Mission of the Pacific Northwest District Church of the Brethren

Our focus is threefold:

1. To nurture the church, the body of Christ, as we grow spiritually: *"Love tenderly, do justice, and to walk humbly with our God."* Micah 6:8

2. To witness God's love to others: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."* Matthew 28:19-20

"Beloved, since God loved us so much; we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfect in us. 1 John 4:11-12

3. To be good stewards of the gifts God has given us: *"God's various ministries are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God is behind it all. Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of gifts are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!"* 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, The Message

Core Values and Foundational Principles

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:

● Conduct our business by discerning the "sense of the meeting."

● 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 every one we meet.

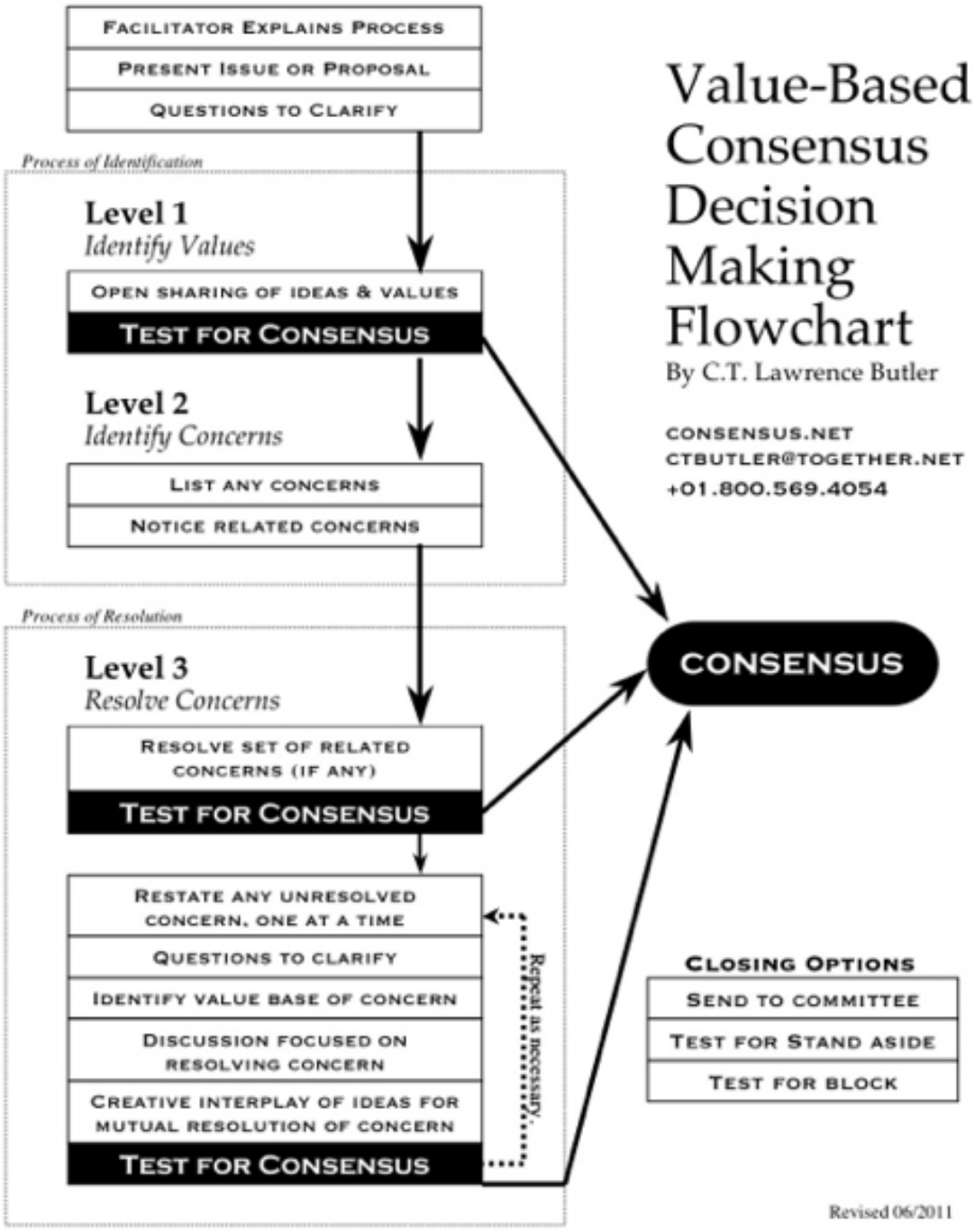
● Continue the struggle of growth and change.

● Affirm the Brethren genius of holding in tension community and obedience with.

individual conscience and Spiritual discernment.

● Celebrate!

● Are God's stewards in the world, continuing Jesus' work; **Peacefully, Simply, Together** .


Facilitator Explains Process
Present Issue or Proposal
Questions to Clarify
Process of Identification
Level 1
Identify Values
Open sharing of ideas & values
Test for Consensus
Level 2
Identify Concerns
List any concerns
Notice related concerns
Process of Resolution
Level 3
Resolve Concerns
Resolve set of related concerns (if any)
Test for Consensus
Restate any unresolved concern, one at a time
Questions to clarify
Identify value base of concern
Discussion focused on resolving concern
Creative interplay of ideas for mutual resolution of concern
Test for Consensus
Repeat as necessary
CONSENSUS
Closing Options
Send to committee
Test for Stand aside
Test for block
Value-Based Consensus Decision Making Flowchart
By C.T. Lawrence Butler
consensus.net
ctbutler@together.net
+01.800.569.4054
Revised 06/2011

Pacific Northwest District Church of the Brethren
District Conference - September 18-19, 2020
Conducted via Zoom

Those present by registration or appearance throughout the conference (for various sessions):

Columbia-Lakewood: Eddie & Terry Gardener
Ellisforde: Debbie Roberts, Steve Kinzie
Lacey: Howard & Diana Ullery, Don Stern, Carol Mason
Living Stream: Audrey deCoursey, Enten Eller, Liz Bizgood Enders, Beth & Gary Gahm, Altha Gahm, Sam Gahm, Nibuca Ruce, Debbie Eisenbise, Monica Rice, Bobbi Dykema, Rick Hillrigel, Bruce Rosenberger, Mary Gorsline
Olympic View: Frosty Wilkinson, Glenn Brumbaugh, Sylvia & Bill Hershberger, Harriet Koscho, Michael O'Cain
Portland: Eileen & Patrick Fiegenbaum, Doug & Jan Eller, Sarah Kinsel, Matt Guyun, Jake & Linda Collins, Jean Keith-Altemus, Terry Altemus
Springfield: Barbara Daté, Lani Wright, Pat & Owen Wright, Sam Brackett, Majeska Seese-Green, Dale Seese, Leslie Seese
Sunnyslope: Ben Green & Carol Bowman, Steve & Esther Gregory, Janet Stutzman, Russ Clark, Lois Tate, Mary King
Tacoma: David & Estelle Ortega
Wenatchee Brethren Baptist: Mary Carter, David Morrow, Colleen Michael, Pam Hannah
Whitestone: Daniel Klayton, Peggy Liley
Wildwood: Elizabeth Ullery-Swenson,

Others: Jeff Barker, Kent Verbeck,
Nancy Heishman & Mishael Nouveau from the Ministry Office of the Mission & Ministry Board; Gregg Carlson (Envisioning consultant); Shannon McNeil (Mission Advancement); Scott Douglass, BBT; Marty Farahat (OEP)

Friday evening — Worship and sharing from congregations

Saturday a.m. - Envisioning Team Report

Gregg Carlson opened with a John O'Donohue quote and prayer.

An overview of process and conclusions was presented by Gregg Carlson on Powerpoint. We do not have a final plan, but this moves us to the next stage in/of the district. The team anticipated a 2-year process, but it may take longer due to Covid.

