an **agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference** is to help the Church of the Brethren become a relevant, vital, "living" peace and justice church equipped to create vital relationships and initiatives responding to contemporary issues of violence and injustice.

On Earth Peace's work as a ministry within the Church of the Brethren dates to 1974, when the organization was founded by 20th-century Church of the Brethren peace leader M.R. Zigler. In 2026, we call the church to courageous acts of peace witness. Kingian Nonviolence Principle 1 is "Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people." In our Agape Magazine (a quarterly resource from On Earth Peace for children ages 8-12) issue *Pursuing Justice*, the author considered the above verse from 2 Timothy. They wrote, "Sometimes we have to listen to our love for others and our compassion for those suffering more than we listen to our fears. Stop and ask, 'Is this an act of love or is it a response to fear?' **…It's a courageous act of love that helps make someone else's world a more loving place.**" Today, we work to prevent gun violence, support immigrants, challenge political violence, and raise conscientious objectors to war as our faith calls us.

OEP is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has been an agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference since 1998. While OEP is an agency of the denomination, no centralized denominational funding supports our work. All resources for our ministry come from individual and congregational donations or program income. **We are grateful to all individuals and congregations who remember us in their family or congregational giving. If you are unable to include us in your annual budget, please consider taking up a one-time special offering in 2026.**

2025 Highlights

- Partnership with Horizons Project to offer Harnessing Our Power to End Political Violence (HOPE-PV) workshops focused on immigrants, LGBTQ+, school board/local electeds, and community leaders.
- **4 issues of a children's resource, Agape Magazine,** covering topics included being neighbors, love in action, preventing gun violence, and finding hope.
- **105 trainings and events** including Kingian Nonviolence intros, book groups, and advanced trainings; gun violence and anti-authoritarianism organizing meet-ups; and more.
- **$220,000 raised for the Deportation Defense Response Legal and Mutual Aid Fund** with **more than 90 grants** made to individuals and families.
- **14 interns** supported On Earth Peace's programs, fundraising, and communications work.
- **335 people reached toward our goal of 1000 Brethren in Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation.** Will your congregation or district partner with us this year?

While On Earth Peace offers many programs for congregations, communities, and individuals of all ages, we want to draw your attention to two opportunities that have been centered this year.

Deportation Defense Response

The Deportation Defense Response (DDR) Team was initiated by four Church of the Brethren Districts (Atlantic Northeast, Atlantic Southeast, Virlina, and Pacific Southwest), working in partnership with On Earth Peace and the Church of the Brethren Office of Intercultural Ministries.

Church of the Brethren congregations have experienced firsthand the devastating injustices committed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Many members have been unjustly detained and deported, and many more are living in fear—afraid to attend church services, work, or necessary medical appointments. Throughout the country, we are witnessing beloved church members, neighbors, fathers, mothers, and children being torn from their homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods.

The DDR Initiative has helped the church stand alongside our siblings in Christ and our neighbors affected by this crisis. We ask you to join us in providing for the needs of immigrants and refugees with your resources and time, raising awareness of this crisis, defending the rights of our brothers and sisters, and demanding that leaders act justly.

I Object! Now What? Conscientious Objection to War

OEP was founded in response to the Vietnam War in recognition that we need ongoing preparation toward conscientious objection and resistance to war. The Church of the Brethren believes that all war is sin, yet our preparedness for conscientious objection in times of war always seems to come a little too late. As armed conflict with many different countries seems to become a real possibility for American citizens, we must look to our churches and within ourselves to see what we believe about violence and war, and how we can muster the courage to walk a path of peace. At On Earth Peace, we are considering what resourcing for conscientious objection to war and preparing youth & young adults is needed at this time. This resourcing might include technical training (how to register or prepare to resist a draft), theological education, war resistance and resistance to the things that lead to war, including systemic oppression, legislative advocacy, and preparing adults and congregations to support conscientious objection. We look forward to working with partners who have long carried this work.

On Earth Peace Values: Jesus-Centered Spirituality; Positive Peace; Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression; Intergenerational Leadership; Beloved Community

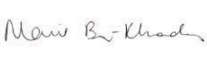
Vision Statement: "We see a world in Beloved Community, free from oppression, violence, and war."

Mission Statement: "We develop and walk with leaders and communities who work for justice and peace."

In 2026, we anticipate working with many of you to respond to the increasing political violence affecting our neighbors and communities. We name our support and commitment to LGBTQ+ persons, to immigrants, to people of color, to those affected by gun violence, to those most directly harmed by state violence and war, and to all who yearn and work for a world free from oppression, violence, and war. We will continue to walk with followers of Jesus in the Church of the Brethren as we seek together a path to become a living peace church. Please include us in your prayers.

In Christ's peace,


Matt Guynn
Co-Director,
Organizing


Marie Benner-Rhoades
Co-Director,
Youth & Young Adults


Mandy Park
Co-Director,
Development


Sydney Goldsborough
Co-Director,
Administration & Communications

McPherson College Report

2026 District Conference Report

Highlights from 2025-26 academic year

- **Expanded academic offerings & partnerships with state universities**
- **Student enrollment & retention success**
- **Highest graduate placement rate reported**

A **new mechanical engineering program** will begin in fall 2026, along with a **re-designed music education degree**. Academic program **partnerships** with Kansas State University (**KSU**) School of Health and Human Sciences, the University of Kansas Medical Center (**KUMC**) and Wichita State University (**WSU**) School of Business continue to provide MC students with exceptional learning opportunities.

MC student enrollment remained strong, with **90% retention** from fall to spring semester. Enrollment projections for the upcoming academic year indicate over **900 full-time students**, which includes 400 first-time Bulldogs.

81% of Class of 2026 graduates were placed in jobs or graduate school *before* they received their degrees. This is an **all-time high** for MC graduates. Only between 12% and 30% of undergraduate students nationally are placed before graduation. McPherson's career-oriented liberal arts approach is serving students well.

McPherson College's **Ventures in Christian Discipleship** continues to serve as a cornerstone initiative for community learning. The 2025–26 series featured six in-depth webinars covering diverse topics, drawing an average of 39 registrants per session. These participants spanned **18 Church of the Brethren districts** alongside various ecumenical participants. Since its launch, the program has connected with **448 unique individuals** through live event attendance and archive recordings.

Programming ideas and strategic planning are guided by an advisory committee comprised of representatives from across the denomination. The sessions are subsidized by our **supporting districts and churches, McPherson College, and individual donors**. We are pleased to coordinate with the Brethren Academy to offer Continuing Education Units for an added fee to those who participate in the live sessions. For more information on the 2026–27 Ventures series, please visit www.mcpherson.edu/ventures.

McPherson College maintains a close relationship with the **McPherson First Church of Brethren**, located next to campus. College staff with dedicated time to constituent relations—with a priority on church relations—are Billy Jamison, director of alumni and constituent relations; Kendra Flory, advancement assistant and coordinator of the Ventures in Christian Discipleship program; Erik Vogel, vice president of advancement; Dr. Aaron Meis, executive vice president; Dan Falk, dean of students; Myles Sandolph, director of engagement and belonging; and Dr. Michael Schneider, president.

Continuing the tradition of hosting an **Annual Conference Luncheon** for alumni and friends, the MC Alumni Office—alongside other Brethren Higher Education Association colleges—staffs an exhibit booth for conference participants. McPherson College also partnered with Manchester University to host a ***Bulldog/Spartan Meet-up*** at Manchester's campus in Fort Wayne, IN.

As in the past, MC will have representation at several regional **District Conferences**, including Western Plains (held on the campus of McPherson College); Northern Plains in Cedar Rapids, IA; and Missouri/Arkansas in Warrensburg, MO. Further, MC admissions representatives will meet with potential Bulldog students at the **National Youth Conference (NYC)** in Estes Park, CO.

Homecoming 2026, ***A Bulldog Family Reunion***, will offer more than a dozen class reunions, plus many other activities and events for MC alumni, their families, parents, and friends. We look forward to hosting many of you on campus during **Homecoming Weekend, October 2-4**.

Respectfully submitted by: Erik Vogel, vice president of advancement

Brethren Volunteer Service Report

2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Brethren Volunteer Service Updates

New Opportunities

Under new leadership, BVS has introduced several exciting changes. A new early enrollment initiative gives motivated volunteers the opportunity to apply early for targeted volunteer placements—this year, 9 applicants joined BVS during this time! A new pre-orientation discernment period helps volunteers gain a deeper understanding of the policies, procedures, and expectations of BVS before they sign their service covenant and attend orientation—this aims to improve volunteer retention and resilience. And, four new project sites allow more options for the upcoming year: SPARK, a service-learning organization in North Carolina; Shepherd's Spring Camp and Global Village in Maryland; Food for Greater Elgin, a food pantry in Illinois; and The Shalom Project, a gap-year program in Pennsylvania. BVS is excited to offer these new opportunities to our volunteers!



"Though the world certainly seems chaotic currently, these months in BVS at SnowCap Community Charities have given me hope and shown me the sheer incredible number of people who are working toward making a more just world where everybody looks out for their community and everyone has enough."

—Josiah Esch, Unit 338

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet the FaithX BVSer

Aly Heckeroth is serving her second BVS year as the Assistant FaithX Coordinator in the BVS office! Aly helps to plan FaithX trips and supports the work of BVS.



2025: BVS by the Numbers

- **Full-Time Volunteers:** 43 served in 8 states, Japan, and Northern Ireland.
- **Short-Term Volunteers:** 165 served in 7 states and Uganda.

BVS Staff Transitions

Welcome New Co-Directors!

After three years of service as Director of BVS, Chelsea Skillen resigned from her position in early 2026 ahead of a move to Portugal. We are grateful for Chelsea's leadership, generosity, and commitment to service.

In January 2026, Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred and Virginia Rendler accepted the positions of Interim Co-Directors of BVS.

Marissa resides in Spruce Creek, PA, and served with BVS during the 2018–2019 year (Unit 321) as Assistant Workcamp Coordinator in Elgin, IL. She continues her current role as Coordinator of Short-Term Service (FaithX) while also providing leadership in the administration of BVS as Co-Director.

Virginia resides in North Manchester, IN, and served with BVS during the 2022–2023 year (Unit 331) at the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. She continues in her role as Volunteer Coordinator while also leading BVS development and partner relationships as Co-Director.

Although the role is currently designated as interim, there are no plans to pursue candidates for the BVS Director position.

Marissa and Virginia are excited for the future and looking forward to leading BVS into its next chapter as Co-Directors!



Orientations

19 volunteers completed orientation in 2025. Summer orientation (Unit 337) was at Camp Colorado and fall orientation (Unit 338) was at Camp Mardela. Orientations for 2026 will be held at Inspiration Hills Camp on July 28-August 5 and Camp Emmaus on September 15-23.