We were placed in break-out rooms to discuss 8 questions which Gregg had discerned that might be helpful to us. Gregg's summary of these shared discussions are as

follows:

1. **Where do we see gaps or items falling through the gaps that need to be recovered or let go of?**

- **Communication was clearly identified as a gap. Did we get approval on the Admin position? If so, we will need to work on crafting a job description.**
- **The idea of re-writing the job description for the District Leader also sounded like an important task.**

2. **How do our camps relate to our future?**

- **The statement: "how can the camps help the District" seems like a place for further exploration.**

3. **Without a paid District Executive how do we provide community, collaboration and training for our clergy?**

- **The idea of collaborating with UCC or Disciples on ministerial training, ethics work and minister retreats seemed a valuable idea.**

4. **As some congregations face an unviable future how can the District use technology and online resources to keep District people connected?**

- **The comments about the issue of distance and the fact that some folks are more active with the District than with a congregation was insightful to me.**
- **The idea of a "District membership", is that possible?**
- **In the Friends and early Methodists they use to have quarterly meetings that invited people whose only other connections was through circuit preaching points.**

5. **How do we advocate for polity changes that could lead to a "District of Shared Values"?**

- **I appreciated the comment that cultural differences get in the way of a District that might be representative of folks from a greater area.**
- **I also found the article that Barbara sent me about issues happening in churches and Districts over the Covenant Brethren split. It seems that there could be congregations and fragments of congregations that would appreciate the thought of connecting with fellow Brethren of like conscience.**

6. **How do we provide apprenticeship or model ways of including the next generation and new people into District leadership?**

- **Colleen had some very deep thoughts about the idea of "unresolved diversity" that you don't have a way to create "safe space" that welcomes.**
- **The idea of local delegates to the District being more involved in weaving new people into the District is worth exploring.**

7. **How do we continue to provide a voice of "just peace" beyond our congregations to impact our Pacific Northwest Region.**

- **I recognize that I don't know enough about the work of "On Earth Peace" but it seems to be a prophetic voice beyond your congregations. I would appreciate a greater understanding of how this fits in.**
- **The idea of creating "talking circles" that might take place online again sounds like something to explore**

8. How do we redefine "church" that makes us inclusive of those who may seek to embrace our online presence, or our "just peace" efforts but don't fit into a traditional model of membership?

- **Liz made some good observations about how the very idea of membership is undergoing re-imagining.**
- **What do we want membership to be about if it is not tied to a building, or a place. But to ideas, faith, people and doing good work of God.**

Saturday afternoon - BUSINESS SESSION

Board Chair, Howard Ullery helped us center, referring to Terry Tempest Williams' writings on conservation and ecology.

Area Minister and Exec Team member, Carol Mason walked us through the consensus process, using a flowchart.

A. The minutes of the PNWDistrict Conference 2019 were approved by consensus.

A. Financial Report - Terry Altemus (addendum, 2020 packet)

1. The PNWD Board authorized moving to Quickbooks on-line. Several persons were authorized to have access Several have access to BBT accounts, as well as checking account, some with oversight, some to make changes. This provides good continuity in the event the treasurer is not available.
2. Financial report - Figures are quite conservative, with somewhat overstated expenses and understated income. We have reclaimed losses in BBT, thanks to those who steered us through some difficulties.
3. The new 2021 budget calls for $13,500 loss
4. There have been big changes from church sales that occurred. Our cash in bank acct went down; we transferred large fund into BBT. Income from BBT accounts $16,000 loss due to expenses. $279,975.86 to the good in equity. No outstanding expenses.

C. Ministry Commission Report - Jean Keith-Altemus (addendum, 2020 packet)

1. This was a renewal year for credentialing; commission took ahold of physical needs; Carol Mason worked on getting required Ethics Committee training done. Jean sent out 26 letters to people on our district/denominational. list. Five people did not respond; nine people have requested non-renewal. This info goes to Debbie Roberts as Exec. Team member, as well as the Ministry Office in Elgin.
2. *Is there a pattern to those not wanting to renew?* Many are retired, and have decided that since they are not in set-apart ministry, there is no point. Life circumstances are changing. Some have physical issues. Point of information: a person can designate him/herself as retired without having to let ordination go. They can still participate in congregational life, but need to take ethics training. Each district handles ordination differently.

D. Administrative Team Reports (addendum, 2020 packet)

1. Debbie Roberts - It was a challenging and interesting year. Most of her work is maintaining files and staying in contact with Nancy Heishman in the Ministry office. It includes: background checks, frequent meetings together with Board Chair Howard, Terry Altemus & Jean Keith-Altemus. She has gained more and more respect for Colleen figuring out what she did as DE. It's sometimes a muddle, and we hope we don't get things lost. Mishael has been very helpful.
2. Glenn Brumbaugh - Glenn's primary duty is to represent us at the Council of District Executives (CODE). A large portion of that work has been dominated by the statement by denomination leadership team re: Covenant Church, as well as discussion of credentialing, dual affiliation. Anything making controversial splashes comes up for discussion. There seems to be a move to make statements re: things. Lots of diversity on CODE. Glenn's focus is to talk, but not make statements. The January CODE meeting will be on-line. Other: OEP will be joining Supporting Congregations Network (SCN). The Administration Team is meeting weekly to support each other. Glenn is the physical office of the district.
3. Carol Mason - Has mostly been with congregations as with Area Minister. worshipping on-line has eased. Has spent time with Sheila Chapman and Gayle Sheller. Oversaw Ethics training — Kudos organizing inter-district training. Has been working with the property person for Mossyrock; working with church planting in Salkum, taking an oblique approach.

Clarification re: CODE - reaction to Covenant Brethren. Every district has its own policies for when a congregation wants to step away, including property and credentialing. Leadership wants to clarify the issues of credentialing... When commitments are made, a pastor (in particular) can't have a foot in both worlds, even at higher administrative levels (DE) CODE is figuring a way through it. Leadership Team paper is quite clear; what's not clear is how individual districts will live it out. The statement quotes polity. Districts should be overseeing processes of calling folks to accountability. DE's are struggling to work with accountability structures.

E. **<u>District Board Report - Howard Ullery</u>** **(**addendum, 2020 packet)

1. The smaller board has taken fully the responsibility given by District Conference last year. A board of all volunteers to care for administrative issues. Noteworthy: Salkum finances, supporting Ministry Commission in work, being supportive of Envisioning Committee by acting to fund it and move forward with it.
2. Nearly all meetings have been meeting on-line, even before Covid. Great, because we can incorporate folks from Living Stream.
3. People are working hard... We can be deeply grateful for those working and confident of the future.
4. *Do Salkum folks know about Living Stream as a worship option?* Carol Mason is meeting with Salkum once per month in-person; she is the official contact for maintaining standing in the CoB; she Has connected Salkum w/ Living Stream.

F. **<u>Standing Committee - Dale Seese</u>**

1. Dale is finishing his 6th year (2 three year terms), but continues until next year (2021) to seat replacement. Standing Committee has been meeting by Zoom to do business. There were no reservations about cancelling Annual Conference (AC). AC leadership did an excellent job in proposal to cancel. Various groups reorganized on-line.
2. Producing nominations was completed by e-mail, and on-line polling. It went smoothly with three runoffs. Good balance of nominees. No new ballot for 2021 will be created; it will be moved to 2021. Most or all have consented.
3. In-box full of OEP/SCN e-mails re: Covenant Brethren. Newsline covers current responses.
4. Next PNWDistrict delegate term begins with organizing committee meeting in 2021. **Consensus to trust the PNWD Board to recruit our next Standing Committee delegate.** Send recommendations to Ben Green or Howard Ullery.

G. **<u>Disaster Report - Frosty Wilkinson</u>** (addendum)

1. Lani and he went to Puerto Rico in Nov. 2019. National Disaster Ministries had opportunities to participate. in NC and Dayton, OH. Children's Disaster Ministries has been assembling kits of comfort since teams are not going directly. Living Stream is working one. There is information on the website and a phone number on the printed. VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) is set up to receive donations. There is a request to NOT send clothing and household items ("stuff"). It creates the problem of having to deal with materiéls, which creates another level of disaster. Please send cash only.
2. Fires: repair coordinated through interfaith and won't start right away. National offices are monitoring needs; rebuilding is a long way down the road after local communities get organized. Local information was sent out to local people to contribute immediately to help.