Did You Know?

- BVS welcomes **anyone over age 18**... young adults, mid-age, or retirees!
- FaithX offers **custom short-term service trips** for districts, churches, youth groups, or families!

Stay in Touch

www.brethren.org/bvs/
www.brethren.org/faithx/

bvs@brethren.org
faithx@brethren.org

(800) 323-8039

FaithX Updates

Living With Purpose

In 2025, FaithX welcomed 165 youth and adults for 9 week-long service trips in Uganda, Arkansas, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon, North Carolina, and Virginia. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 70, represented 26 Church of the Brethren congregations, and 36% were first time attendees! The year's theme, "Living with Purpose," was grounded in Ephesians 4:1-3 and invited particpants to explore the unique ways that Christ calls them to serve and love others. Thank you to Rachel Johnson for serving as our BVS Assistant FaithX Coordinator for the 2025 season!

In 2026, FaithX will host 5 trips with over 60 youth, adults, and young adults with intellectual disabilities. The 2026 theme is "Break Through" inspired by Isaiah 43:2.



"The knowledge that FaithX trips provide is astounding. A lot of it is getting to know what goes into serving people and understanding what people are going through. It is very interesting and eye-opening."

—Kellen, Senior High Participant

Brethren Disaster Ministries Report

Church of the Brethren

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

***… Serve one another humbly in love** (Gal. 5:13 NIV)*
***… Love your neighbor as yourself…** (Mark 12:31 NRSVUE)*
***Serve the Lord with Gladness….** (Psalm 100:2 NRSVUE)*

These verses exemplify the love and service that flow from the volunteers, supporters, and partners of Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) as we bring hope and healing to survivors of disasters in the US and around the world. We are grateful for all who support our ministry in varied ways: leaving home to serve in a different community, providing practical support at home to enable others to travel, praying for our ministry and those who serve and are served, providing financial or in-kind donations, advocating for the work that we do—there are so many ways that your compassion and dedication are indispensable to our ministry.

The primary 2025 location for the BDM Rebuilding Program was in Eastern Kentucky helping families impacted by the 2022 flooding in the area. Volunteers repaired homes and built new homes on reclaimed mining land in higher ground communities. This work, with partner HOMES Inc., was completed in March 2026, ending BDM's three-year plus work in Kentucky in response to flooding and tornadoes. Two 2025 short-term responses served survivors of 2024's Hurricane Helene in North Carolina and Tennessee. Hurricane Helene recovery will be the main focus for the Rebuilding Program during 2026 and possibly longer. The need is still great, and recovery is expected to last for years.

In December 2025, a new Construction Assessment Team was formed after the initial team training was held in Allegany County, Md., in an area that experienced flooding in May 2025. This team of five is now equipped to deploy to disaster impacted areas where they can perform damage assessments on homes to determine the work and cost needed to complete repairs. The training also led to a partnership with the long-term recovery group, resulting in a one-week BDM response in April/May 2026.

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) responded to seven disasters in 2025, sending 61 volunteers to care for a total of 759 children. Critical Response Childcare Teams cared for children in January after a truck attack in New Orleans, La., and in July after catastrophic flooding in Texas. When wildfires devastated large areas of the Los Angeles, Calif., region in January, CDS sent three volunteer teams to serve in Multiagency Resource Centers (MARCs) and one team to a

Local Assistance Center (LAC). They cared for 515 children in five weeks. After multiple tornadoes passed through Missouri in April and May, CDS responded with four teams to three MARCs, a shelter, and a Disaster Assistance Center. In mid-September, a CDS team from La Verne, Calif., responded for one day to a LAC after a fire in Sonora. In December, after heavy rains caused flooding and evacuations in Washington, CDS responded with a local team, serving in two shelters for a total of four days.

BDM's international disaster response supports relief and recovery for global churches and partners following natural and human-caused disasters, including in conflict areas. In 2025, nearly 16 percent of global Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants ($163,350) were in response to natural disasters, including flooding and storm damage in Venezuela and Uganda. When Hurricane Melissa brought extensive damage in the Caribbean in the fall, a unique opportunity emerged to support churches in Cuba with emergency relief through their relationship with the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela. An EDF grant also supported agricultural recovery programs of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti following the storm, in areas that received little international attention.

The majority of international grants in 2025 supported responses to conflict by Global Church of the Brethren Communion members in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren Mission in South Sudan. The ongoing conflict in the DRC between the national army and the M23 rebel group has created destruction, chaotic conditions, economic hardship, and food insecurity which spilled over to the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Burundi, with the latter receiving many refugees. EDF grants have helped Brethren leadership in DRC and Burundi to serve church members and neighbors. In South Sudan, BDM has partnered with the Global Mission office on strategic planning, while concentrating on humanitarian relief to support families impacted by flooding as well as escalating conflict between the two major power groups in the government.

The Nigeria Crisis Response, a partnership between the Church of the Brethren and Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) since 2014, provided food and agricultural distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, and home repairs for the most vulnerable during 2025, and continuing through 2026.

Several staffing changes early in 2026 saw Michael Scalzi retiring as the CDS program assistant and Jenn Dorsch-Messler resigning to work with another disaster response organization. We expect new staff to be in place by the time of the district conference.

Toward the end of 2025, with the help of a Lilly Foundation planning grant, BDM gathered a broad range of information about its current work and impact, helping it to envision how its ministry could be improved and extended. This served as the foundation for a strategic planning process which in turn led to the application for and receipt of a three-year Lilly Foundation implementation grant. This grant will support the strategic plan's goals of strengthening BDM's US programs and increasing volunteer participation. While these funds focus on program improvement and growth, continued support from individuals, congregations, and districts will be key for ongoing operations.

Brethren Disaster Ministries' mission to share Christ's compassion and transform lives by working toward recovery and healing for disaster survivors is only possible because of the faithful support and sharing of God's bounty of all who partner with us through donations of time, talent, treasure, and prayer. We are humbled and thankful for your commitment, compassion, and generosity.



Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries
On behalf of BDM staff: Sharon Franzén, Kim Gingrich, and Carolyn Neher

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

Brethren Disaster Ministries, 601 Main Street, P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, Maryland 21776-0188
410-635-8731 800-451-4407 Fax: 410-635-8739

General Secretary Letter (English)

Church of the Brethren

Together as the Church of the Brethren

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I bring greetings to you during your district conference—gratitude for your ongoing work as the hands and feet of Jesus in your local communities and for the work of denominational staff on your behalf. You will find information about denominational mission and ministries reflected in two resources available to you on the Church of the Brethren website (www.brethren.org). The *Church of the Brethren Annual Report* offers a glimpse of the ministries over the last year, and the *Advocating Generosity* booklet invites you to partner with us in our current ministries. Your conference may have these resources printed and available onsite as well.

We are living in times marked by uncertainty and strain. Across our communities and around the world, we witness conflict, division, economic pressure, and deep human suffering. Public discourse is often shaped more by outrage than understanding, and many feel isolated, overwhelmed, or weary. In such a time as this, the witness of the Church of the Brethren is both urgent and essential.

Bonded to Jesus Christ, we move together toward God's new creation. This shared journey grounds us when the world feels fractured. In our diversity, we celebrate our unity in the person and work of the Savior, praising the God who makes us one. We remember that we are not simply individuals navigating difficult times alone—we are the people of God, formed into one body through Christ.

In a culture that often elevates independence, self-interest, and going it alone, we choose a different way. We choose interdependence and community. The church is called to embody a life together that resists isolation and fear, offering instead belonging, mutual care, and shared purpose.

The early church in Acts 4 gives us a vision for faithful living in uncertain times. They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, prayer, and the breaking of bread. Their life together was marked by a radical generosity, gladness, and awe—and even amid uncertainty, God was at work, adding to their number and strengthening their witness. This was not a perfect community, but a faithful one, shaped by devotion to Christ and love for one another.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians that the church is one body with many members, carefully arranged by God. Each part matters. Each person belongs. God's

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120 847-742-5100 800-323-8039 Fax: 847-742-6103

desire is that there be no division within the body, but that the members have the same care for one another. When one member suffers, all suffer together; when one is honored, all rejoice together. This shared life calls us to notice one another, to bear one another's burdens, and to celebrate one another's gifts.

Let us live out this calling together within the Church of the Brethren. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, may we seek to follow Jesus faithfully, trusting that every expression of the church—local and trans-local—has a role in God's reconciling and renewing work. May our faith legacy live on as we risk adventuresome acts of radical discipleship reflecting Christ's body at work in the world: united, compassionate, and alive with hope. Together, let us venture forth boldly serving others and bearing witness to the God who makes all things new.

With gratitude for our shared journey in Christ,



David A. Steele
General Secretary

Resources located at www.brethren.org/annualreport for the *Church of the Brethren Annual Report* and www.brethren.org/greatthing for the *Advocating Generosity* booklet.

General Secretary Letter (Spanish)

Church of the Brethren

Unidos como la Iglesia de los Hermanos

Queridos amigos en Cristo,

Que la gracia y la paz estén con ustedes en el nombre de Jesucristo. Los saludo con un sentido profundo de gratitud durante su Conferencia de Distrito; gratitud por su continuo trabajo, siendo las manos y los pies de Jesús en sus comunidades locales, y por la obra que el equipo denominacional ha hecho a nombre de ustedes. Podrán encontrar información sobre la misión denominacional y los ministerios, en dos recursos disponibles para ustedes en el sitio web de Church of the Brethen (www.brethren.org): El *Informe Anual de la Iglesia de los Hermanos (Church of the Brethren Annual Report)* ofrece un vistazo de los ministerios del año pasado; y el folleto *Promoviendo Generosidad (Advocating Generosity)* el cual los invita a asociarse con nosotros en nuestros ministerios existentes. Su Conferencia puede tener estos recursos tanto impresos como también en el sitio web.

Estamos viviendo en una época marcada por incertidumbre y tensión. Tanto en nuestras comunidades como en el mundo, presenciamos conflicto, división, presión económica, y profundo sufrimiento humano. El discurso público es frecuentemente determinado por la indignación más que por la comprensión, y mucha gente se siente aislada, agobiada o cansada. En una época así, el testimonio de la Iglesia de los Hermanos es tanto urgente como esencial.

Unidos con Jesucristo, avanzamos juntos hacia la nueva creación de Dios. Este viaje compartido nos une cuando el mundo nos quiere fracturados. En nuestra diversidad, celebramos nuestra unidad en la persona y la obra del Salvador, alabando al Dios que nos hace uno. Recordamos que no somos simplemente individuos navegando solos esta época difícil, somos el pueblo de Dios, formados en un solo cuerpo por Cristo.