H. Camp Reports (addendum)

1. Koinonia - Best shape ever. Kevin Eichorn is following local county Covid recommendations from the Health Dept. Gift from district was sent.
2. Myrtlewood - impressed by Koinonia's e-mails - helpful hints about Covid-times. Is tackling some long-term projects - things that can't be done when campers are around. e.g. remodelling and replacing water tower. The camp provides respite for people coming out of cities (Portland). Board will gather in-person at camp as retreat in October. Usually zoom meetings. The camp is afloat financially. Great gratitude for people who know camps are in distress. Please consider these as your camps. All are welcome.

NEW DISTRICT BUSINESS

A. Query from Living Stream (addendum)

1. To add clarity: explain at AC that Brethren from the west and Puerto Rico often have full-time jobs that curtails travel, or require extra days of travel. We want everyone at the table, but some can't get there.
2. Other concerns:
   - Dually aligned congregations - claim one denomination or another.
   - Living Stream has one delegate. Can't officially have membership in two places. Can associates be delegates? What does "membership" mean? The query may help start that conversation.
3. We can consider working with disability folks; this extends the table out and brings our experience to the wider church.
4. This query will wait until 2022, as no new business in 2021 due to Compelling Vision work. We are probably just getting in the queue. Can we push Standing Committee to address the issue(s)?
5. From Nancy Heishmann: 77 Church of the Brethren ministers are multi-vocational and thus attendance-challenged also. This query is very timely.

Consensus of the PNWDistrict Conference to approve this query and refer it to the Annual Conference.

B. Proposal to staff a district Administrative Assistant (addendum)

1. The three-person Exec. Team has had too much work. The proposal is for a paid part-time administrative assistant.
2. Edits to the proposal: Total *package* to be under $15,000; remove "within limits set by action of District Conference" because we need to be flexible in working out package.
3. Terry (Treasurer) has included additional monies for office expenses, as well as estimate of administrative assistant package.
4. Need to clarify the limits of assistant's authority - will be done by Executive Team with Howard as Board Chair.

Consensus to staff a district administrative assistant with edits as suggested, giving latitude to the District Board to study employment issues while targeting a compensation package of around $15,000.

C. <u>2020-2021 budget - Terry Altemus</u> (addendum, 2020 packet)

A budget for 2020-21 was proposed. Comments from treasurer:

- some additions due to Covid; may be high
- Envisioning work doesn't need additional funds, but left some "in case"
- We are looking at a potential $13,500 deficit
- There is $16,000 included for disaster response. We want to include disaster preparedness.

D. <u>Setting for 2021 Dist. Conf.</u>

Discussion: If in-person, we still want to try to include technological attendance options, particularly with our query in mind.

Would like relationship-building and fellowship with all who want to be included,

Consensus that Wenatchee be the default location for our 2021 District Conference, with leadership working to make it hybrid if in-person is possible. The dates are September 17-18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Bowman, Recording Secretary

Addenda to 2020 District Conference Minutes

Many of the noted addenda in the 2020 District Conference minutes can be found in the 2020 District Conference packet. These documents are viewable at the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UBUw24443pqIOWwBjJUTortaByVeco65?usp=sharing

Those addenda not specified as within the 2020 conference packet are included below.

Report from Pacific NW District Disaster Co-coordinator, September 2020

Our district participated in disaster recovery in Puerto Rico following hurricane Maria. Loni Wright and Frosty Wilkinson joined a team for two weeks in November 2019 and had a good experience helping to replace a roof at Castañer, PR. The Puerto Rico District completed its Hurricane Maria recovery project in spring 2020, serving 100 families.

Brethren Disaster Ministries nationwide has two active projects currently, in Dayton Ohio and Coastal North Carolina. Due to the concerns related to the Covid 19 pandemic, volunteer numbers are really low. Many districts are able to provide just a few volunteers or none at all. If individuals are willing and able to volunteer we can certainly use them. Both Dayton OH and Coastal NC have a lot of cases to work through so survivors can return home. 1 or 2 hands is better than none. If anyone is interested, please contact Brent Carlson or Frosty Wilkinson.

BDM has awarded 25 grants and over $109,000 to US churches and Districts that are doing a lot of good work in communities assisting with needs created by covid 19.

The staff of Children's Disaster Services (CDS) have been working on a shift to new ways of serving children who are affected by disasters this year. During a time when CDS volunteers may not be able to work at disaster sites, CDS will be providing an individual Kit of Comfort (IKOC) for children.

Brethren Disaster Ministries is monitoring the situation in Louisiana and Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura as well as the wildfires affecting northern California, Oregon and Washington. Staff are participating in national coordinating calls and communicating with partner organizations to coordinate any response. The initial Church of the Brethren response has begun with Children's Disaster Services (CDS). The Red Cross activated CDS to deploy 600 Individual Kits of Comfort to aid children and families affected by Hurricane Laura and the California wildfires.

Many many more Individual Kits of Comfort (IKOC) are needed. Our online church, Living Stream COB, is working on assembling an ICOK kit. If your congregation would like a project to gather materials for some IKOC kits, contact Lisa Crouch, Associate Director of Children's Disaster Services: "It is definitely a turn for CDS, we would have never anticipated, but you know CDS is creative and flexible to circumstances presented, just like on a disaster response! 😊 Please reach out to me with questions, concerns, comments, and if you decide to take on part of this project,please let me know how many you or your group are targeting for a quantity,this will help us in planning and also to prepare the activity sheet inserts for you." Lisa Crouch, 410-635-8734 office, 517-250-7449-mobile, lcrouch@brethren.org

The big disaster auctions normally held in the Eastern states are not happening due to the pa ndemic, so donations for BDM are certainly needed.

-Frosty Wilkinson

Greetings from Camp,

This year has been extraordinary. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of our lives in unpredictable ways. Peaceful protests across the nation challenging structural inequality face violent repression. Wildfires across the west threatened millions and blotted out the sun. Down here in southwest Oregon, neighbors have conflicted perspectives of what's going on. We've found comfort in conversation with those neighbors and the strength of this community shines through the confusion. Our shared values outweigh our differences and yet, our narratives create barriers to consensus. This is all very fascinating.

Our life at Camp Myrtlewood seems so far removed from it all. The extended closure has meant a change in operations. The down time allows us to work on much needed improvements. We've been busy in the woods, from cabin and bathroom remodels to hauling lumber up the mountain for our new water tank. The changes taking place have been long in the making. People are stepping up to offer their support. Financial strain was met with generous donations and grants to help keep us afloat. But we're nervous about what's ahead.

Not knowing what to expect, we move forward with care and hope in the stability of our community. We continue to maintain and improve this beautiful oasis. Volunteers have been trickling in to keep us on track. The occasional guest is a welcomed sight and much needed fellowship. We welcome anyone to reach out and connect with us. Our staff cabins are available to those willing to help with projects or simply in need of rejuvenation. We hope to put the strains of this pandemic behind us one day, to gather together again and celebrate.

Stay strong,

Camp Koinonia Report 2020

This has definitely been a challenging year for Camp Koinonia. In January, we were poised to have our best camping year ever. Then everything changed, but there is some good news in all of this. This year is Camp Koinonia's 62 year. During this time, the District and many of its members contributed time and money to develop and support the Camp's facility and programs. In recent years, the ability of the district to private support has become less than in the past. The good news is that Camp Koinonia is thriving.

Members of our user groups who have been utilizing our facilities for many years, have and are, contributing significant time and money to support us. Just several examples among many. Labor and materials were donated to put new roofs on all our buildings; a new activity lodge was built; a swimming pool was added; plus large financial donations to support operational needs. As a result, Camp Koinonia is in the best shape regarding facility and operations.

With our current Camp Director, Kevin Eichhorn's outstanding leadership, we are weathering the current storm and are prepared and ready to move forward as is appropriate.

Camp Koinonia Board President – Kent Verbeck

With almost all of our user groups getting cancelled for the remainder of the year, we knew we needed to act fast in order to save our staff and keep our momentum. We applied for the PPP loan along with the EIDL and received both. This allowed for us to keep our year-round staff as well as bring in our summer staff early. We also received significant individual donations that helped get us to summer.