En una cultura que frecuentemente propende por independencia, autointerés, y hacerlo solo, nosotros elegimos un camino diferente. Elegimos interdependencia y comunidad. La iglesia es llamada a encarnar una vida juntos que resiste el aislamiento y el miedo, en cambio ofrece pertenencia, cuidado mutuo y propósito compartido.

La iglesia primitiva, en Hechos 4, nos da una visión de cómo vivir fielmente en una época incierta. Se dedicaban a la enseñanza, la hermandad, la oración, y el compartir el pan. Su manera de vivir juntos fue marcada por una generosidad radical, por gozo y sobrecogimiento; incluso en medio de la incertidumbre, Dios estaba trabajando,

agregando fieles a su grupo y fortaleciendo su testimonio. No era una comunidad perfecta, pero sí era una comunidad fiel, moldeada por la devoción a Cristo y el amor del uno por el otro.

El Apóstol Pablo nos recuerda en 1 Corintios que la iglesia es un cuerpo con muchos miembros, cuidadosamente organizados por Dios. Cada parte importa. Cada persona es parte de la iglesia. El deseo de Dios es que no haya discordia al interior de este cuerpo, sino que los miembros se cuiden unos a otros. Cuando un miembro sufre, todos sufren juntos; cuando uno es honrado, todos se alegran juntos. Esta vida compartida nos llama a preocuparnos el uno por el otro, a llevar mutuamente nuestras cargas y a celebrar los talentos de los demás.

Vivamos este llamado juntos, dentro de la Iglesia de los Hermanos. Empoderados por el Espíritu Santo, procuremos obedecer a Jesús fielmente, confiando en que cada manifestación de la iglesia, tanto local como translocal, contribuya a la obra reconciliadora y renovadora de Dios. Que nuestro legado de fe se mantenga vivo mientras enseñamos con firmeza, reflejando el cuerpo de Cristo al mundo: unido, compasivo y viviendo con esperanza. Juntos, aventurémonos decididamente sirviendo al prójimo y dando testimonio del Dios que hace nuevas todas las cosas.

Con agradecimiento por esta jornada compartida en Cristo,



David A. Steele
Secretario General

Recursos disponibles en www.brethren.org/annualreport para el *Informe anual de la Iglesia de los Hermanos* y www.brethren.org/greatthing para el folleto *Propugnando generosidad.*
Continuando la obra de Jesús. Pacíficamente. Simplemente. Unidos.

Annual Conference Moderator's Letter

Church of the Brethren

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of the Pacific Northwest District,

I am grateful to send you greetings as you prepare for your District Conference. Each year, we hear reports and process business of the work being undertaken by our local congregations, districts, agencies, and denomination. Sometimes that work seems routine. And yet, with each new year comes new opportunities to think creatively and pray that God will continue to renew our church and grow our ministries.

I am excited to welcome each of our sisters and brothers who will gather together for the 240th recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Daytona Beach, Florida, July 28 – August 1, 2027. We will return to our typical Wednesday-through-Sunday format, while meeting later in July than usual. Ocean Center in Daytona Beach lives up to its name, located only 400 feet from the Atlantic Ocean. But most importantly, we will experience the great cultural diversity present among our brothers and sisters in the Atlantic Southeast District.

The Hartford Institute for Religion Research reported in late April 2026 that, for the first time in two decades, Christian congregations were growing overall. If we look worldwide, we see many of our congregations in the Global Church of the Brethren and other denominations growing and thriving. What do we need to do in our North American Church of the Brethren congregations to see growth and renewal?

Much of my ministry over the past three decades has focused on the youth of the church. I have seen young children who listened intently to a Sunday School teacher become young adults who volunteered at their district summer camp teaching other children about Jesus. I have served alongside youth at Annual Conference senior high activities, Christian Citizenship Seminar, FaithX, and National Youth Conference who have gone on to become leaders in our denomination. This is where we see growing faith continue in our church.

May we be energized and encouraged as we anticipate gathering together next summer in Daytona Beach, continuing to support the growing faith of those in our congregations, districts, and denomination.

Your Brother in Christ,
Dennis Beckner
2027 Annual Conference Moderator

Annual Conference 2027



To watch a special invitation from the Atlantic Southeast District go to www.brethren.org/cometoDaytona

GROWING FAITH
2 Thessalonians 1:3
Annual Conference 2027

- dynamic preaching and worship
- uplifting singing
- formational Bible studies
- discernment around business
- strengthening and equipping workshops
- informative exhibits
- witness and service to the host city
- activities for children and youth
- opportunities for fellowship

Information is added through the year to:
www.brethren.org/ac

Church of the Brethren

Office of Ministry Letter

Church of the Brethren

July 10, 2026

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Greetings, beloved fellow disciples of Jesus. I am encouraged by the 2027 Annual Conference moderator's theme of *"Growing Faith"* which offers the church the opportunity to celebrate the gifts and passions of children, youth, and young adults. Truly they are the church *now*! My prayer is that as ministers and congregations partner ever more closely, "our faith will grow abundantly and the love of every one of us for one another will be increasing!" (2 Thess. 1:3)

As we engage in ministries together, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry Office and the Council of District Executives, provides materials related to ministerial compensation that have been approved by the Annual Conference. The *Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement* (IAMA) serves as one document for both the start-up and renewal needs for pastors. In addition, this Agreement contains a helpful document entitled "*Shared Ministry Priorities*," which can aid in developing a strong and transparent partnership between pastor and congregation. We urge congregations to utilize both documents and to renew them each year. The IAMA has been updated to reflect the recent transition from Eder Financial's retirement services to those now provided by Everence Financial. Information on obtaining ancillary insurance products is not included yet, however, pending Eder's efforts to continue offering them. The documents (in fillable form) are posted separately on the Office of Ministry compensation page.