One area that I always wanted to grow was our community relations. Typically, people enjoy camp for a week or weekend and leave and we see them again next year. 2020 allowed us to try something different. We began offering RV & Tent Camping in early July. This expanded into families using our cabins and long-term guests staying while working in the area. Currently 14 individuals and families are calling Koinonia their "temporary" home. In addition to our guests staying overnight, we began offering community swim lessons, private swims, and open swims so our pool would get use during the week. The response was very humbling with our pool becoming a regular stop for dozens of families.

Our constituency has always been smaller than average. This bizarre year enabled us to serve 265 different families which doubled our E-mail list and hopefully will add to our volunteer and donor base.

Life is filled with unexpected surprises. I view this year as a gift from God. We were able to give staff more time in leadership roles and work with guests. We opened our doors to people who didn't know Jesus and never even knew our camp existed. We were blessed with a paycheck, time together as a staff family and the chance to try something new.

Camp Koinonia Director – Kevin Eichhorn

Query -- Breaking Down Barriers: Increasing Access to Denominational Events

Brethren uphold the ideal that all congregations and all members should be equally represented at Annual Conference and other meetings, and we value the voice and participation of the entire body, all our members, to the fullest extent possible, as together we seek the mind of Christ.

Nevertheless, barriers to full and equal participation in wider church events, such as Annual Conference, exist due to factors such as:

- travel (distance, time, complexity, and cost);
- obstacles to travel (which might include pandemic travel restrictions, identification requirements, or others);
- cost of meals and accommodations;
- necessity of being away from home or work for extended periods of time; and
- physical obstacles, and less-than-ideal accessibility on-site.

Brethren from the West, from Puerto Rico, minorities, those with disabilities, those who are economically disadvantaged, and those with on-going work or family responsibilities, are especially impacted by these barriers, resulting in their being under-represented at such meetings. These factors also impact international Brethren.

We hold the realities of these barriers in tension with our ideals.

However, there is hope, as our world has changed and is still changing--as even we Brethren have experienced:

● 21st Century technologies now exist to help people and groups overcome barriers and share access easily. These resources are more accessible, secure, and cost-effective than ever before.

● The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed us the opportunity to experience firsthand some of the rich possibility for technology to bring us together for worship and business, fellowship and connection. Many congregations have effectively used these technologies, including even home-bound members who were not able to participate previously.

● Online denominational events, beginning with the Love Feast in April 2020, reached many times the number of participants of recent Annual Conferences, and included Brethren from all over the world who could never have participated in person.

● Many district board meetings and conferences have been held online. They have included worship, reports, and secure methods for voting on business items.

● Alternative meeting strategies can allow good stewardship choices, reducing costs as well as environmental impacts that contribute to climate change.

In light of these observations, we are convinced that our current polity, which restricts voice and vote at Annual Conference to only those who have the ability, time, and resources to be physically present, no longer serves us well. Therefore, we, the Living Stream Church of the Brethren--the denomination's fully online congregation--feel that this is the proper time in our life together to raise the following question:

Should the Brethren explore the possibilities of how we can faithfully, in good order and with proper representation, use technology to remove barriers and facilitate the full participation of delegates and those desiring to be present for Annual Conference and other events, who might be better served-- and could better serve the body--from a distance?

--Approved with the full unanimous consensus of the Living Stream Church of the Brethren church board at their regular board meeting; August 11, 2020. Board Chair, Sam Gahm

--Approved with the full unanimous consensus of the Living Stream Church of the Brethren congregation gathered in a specially called congregational meeting on August 16, 2020.

Sent on to the Pacific Northwest District Board, with the hope that the query will be approved by the Pacific Northwest District Conference, being held virtually by Zoom *(a concrete example of the reason for this query)* on September 18 and 19, 2020, and sent from there to Annual Conference June 30-July 4, 2021, in Greensboro, NC.

—Approved by full consensus of the Pacific Northwest District Board meeting online on August 26, 2020. Board Chair, Howard Ullery Recording Secretary, Carol Bowman

Pacific Northwest District
Church of the Brethren

Proposal

Establish staff position of District Administrative Assistant

Purpose:

The intention is to provide support for the District Executive Team and enhance the functioning of the Pacific Northwest District.

Areas to be addressed:

- be a conduit for District communication receiving and sharing information appropriately
- process postal mail distributing as necessary, responding as needed
- manage/monitor electronic media (email, website, social media)
- create and maintain a District Directory
- develop and produce a District Newsletter
- maintain and make available a District calendar
- serve as technology resource/support person for District and congregations
- prepare denominational reports, serve as interface between denomination and district
- keep overview of ongoing tasks and activities related to District administration
- be available to assist members of DE Team with tasks as needed

Functional assumptions:

The Administrative Assistant will attend District Conference and District Board meetings to cultivate perspective on District actions and interests as well as being a source of applicable information.

Person best suited to fill this position will have strong ties to the Church of the Brethren and the Pacific Northwest District.

Administrative Assistant will work closely with and be responsible to members of the District Executive Team within general oversight of the District Board.

Compensation:

The position of Administrative Assistant will be established on a 1/4 time basis with financial compensation not to exceed $ 15,000.00 annually. Actual operating contract will be finalized and adopted by the District Board within limits set by action of District Conference.

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Balance Sheet

As of August 31, 2021

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
11100 Checking and Savings	
11120 Cashmere Valley	
11131 Checking	26,780
Total 11120 Cashmere Valley	**26,780**
Total 11100 Checking and Savings	**26,780**
11200 Brethren Foundation	
11300 BF Endowment 1	
11310 Church Development	9,948
11320 Endowment	84,496
11330 OR Cemetary Maintenance	2,480
Total 11300 BF Endowment 1	**96,923**
11400 BF Endowment 2	
11410 Camp Koinonia	1,951
11420 Disaster Relief Fund	18,263
11430 Endowment	164,127
Total 11400 BF Endowment 2	**184,341**
Total 11200 Brethren Foundation	**281,264**
Total Bank Accounts	**$308,044**
Accounts Receivable	
12000 Accounts Receivable (A/R)	
12100 Larchmont Receivable	15,900
Total 12000 Accounts Receivable (A/R)	**15,900**
Total Accounts Receivable	**$15,900**
Total Current Assets	**$323,944**
Fixed Assets	
16000 Church Properties	
16110 Mossy Rock	0
16120 Slokum	0
Total 16000 Church Properties	**0**
Total Fixed Assets	**$0**
TOTAL ASSETS	**$323,944**
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	
Equity	
31000 Opening Balance Equity	301,706
36000 Retained Earnings	-3,212
Net Income	25,450
Total Equity	**$323,944**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**$323,944**

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Profit and Loss

January - August, 2021

	TOTAL
Income	
41000 Income	
41010 Donations	14,688.64
Total 41000 Income	**14,688.64**
Total Income	**$14,688.64**
GROSS PROFIT	**$14,688.64**
Expenses	
61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	
61010 Postage, Mailing Service	55.00
61050 Miscelaneous Expense	24.00
61080 Insurance	300.00
61100 Office Supplies & Software	1,030.10
61110 Utilities	78.60
61120 Payroll Expenses	10,000.00
61121 Federal Withholding	550.00
61122 Social Security Company	775.00
61123 Social Security Employee	155.00
61124 Medicare Company	181.20
61125 Medicare Employee	36.24
Total 61120 Payroll Expenses	**11,697.44**
Total 61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	**13,185.14**
62000 District Expenses	
62030 District Conferences	306.00
62050 Annual Conference Fees	540.54
Total 62000 District Expenses	**846.54**
64000 Disaster Preparedness	168.00
Taxes & Licenses	50.00
Total Expenses	**$14,249.68**
NET OPERATING INCOME	**$438.96**
Other Income	
70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	
71000 Miscellaneous Income	
71400 Wildwood Pass Through Income	500.00
71500 Other Miscellaneous Income	500.00
71600 Salkum Income	5,140.00
Total 71000 Miscellaneous Income	**6,140.00**
72000 Investment Income	27,384.02
Total 70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	**33,524.02**
Total Other Income	**$33,524.02**
Other Expenses	
63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	
63010 District Expenses	245.00
63040 Misc Dist Expenses	686.77
63400 Salkum Expenses	7,580.72
Total 63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	**8,512.49**
Total Other Expenses	**$8,512.49**
NET OTHER INCOME	**$25,011.53**
NET INCOME	**$25,450.49**