The *Guidelines for Pastors' Salary and Benefits* contain basic background information and explanations regarding compensation and benefits. The *Minimum Cash Salary Table and Guidelines* seeks to encourage congregations to be fair and generous employers of pastoral leadership. For the time being, all these materials can be utilized in conjunction with the *Pastoral Compensation Calculator* developed with Eder Financial and found here:
https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/
The plans for continuing the use of a compensation calculator are still undetermined but it appears likely that such a tool will continue to be offered, either by Eder or by Everence. Look for updates from the Ministry Office and the Pastoral Compensation & Benefits committee.

It is important to note that the any compensation calculation should begin with what the congregation can afford to pay, include the cost of housing, pension, and benefits, and then calculate how many hours (based on the Minimum Cash Salary Table) of average weekly pastoral time the congregation should expect to receive from their pastor. In summary, these calculations can clarify the congregation's ability to determine appropriate levels of compensation for pastors.

Please NOTE: THE NECESSARY FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN FILLABLE FORMAT AT
https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/
(This is the source to find all documents and resources related to pastoral compensation.)

Church of the Brethren

The following resources are provided for congregations and pastors as they work at these conversations:

1. **Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement (IAMA)** –
   As mentioned above, the Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement (replacing start-up and renewal agreements) is available online (see link above). This agreement is to be completed each year. Please secure the appropriate signatures and place a copy in the ministerial file. A signed copy should be returned to the ***district office*** from each pastor and placed in the minister's file. ***Please highlight the critical importance of this document being signed and returned annually to the district office.***
2. **Minimum Cash Salary Table and Guidelines*** (the Table as posted reflects a cost-of-living adjustment of 4.2% approved by Annual Conference delegates and effective January 1, 2027.) Link: https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/
3. **Compensation Calculator** available (for now) at this link: https://pccalc.azurewebsites.net/
4. **Shared Ministry Priorities**, fillable – This document included in the IAMA is also posted separately for convenient access.
5. **Guidelines to Pastors' Salaries and Benefits** document serves as a resource for compensation conversations and can be found here: https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2022/08/2023-Guidelines-for-Pastors-Salary-and-Benefits.pdf

*The recommended cost-of-living increase approved by delegates at the 2026 Annual Conference constitutes a 4.2% increase across the salary table taking into consideration economic factors and careful projections of experts in the field. The committee encourages congregations to be equitable in seeking to be supportive to ministers in this midst of a climate of rising inflation and increased social challenges. While financial remuneration is not the only means of expressing support, it is a fitting way to communicate gratitude during these challenging days of ministry together.

The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee is available as a resource during this process of resourcing pastors and congregations. The current chair is Harry Biddle of Oakton, MD. The recording of the original introductory workshop to the new compensation tools is still posted on the compensation website here: https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/

The Office of Ministry welcomes your input, and we desire to work closely with you in endeavoring to serve our ministers and congregations well. We recognize that the conversations you guide as leaders provide a prime opportunity for you to be in conversation with congregations about their vision for mission and ministry as a people of faith including a vision

Church of the Brethren

for leadership/staffing needs.

Under special, limited circumstances, licensed ministers are utilized as pastors. Two important notes/reminders about licensed ministers:

1. Please remember to use the **Approval for Employment** form in the Ministerial Leadership Manual (page OM340 and attached to this mailing in both PDF and Word format) for licensed ministers serving as pastors. Remember that a licensed minister is to serve as a pastor only when she/he is engaged in an approved ministerial training program and under the direct supervision of an ordained minister (MLP 2014).

2. Please remember to use the **Student Placement Guidelines** in the Ministerial Leadership Manual (page OM320 and attached to this mailing) for a licensed minister who is serving as a pastor in a district beyond where she/he is licensed while in seminary or academy level training programs.

Please be in touch with the Ministry Office if you have questions. Thank you for your ongoing assistance with interpreting items regarding pastoral salaries and benefits. May God bless you in your ministry and give us all wisdom and courage for the journey.

Yours in Christ,

Nancy S. Heishman

Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, Director, Ministry Office

c: David Steele
Members of Pastoral Compensation & Benefits Advisory Committee: Harry Biddle, chair, Angela Finet, Lori Hurt, Chad Whitzel, and Andy Hamilton, representative from the Council of District Executives

* While the title pastor is used, these materials are to be used with other types of ministerial leaders as well – Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, Youth Ministers/Pastors, Interim Pastors, etc. They are designed for most persons serving in "pastoral" roles.

Bethany Theological Seminary Report



Bethany Basics

ENROLLMENT

122	71
TOTAL STUDENTS	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT



Academic Programs

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts
- Master of Arts in Biblical Peacemaking
- Master of Arts in Spiritual and Social Transformation
- Master of Arts: Theopoetics and Writing

- Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma in Biblical Peacemaking (CBP/PDBP)
- Certificate of Achievement in Ministry Studies (CAMS)
- Certificate in Intercontextual Biblical Interpretation (CIBI)
- Certificate in Peacebuilding and Neighborhood Engagement (CPNE)
- Certificate in Peacemaking, Violence, and Power (CPVP)
- Certificate in Theopoetics and Theological Imagination (CTTI)
- Certificate for Expanded MA Studies (CEMAS)
- Certificate for Chaplaincy Preparation (CCP)

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION WITHOUT DEBT

During the past two academic years, not a single Bethany student took out a student loan. This success was made possible by the combined efforts of generous donors, shifts in administrative policies and practices, and efforts of our students themselves. A decade ago, Bethany had many fewer students, and they collectively borrowed about $300,000 in a year.

FLOURISH: A CAMPAIGN FOR BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Bethany recently completed an initiative to enhance the student experience, encourage faculty innovation and creativity, and bolster annual fundraising efforts. As of June 30, 2026 we have surpassed our goal and raised more than $12 million.

NIGERIA CONNECTION

Bethany celebrated its first commencement in Jos, Nigeria in May 2024. The Seminary hopes to host ceremonies there every other year. Beginning in the fall, Nigerian students will be able to pursue the Master of Arts in Biblical Peacemaking in addition to the Postgraduate Diploma in Biblical Peacemaking.

615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374 ▪ bethanyseminary.edu ▪ 765-983-1800 ▪ 800-287-8822

Bethany
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Preparing the Way

The Lilly Endowment Inc. has cast a remarkable vote of confidence in Bethany with a $10 million grant — the largest in the Seminary's 120-year history. This new funding will support the Seminary's new partnership with undergraduate institutions and encourage students to pursue graduate theological education and careers in ministry. The grant marks the beginning of a new era for Brethren higher education, as it will strengthen the connection between the Seminary and the Brethren-related colleges and universities.

This generous philanthropy will establish the Brethren Higher Education Consortium and foster collaboration between Bethany and the six undergraduate colleges and universities that are affiliated with the Church of the Brethren: Bridgewater College, Elizabethtown College, Manchester University, McPherson College, Juniata College, and the University of LaVerne. Bethany has created a new program called UP@Bethany, which will allow juniors and seniors at those institutions to take Bethany courses prior to receiving their undergraduate degrees. The grant will also support continued collaboration with Earlham School of Religion, a key partner of Bethany for the last 30 years. The Lilly Endowment grant will enable Bethany to create an endowed fund, helping to ensure the Seminary's long-term success.

> "We are thrilled and humbled to receive this transformational grant from the Lilly Endowment."
>
> -REV. DR. JEFF CARTER
> PRESIDENT OF BETHANY SEMINARY

The new project funded by the Lilly Endowment is entitled, "Preparing the Way: Expanding Vocational Paths for Undergraduate Students." It is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. The grant to Bethany is one of 45 that were approved in a competitive round of the initiative to support theological schools as they lead large-scale collaborations with other seminaries, colleges and universities, and other church-related organizations.

The Lilly Endowment — a private foundation based in Indianapolis, Indiana — supports the causes of community development, education, and religion.

"We are thrilled and humbled to receive this transformational grant from the Lilly Endowment," says Rev. Dr. Jeff Carter, president of Bethany Theological Seminary. "Thanks to Lilly's generous support, we will create new pathways to careers in ministry for exceptional students attending Brethren colleges and universities. The grant will also allow us to provide students at these institutions an introduction to graduate study and access to advanced courses in theology and Biblical studies that are not typically available to undergraduates."

Bethany currently enrolls 122 students in five master's degree programs and nine graduate certificates, including those from across North America and a strong and growing contingent in Nigeria. Most Bethany students study at a distance, so all courses are accessible via Zoom using state-of-the-art classroom technology. This format ensures that undergraduates will enjoy robust educational experiences without leaving their undergraduate campuses.



In December, Bethany received a check for $5 million in immediate funding to get the program up and running. These new funds will have an immediate positive impact on the Seminary's operating budget, and will help Seminary collaborate with the other Brethren colleges and universities to begin enrolling students as soon as possible.

Bethany will be required to raise $2.5 million from other donors in order to receive $5 million in matching funds from Lilly Endowment. The Seminary has begun conversations with a number of donors who are enthusiastic about supporting this new endeavor.

"A grant like this is a tremendous vote of confidence in our mission from one of the leading philanthropic supporters of education and religion in the world," notes President Carter. "As I travel around the country speaking to friends of the Seminary, it is clear to me that this grant from Lilly has made even longtime supporters of Bethany think about us in a new way. We are imagining possibilities that none of us could have envisioned without Lilly's generous support."

The Seminary's fundraising will build upon the success of its ongoing comprehensive campaign — Flourish: A Campaign for Bethany Theological Seminary, which has already generated significant new funding to strengthen the student experience, bolster faculty creativity and innovation, and bolster annual fundraising.

It remains to be seen what long-term effects this grant will have on the life of the Seminary. Early signs suggest that UP@Bethany will offer undergraduates at Brethren colleges and universities a new pathway to Bethany, a new range of options to engage with some of the most important questions facing humanities, and more ways to explore ministry and service in whatever communities they join.

"We believe that the impact of this new funding will reverberate long after the five-year lifespan of the grant," says Carter. "By establishing an endowed fund, and by inspiring the generosity of other donors, this moment holds the promise of transformation for Bethany and our partner institutions."

Bethany
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Measuring Bethany's **Impact**

AN ENTERING CLASS OF RECORD SIZE.

This fall, Bethany welcomed 38 entering students — the largest class at the Seminary in recent memory. This growth would not be possible without the generosity of donors like you.

THREE CONSECUTIVE SEMESTERS WITHOUT FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS.