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Budget Overview: 2022 Budget - FY22 P&L

January - December 2022

	TOTAL
Income	
41000 Income	
41010 Donations	22,800
Total 41000 Income	**22,800**
Total Income	**$22,800**
GROSS PROFIT	**$22,800**
Expenses	
61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	
61010 Postage, Mailing Service	120
61050 Miscelaneous Expense	21
61070 Web Maintenance	240
61080 Insurance	300
61100 Office Supplies & Software	2,400
61110 Utilities	120
61120 Payroll Expenses	15,000
61122 Social Security Company	1,860
61124 Medicare Company	435
Total 61120 Payroll Expenses	**17,295**
Total 61000 Office/General Administrative Expenses	**20,496**
62000 District Expenses	
62030 District Conferences	480
62050 Annual Conference Fees	3,600
62070 Meals & Entertainment	1,200
62090 CoDE Expenses	3,000
Total 62000 District Expenses	**8,280**
64000 Disaster Preparedness	120
Taxes & Licenses	50
Total Expenses	**$28,946**
NET OPERATING INCOME	**$ -6,146**
Other Income	
70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	
71000 Miscellaneous Income	
71500 Other Miscellaneous Income	500
71600 Salkum Income	7,560
Total 71000 Miscellaneous Income	**8,060**
72000 Investment Income	18,000
Total 70000 Other Miscellaneous Income	**26,060**
Total Other Income	**$26,060**
Other Expenses	
63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	
63010 District Expenses	240
63020 Standing Committee	1,074

Pacific Northwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Budget Overview: 2022 Budget - FY22 P&L

January - December 2022

	TOTAL
63030 Annual Conference Fee	3,000
63040 Misc Dist Expenses	1,200
63060 District Event Expenses	4,800
63400 Salkum Expenses	9,600
Total 63000 Other Miscellaneous Expense	**19,914**
Total Other Expenses	**$19,914**
NET OTHER INCOME	**$6,146**
NET INCOME	**$0**

Reports from the District Executive Team

Glenn Brumbaugh

Over the past year, I have continued to represent the district on the Council of District Executives (CoDE). With the new reality of COVID-19, our meetings have taken place virtually on Zoom. Both our winter and summer scheduled meetings have used this format, as well as bimonthly gatherings as needed. A number of topics have occupied our time and discussions together:

- Congregations choosing to leave the COB
  - We have continued to share anecdotal information on the unique situations in each district regarding congregations making the decision to part ways with the Church of the Brethren, whether to join with the Covenant of Brethren Churches (CBC) or simply to become an independent, non-aligned body. While this has been an ongoing process, the initial wave of division seems to be waning.
- Consultation with the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee (PCBAC)
  - As they have further refined and updated the method and process for establishing adequate and fair compensation for pastors in today's circumstances, ensuring compensation is reflective of the actual time commitment and work being performed. CoDE has made multiple suggestions to ensure this new process is as streamlined as possible and something that is easily incorporated into the current congregational and district realities.
- On Earth Peace
  - Ongoing dialogue with and discussion about On Earth's Peace recent decision to join the Supportive Communities Network (SCN). While I and others around the CoDE table were successful in preventing the Council from drafting a public position statement, there are many who wish to continue conversation around this decision of OEP in light of perceived conflicts with Annual Conference statements.
- District Structure and Viability
  - CoDE has begun to have some initial discussions about the aging and arbitrary geographical delineations of the current districts, and how looking at new definitions of districts may be helpful and necessary to ensure the viability of the middle adjudicatory structure that districts currently represent. The Council is in the early discussions of this topic, but may decide to come up with some recommendations for Standing Committee and Annual Conference to consider in the future.

Currently CoDE is planning to resume in-person meetings with our January meeting scheduled to take place in Florida as usual. However, that decision was made prior to the spread of the delta variant of COVID-19, so that decision may be altered if numbers do not improve.

Carol Mason

I met with Audrey Oxley's daughter last week at the Salkum church and received archivable materials from Leah who had come West to clean out the house and get ready for an estate sale.

In the old photos I learned there used to be a steeple and a cross on the church! Just like I thought I remembered from the old "mission itineration" days! So that is my new goal to find the steeple and the cross and get those put back up! Definitely the roof is repaired, the downspouts, toilets, flooding and septic tank all cleaned up and ready for the Headstart to begin meeting in person soon. There will be small classes of twelve starting this week.
In April I added fellowship outside for Easter and that's been a chance for folks to meet each other. In May I attended the Church Planting Conference-New and Renew- and began networking with some potential church planters. I stressed that there was a high need for a church in East Lewis County, but to think of it more as a mission field than a congregation. I am circulating a "profile of Salkum" rather than a "congregational profile.". Meanwhile I continue to provide weekly "services of blessing" for anyone in the community to spend time in prayer and meditation, offering the Eucharist while giving prayers for peace and reconciliation. I do use this opportunity to share with the few Brethren in attendance about Annual Conference and District Conference and offer Living Stream cards to connect folks to a more stable congregation. Everyone was invited to the Compelling Vision study, and I did enjoy leading that for the District, but no new folks joined us there. It is a pleasure to keep Salkum beautiful and clean with fresh flowers and candles and seasonal touches, but I do wish we could find a resident pastor who would love to get to know the people in this place and live and serve among them.

I continue to stay in touch with my area pastors, but it feels like forever since I've seen anyone in person. I cannot praise our pastors enough for the great job they are doing rolling with the mandates: pivoting to being completely online and then safely back to "hybrid" because we do need to meet in person and also keep online and also stay safe and healthy.

Debbie Roberts

This year has been less challenging than last, as I am learning a bit more about the nuts and bolts of my district responsibilities. I keep our district files, am the point person for the denomination’s Office of Ministry, and submit Ministry Report Forms when there are changes in contact info and in other areas. My most active work this year has been in maintaining our files, staying in contact with Nancy Heishman, Office of Ministry Director, and working with Wenatchee Brethren Baptist Church in their pastoral search. I have especially appreciated working with the WBBC search team and celebrate their decision to hire an interim as they continue to discern their needs and calling for pastoral ministry.

I meet monthly with Glenn and Carol as the three member DE team, with Howard as district board chair, and with Daniel as district administrator, to assure we are accomplishing our tasks and keeping each other up to date with the details of district ministry. Daniel has been an incredible asset for our district in keep us on task and informed about issues and events sent out by various denominational agencies. He is also and wonderful asset with technology and we have all come to rely on his expertise in this area. As a group, we have continued discussions on church closures and whether to sell, rent, etc. the current space, as well as conversations regarding our ongoing vision for our district as we discern the changing tide . I look forward to further conversation regarding the latter at our meeting this weekend.

My responsibilities as part of the DE team have included regular participation in district activities including board meetings, District Conference, Spring Event, and other district obligations.

This district conference will be my last as part of the DE team, as I am resigning my position, along with my pastoral ministry position. I have enjoyed working with this team and wish them all blessings on the ongoing journey.

Pacific Northwest District Board Report
2021 District Conference

September 18, 2021

Pacific Northwest District Board efforts this past year were once again grounded in the format set by the District Envisioning Plan adopted by the 2019 District Conference. That format organizes Board work through a "Holding-down the Fort" (administrative) Team and a "Deep Work" (envisioning) Team.

Administrative tasks this past year included calling Debbie Eisenbise to serve as the District Standing Committee Delegate to Annual Conference, seeking and hiring a District Administrative Assistant (Daniel Klayton), working with the Larchmont Congregation to provide a loan to replace the building roof, following-up on repair work to maintain the Salkum building, supporting the Ministry Commission's work to complete the Five Year Ministry Review and Ethics Training, addressing the Covington congregation's decision to withdraw from relationship with the Church of the Brethren, planning District Conference, and preparing a slate of officers for the coming year. With good spirit and dedicated, thoughtful work, the District Executive Team (Debbie Roberts, Glenn Brumbaugh, Carol Mason), Administrative Assistant Daniel Klayton and the members of the Board accomplished a fairly heavy workload.

Primary Envisioning efforts centered on the consultation with Greg Carlson and producing a District Spring Event. Numerous meetings, research, thoughtful discussions, and discernment led to the May conclusion of the consultation. A final report offering insights and recommendations concerning District life is included in the conference packet. The Spring Event, *"Danger and Opportunity: What does it look like to live our values today?"* drew from some of the talent of Pacific Northwest people to produce an effective and meaningful retreat for everyone involved.

Welcomed or not, transition is a common theme in so much of life these days. By its nature, transition introduces a measure of uncertainty to our lives if for no other reason than transition has a way of striking its own path. We, as a body, have intentionally engaged in a process of transition; some things have become clear, some remain rather murky and un-focused. What's risen to the surface is the adaptability, faithfulness, and spirit of the people who have joined in the journey. With that, and God's leading, we will surely find our way.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard Ullery, Board Chair

This last year saw the completion of the five-year review process for the ordained personnel of the district as well as the yearly renewal of licensed and commissioned persons serving our district.

All those seeking renewed credentials have completed the required Ethics training thanks to the diligence of Carol Mason and the Ministry Office coordinating Zoom classes across the denomination.

The persons wishing to maintain their ordination status have received their current cards issued by the Office of Ministry identifying them as ordained within the Church of the Brethren and Daniel Klayton has updated the district directory.

Submitted in humble service,

Jean Keith-Altemus

Standing Committee Report

A good summation of this year's online Annual Conference was provided in this summer's district newsletter. Daniel Klayton did an excellent job of listening in on Zoom discussions of those who attended (district delegates and non-delegate attendees) and providing an overview of our collective experience.

This was my first Annual Conference as the district Standing Committee representative. In preparation, I attended district leadership team meetings and had conversation with previous representative Dale Seese. Thanks to all of them for the orientation to the work of the district and their reflections on experience with Standing Committee in the past.

Given the lack of a full docket of business for this year's Annual Conference, these were the main items of concern raised in the Standing Committee meetings:

1. That the conversations between On Earth Peace and a representative group from Standing Committee (which both groups feel have been productive and helpful in increasing mutual understanding) should continue this next year. Also, that those appointed by Standing Committee who are moving off Standing Committee will be able to continue in these conversations and the emphasis will shift to be about a move toward healing and reconciliation.

2. That continued ongoing discernment is needed about our process of taking nominations from the floor of Annual Conference. The Nominating Committee brought a report and recommendations that are now under consideration.

3.That the Compelling Vision be passed onto the 2021 delegate body for affirmation.

The Council of District Executives gave a report noting concerns about congregations leaving the denomination and competition between districts for congregational pastoral leadership. Denominational leadership also gave previews of reports that would be presented to the delegates.

I was elected to the Nominating Committee, and hope that we might prayerfully discern those in our congregations that might have gifts for demoninational service. Nominations are being received now.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve PNWD and be about the work of the wider church on your behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Eisenbise

Denominational Groups & Agencies video reports

Bethany Theological Seminary
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTJQMXE0HaY

Church of the Brethren Ministries
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwIypFFe7DM

On Earth Peace
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wu346a7p2GE_RxR0VmSIe9SjqWVwQYuB/view?ts=611bea63

National Youth Conference, NYC 2022
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTJQMXE0HaY

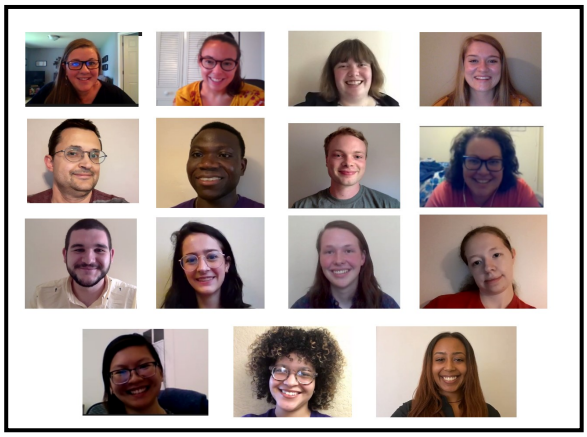
Brethren Volunteer Service Annual Report

Sharing God's Love Through Acts of Service

Working for Peace ***Caring for Creation***
Advocating Justice ***Serving Human Needs***

BVS ended 2020 with 20 volunteers:

- who served in 6 countries: El Salvador, Japan, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Nigeria, and the U.S.;
- placed in 13 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.;
- 54 volunteers served throughout the year.



Unit #325, Summer 2020: Volunteer group photo taken over Zoom

In 2020:

- BVS hosted three orientation units this past year. One was hosted in Newmanstown, Pa., and two were hosted virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Partners in Service Award



Alyssa Parker (unit #321.1) singing with the Harrisburg First choir

Each year, BVS presents a Partners in Service Award to an individual, group, or organization that has shown exceptional commitment to the work of sharing God's love through acts of service. The 2021 award goes to Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren and bcmPEACE in Harrisburg, Pa.

Since receiving their first BVS volunteer in 1960, Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren and bcmPEACE have hosted nearly 60 BVS volunteers. They began their partnership with BVS in hopes of being helpful to the migrant community in the area and continue to host BVSers to serve their community today.

The Partners in Service Award is usually presented at the Annual Conference Brethren Volunteer Service Luncheon each July. However, this year it will be acknowledged at the BVS Networking Session on July 1 as part of the 2021 virtual Annual Conference.



New European Coordinator: Sara Cook

Sara Cook began working with BVS as the European coordinator in January 2020. Sara is based in Northern Ireland where she served with BVS from 2001 to 2003 as a part of unit #246. Since her time as a BVSer, Sara has worked to support Northern Ireland's peace process. Her work has included facilitating dialogue encounters between former security forces, paramilitaries, and those bereaved or injured by conflict-related violence. In recent years, Sara has also supported the work of international women peacebuilders and the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

As European coordinator, Sara will continue Kristin Flory's work of supporting BVSers based in Europe, with a current focus on projects in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Though the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges soon after Sara began her work, she is "really enjoying working with current volunteers based in Belfast." She says, "BVS changed my life. My peacebuilding work, my life in Northern Ireland, and so many of my perspectives and values are due to my time as a volunteer with BVS. It's a privilege to work with current BVSers as they serve with BVS."

BVS During COVID-19

In March 2020, along with the rest of the world, BVS was forced to shift all of its programming to a virtual format in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first pivot was the annual volunteer mid-year retreat becoming an online experience. Volunteers and BVS staff gathered virtually for a day of fellowship, games, and respite.

BVS staff then got to work at shifting its 2020 orientations to a virtual format. Instead of a three-week, in-person orientation, the summer unit #325 and fall unit #327 were hosted via Zoom. Volunteers and BVS staff met weekly in the month preceding orientation for pre-orientation, a time of connection and project discernment. Volunteers then traveled to their project sites and attended orientation virtually for 14 days, which doubled as a quarantine time. BVS staff will carry some of the changes from this year forward as they continue to seek innovative ways of training volunteers.

Amidst the programming changes, BVS also experienced a transition in staff. In addition to the usual turnover in staff volunteers, in July 2020, Jocelyn Siakula resigned from her role as orientation coordinator, a position she had held since 2015. Pauline Liu, unit #319, stepped into the role of interim volunteer coordinator following Jocelyn's departure. Pauline served with L'Arche Kilkenny in Ireland as a live-in assistant during her BVS term in 2018-2019. She remotely joined the BVS team in May 2020 as the orientation assistant before taking on the role of interim volunteer coordinator. Pauline holds a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Leadership Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder, and recently completed a master's degree in Educational Psychology – Human Relations at Northern Arizona University.



Photo courtesy of Alex McBride



Photo courtesy of Deb Wilson

Alex McBride (unit #322) at SnowCap Community Charities in Portland, Ore. (left), and Deb Wilson (unit #327) wrapping gifts at Project PLASE in Baltimore, Md. (right).

Workcamp Ministry Name Change

In November, the workcamp ministry changed its name to Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX). This name change came from a several-year process of determining the future for the short-term service program. In the new name, the word "faith" expresses that these experiences are a place for theological exploration, discernment, and spiritual growth. The word "outreach" speaks to the experience of becoming the hands and feet of Christ to the world. The word "expeditions" emphasizes the sense of adventure and fun that we hope all participants experience while serving.