Philanthropy has been key to our efforts to reduce student borrowing and create a pathway to graduate theological education without new debt.

A NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL PEACEMAKING.

For several years, our Nigerian students have expressed interest in pursuing master's degrees at Bethany. Thanks to the leadership of our faculty and your faithful support, we launched this new degree this year.

AN ALUMNI AND FRIENDS TRIP TO GREECE.

Dr. Dan Ulrich led an education journey through Greece, focusing on places that feature prominently in Paul's letters. This trip was remarkably successful, thanks in large part to the 30-some alumni, friends, and students who participated.

A STEINWAY FOR NICARRY CHAPEL.

A fund provided by Professor Emerita Nancy Faus made it possible for Bethany to acquire a Steinway Grand B piano for Nicarry Chapel. We were happy to be able to celebrate the dedication of this instrument with many local donors and friends.

A BOLD EVENT, SPONSORED BY THE BAKER ENDOWMENT.

Bethany welcomed Dr. Heather DuBois of Boston College as the feature speaker at an event supported by the Jennie Calhoun Baker Endowment. We are grateful to all who support Bethany's ongoing commitment to peace studies.

A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH BRETHREN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

Many generous alumni and friends of the Seminary are also loyal supporters of Brethren colleges and universities. Building on the foundation of support that you have provided, we received a $10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., to create a new partnership with the goal of encouraging undergraduates to explore theological education and careers in ministry.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR THE BETHANY FUND.

Thanks to tremendous support from a growing group of alumni, friends, and local community leaders here in Wayne County, Indiana, it has been another successful year for the Bethany Fund. This annual fundraising effort provides money that goes into immediate use to support the day-to-day activities of the Seminary and the vital work that our employees do every day.



Calls to Action—Annual Conference Resolutions

NB 1. RESOLUTION ON WEAPONS TRANSFER

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **At the individual level:**

  1. That individuals educate themselves and others about the impacts of the US arms trade and our biblical call to peacemaking.

  2. That individuals reflect and pray about the effects of US weapons transfers around the world, and how best to move society and government down a less militaristic path.

  3. That individuals who own investments, including retirement accounts and pensions, divest from the arms industry. Annually, Eder Financial compiles lists of the top twenty-five publicly traded defense contractors and all publicly traded companies where more than ten percent of their revenue comes from contracts with the US Department of Defense. Following these guidelines, individuals should divest from companies that have more than a minimal involvement in weapons production whether or not they derive the majority of their profit through military contracts.

  4. That individuals contact their elected representatives and participate in nonviolent direct action to oppose US weapons transfers.

- **At the congregational and district levels:**

  1. That congregational and district leadership provide resources and encouragement for church members to learn about, reflect on, and take action on the concern of US arms transfers.

  2. That congregations and districts divest from companies that have more than a minimum involvement in weapons production, including those that derive the majority of their profit not through military contracts.

- **At the denominational level:**

  1. That the Church of the Brethren, through the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, engage in ongoing research, education, and advocacy against US arms transfers and the defense industry

2. That Annual Conference agencies and other Church of the Brethren-related organizations divest from companies that have more than a minimal involvement in weapons production, including those that derive the majority of their profit not through military contracts, referring to the lists compiled from Eder Financial.

NB 3. RESOLUTION - WALKING TOGETHER: IMMIGRATION, PEACEMAKING, CONSCIENCE, AND SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBORS

CALLS TO ACTION

- **For individuals:**
  - *Learn and listen*
    - Read immigrant and refugee stories.
    - Listen with humility and respect.
    - Learn about cultures, histories, and experiences.
  - *Speak with care*
    - Challenge harmful stereotypes with truth and grace.
    - Use language that honors dignity.
    - Share accurate information with compassion.
  - *Show up consistently*
    - Volunteer regularly, not just once.
    - Accompany families when invited.
    - Build relationships rooted in trust.
    - Understand that civil disobedience may be necessary.

- **For congregations:**
  - *Pray and reflect*
    - Pray for immigrant families and communities.
    - Include immigrants in congregational prayer.
    - Reflect on the biblical call to welcome the stranger and to work for justice.
  - *Offer welcome and support*
    - Greet and acknowledge immigrant neighbors.
    - Help with forms, school questions, or appointments.
    - Offer rides, childcare, or translation, when possible.

        - Understand that civil disobedience may be necessary and support church members who prayerfully participate in such actions.

- **For districts:**
    - *Give resources*
        - Donate food, clothing, school supplies, or gift cards.
        - Support trusted local and national organizations.
        - Share resources collectively for greater impact.
    - *Bear the cost*
        - Accept inconvenience, misunderstanding, or criticism.
        - Share power, space, and leadership.

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        - Remain faithful when support requires sacrifice.
        - Understand that civil disobedience might be necessary and support congregations' prayerful participation in such actions.

- **For the denomination:**
    - *Advocate courageously*
        - Speak up when policies harm families.
        - Contact leaders and institutions respectfully.
        - Use voice and position to act for justice.
    - *Stand in solidarity*
        - Be publicly supportive of immigrant communities.
        - Attend prayer services, vigils, or community gatherings.
        - Choose presence, even when uncomfortable.
        - Understand that civil disobedience might be necessary and support parts of the denomination, including staff, who prayerfully participate in such actions.

- **For reflection:**
    - Annual Conference statements on peace and justice.
    - The 2007 "Separate No More" Annual Conference paper (on racism and unity).
    - Church of the Brethren positions on immigration, refugee support, and nonviolent action.

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