The breadth of the new name speaks to the hope of expanding short-term service opportunities beyond the summer programming for youth and young adults. Additionally, for those outside the Church of the Brethren, or those not as familiar with the short-term service program, this name encompasses the program's mission and goals. The name Faith Outreach Expeditions speaks to the spiritual component of the program, the emphasis on service, and the sense of adventure that is promoted as participants travel to new places and try new things.

FaithX Update



Chad Whitzel and Alton Hipps (at right) are serving as the FaithX coordinators in the BVS office. They began their work in August of 2020 and are part of the first group of volunteers to live in the newly-purchased Elgin BVS house located near the general offices.

The 2021 theme is "Step Out: Seeking New Paths," and Chad and Alton are working to plan eight in-person and virtual FaithX experiences for the 2021 summer season.

Brethren Volunteer Service
1451 Dundee Ave.
Elgin, IL 60120

brethrenvolunteerservice.org
bvs@brethren.org | 847-429-4384

BVS is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren

Church of the Brethren

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, Colossians 1:3 (NIV)

Indeed, we at Brethren Disaster Ministries are thankful for the overwhelming support we received in 2020 as we stepped out in faith to meet the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic along with other disasters, including a record-breaking Atlantic hurricane season. Our staff, volunteers and supporters took to heart the messages of adaptability, innovation, and fearlessness in order to meet disaster survivors where they were and walk with them toward recovery.

BDM responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through two new grant programs funded through the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) designed to help U.S. congregations and churches, and Global Brethren churches and trusted partners, to meet the needs of the vulnerable members of society affected by the restrictions put in place to stop its spread. The grant program for U.S. congregations and districts provided 44 grants spread across 11 districts. The global grant program supported critical humanitarian programs in seven global Brethren communions, four Church of the Brethren mission points, and three partners. These programs, in DR Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Spain, and Venezuela, provided distributions of food, hygiene, and safety supplies to marginalized and impoverished people, many of whom depended on daily labor for survival and were overwhelmingly impacted by pandemic restrictions. The pandemic grant programs are continuing in 2021 as long as funds are available.

The pandemic created difficulties deploying volunteers for the Rebuilding Program and Children's Disaster Services, but also brought opportunities for creativity and dedicated detailed planning to meet those challenges. The Rebuilding site in Tampa, Fla., serving Hurricane Irma survivors, closed as scheduled in March. Out of concern for the safety of volunteers, survivors, and partners, and in compliance with local COVID-19 regulations, the sites in North Carolina and Puerto Rico (responding respectively to Hurricanes Matthew and Florence, and Hurricane Maria) also closed in March. Both were nearing their scheduled end and were not reopened.

The diligent efforts of BDM Rebuilding staff and leaders led to the development of COVID-19 protocol and mitigation efforts so that new sites could open safely. The Dayton, Ohio, site, serving survivors of the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes, opened in July but was paused at Thanksgiving, and is planned to reopen in May 2021. The Coastal NC (Bayboro, N.C.) site opened in September and is assisting Hurricane Florence survivors who have been waiting two years or more to have their homes repaired. Through the end of the year, a total of 296 volunteers served on these projects following strict protocol involving wearing face coverings, social distancing, and rigorous hygiene measures, allowing volunteers to do amazing work without a single person contracting the coronavirus while on site. We praise God for the work and protection!

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

Although the last few weeks of scheduled volunteers for the Puerto Rico project were cancelled due to pandemic restrictions, the local leadership and contractors completed all homes scheduled for repairs before the official end of the project in June. Even though the official project celebration was postponed until the fall of 2021, we already celebrate the positive impact on the survivor families and the volunteers who served them, as well as the partnership and relationship with the Puerto Rico district during our collaborative response to Hurricane Maria!

In 2020 Children's Disaster Services celebrated 40 years of serving over 100,000 children and their families after disasters. Unfortunately, CDS was not able to deploy volunteers in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Undaunted, and determined to continue to serve children, CDS developed the Individual Kit of Comfort (IKOC), a pouch containing multiple activities for children in non-congregate sheltering that encourages creative play and helps begin the healing process. The kits were assembled by volunteers around the country. Over 2,500 were distributed to children through American Red Cross operations to California, Colorado, Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas, and through Partnerships with Native Americans (PWNA) to tribal communities hit hard by COVID-19. All but two of CDS' scheduled volunteer trainings had to be postponed but there is hope that these can begin again later in 2021.

The Nigeria Crisis Response continued to be the largest global response as the Church of the Brethren worked with its two main partners, EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and Mission 21. In the midst of the two-fold challenges of the pandemic and ongoing violence in many places, EYN persists in providing both relief and recovery programs for internally displaced persons and those who have been able to either settle in safer areas or return to their homes. Programs center around agriculture, safe drinking water, food and medical assistance, livelihood training, home repairs, education, and trauma and peacebuilding, as well as the strengthening of EYN leadership.

In eight other countries, EDF grants supported responses by partners, Global Brethren Churches, and Church of the Brethren mission points. Two of the largest grants to partners were in response to the major explosion at the port in Beirut, Lebanon, which caused widespread destruction and displacement of people. Church World Service received grants to assist with flooding in Kenya and their continued response to 2019's Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Venezuela were also supported in flood responses. The largest combined response of 2020 supported relief programs by several partners for survivors of the devastating Hurricanes Eta and Iota which struck Central America in November. Support for relief and recovery programs in this area will be continued in 2021.

The total 2020 program expenditures were $349,021 for U.S. responses, including the Rebuilding Program and CDS ($127,469 of that amount supported the Puerto Rico hurricane response); $287,548 for the Nigeria Crisis Response; $166,000 for all other international responses; and $422,612 for the domestic and global COVID-19 Pandemic Grant programs.

BDM was grateful for sufficient EDF reserves given by faithful and generous financial giving which enabled us to boldly respond to and walk with those affected by disasters and/or the COVID-19 pandemic 2020. Our Rise Up! appeal at the end of the year brought a heartwarming

response that allows responses to continue. How precious you all are to us and to God who loves us all!



Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries
On behalf of BDM staff – Sherry Chastain, Lisa Crouch, Jenn Dorsch-Messler and Sharon Franzén

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

Church of the Brethren

District Conference 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of Christ our Savior!

It is an honor and privilege to write to you on behalf of the employees, volunteers, and Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren. We are praying for you, your congregations, and your district as you gather in person or virtually to worship, sing praises, pray, and accomplish the tasks set before you by your District Moderator.

Our staff have been working hard shifting our programming and events from in-person to virtual. What we have learned over the past year is that while there is something special about in-person events, the virtual world has opened up new opportunities for connecting with those who may not have the time or the resources to travel. I would encourage you to visit the webinar archives at www.brethren.org, where you can access a number of excellent resources to support your ministries. Going forward, we will offer hybrid opportunities for our events where it makes sense to do so.

The Mission and Ministry Board has been laying the groundwork to live into their new strategic plan. Considerable work has been done by the board's Executive Committee to evaluate Church of the Brethren programs and ministries – the first step toward the board's prioritization of our ministry and programming work. By the time you meet for your district conferences, more information will be available about the board's priorities.

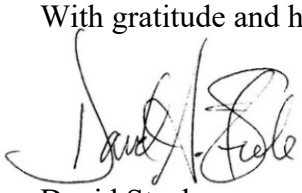
As congregations have adjusted their ministries and events out of concern for the health and safety of their members and neighbors, some of the most difficult times were those in which we could not gather in community together to worship and celebrate new life, affirm relationships, or grieve the loss of loved ones. There is little doubt that the pandemic has taken a toll on our families and friends, our communities of faith, and our pastoral and congregational leadership. Yet we have also discovered a new virtual medium for ministry that has opened up new possibilities of being church. It is my hope that each of us will embrace this new evangelism tool to share the light and hope of Christ both near and far.

In this past year I have appreciated the opportunities to deepen my relationships with many dedicated church leaders. Despite the challenges that we face in the church in general, those I work most closely with – our Mission and Ministry Board, our district

executives, and our staff – continue to give me hope. Even though all things "Elgin" are often misrepresented in some segments of the church, I see Jesus present and central in all our work and ministry together.

I am grateful for the many ways your district and local congregations faithfully strive to live out the Gospel – to simply try to do what Jesus did. The vital ministries of our Church of the Brethren congregations – small to large – are at the heart of our Church. We should never diminish the essential role that each unique part of the body plays in our common ministry together.

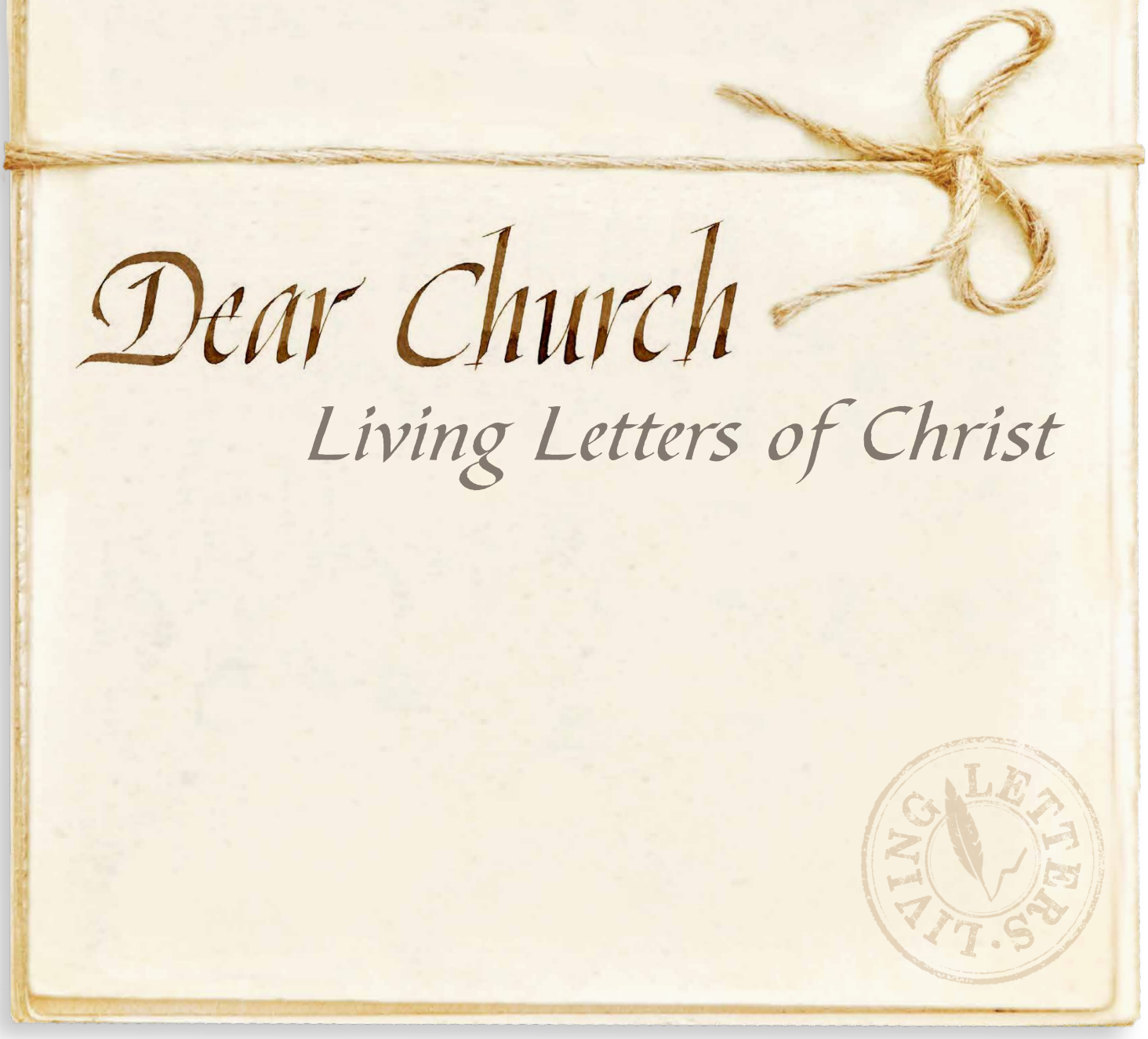
With gratitude and hope,



David Steele
General Secretary

Church of the Brethren Annual Report of 2020

Published in June 2021



Report of the Church of the Brethren

"You yourselves are our letter,
written on our hearts, to be known and read by all;
and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us,
written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,
not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."
–2 Corinthians 3:2-3

In 2020, almost no part of the church's ministries were unaffected by COVID-19. Most staff worked from home. Travel to mission partners came to a halt. Events went online or were canceled. But in a world where "distance" became part of everyday vocabulary, the church developed new ways to connect. In discomforting times, the church remembered the apostle Paul's words to people who were far away and became "living letters" to one another. As this report attests, the work of Jesus continued, often in unexpected ways.

GLOBAL MISSION

The Global Mission office seeks to deepen faith and relationships with partners around the world. A newly developed map of the Global Communion shows 11 countries in which there are registered Church of the Brethren denominations.

After executive director Jay Wittmeyer resigned in early January 2020, interim directors Norman and Carol Spicher Waggy, with support from Roxane Hill as interim office manager, helped mission work continue during the search for a new executive director. Organizational restructuring separated Global Mission from Service Ministries, though these departments still work together closely. The Global Food Initiative remains lodged within Global Mission, and the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy is now part of the Office of the General Secretary.

Global Church of the Brethren Communion
The vision of Global Mission, based on the 2018 Church of the Brethren statement on the Global Church, is that partner denominations in other countries will develop a structure to encourage interdependent relationships and partnership in mission. While no physical gathering of international partners was possible in 2020, two meetings were held via videoconference.

The second included representatives from all but one of the 11 international denominations. A committee is working on a constitution and bylaws for this organization. Under the leadership of Marcos Inhauser as chair, the work is proceeding through email and videoconference meetings.

Country Advisory Teams
Country Advisory Teams (CATs) were developed this year to facilitate communication between the Global Mission

office and the partner denominations in other countries. Each country team of two to three people has representation from that country and the US. These teams report quarterly to the interim directors and can offer advice and counsel. For example, the American member of the CAT for the Dominican Republic has been active in mediation efforts between factions within the church in the Dominican Republic.

Countries with Church of the Brethren denominations

Brazil's Igreja da Irmandade continues under the leadership of Marcos and Suely Inhauser. The church provides small group worship, counseling, and ministries of theological teaching and writing. The Inhausers produced a bilingual video on the Pietist and Anabaptist roots of the Church of the Brethren that is accessible at Brethren.org.

Challenges abound for all of our partner denominations. There was major flooding in Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). World economies suffered this year, especially in the poorer nations. Every partner was affected by COVID-19. Day laborers could no longer find work as the pandemic caused lockdowns, creating increased financial hardship.

These challenges affected the Iglesia de los Hermanos in the Dominican Republic and in Spain and Eglise de Freres in Haiti. Church of the Brethren involvement in Haiti remains strong and includes the work of the Haiti Medical Project.

In the Great Lakes region of Africa there are growing Brethren groups in Rwanda, the DRC, and Uganda, the newest one. The internet helps the Global Mission office connect with these brothers and sisters, who are so distant given travel restrictions this year.

Concerns for Nigeria have not diminished, as the violence there worsened through the year. Attacks from Boko Haram and the pandemic compel the church to ongoing prayer for our brothers and sisters of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria.

The office attempts to maintain relationships with two groups in India, the Church of North India and the Second District Church of the Brethren. This year Global Mission helped with an evangelistic project of the Iglesia de los Hermanos in Venezuela, which continues to grow and reach out to those in need.

International relationships

The Global Mission office also relates to a number of ministries that are not yet officially registered as denominations. A map is available to illustrate these connections as well.

South Sudan is prominent on that list. Athanasus Ungang is Global Mission staff working at the Torit Peace Center and engaging in church development.

The other country with Global Mission workers is China. Eric Miller and Ruoxia Li work with a hospice program at the Friendship and Love Hospital, a successor to early Brethren mission work in China.

Churches in Burundi are growing; contacts with groups in Mexico continue; and exciting contacts have been established with a congregation in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Other relationships

The Mission Advisory Committee has met several times this year, providing helpful feedback to the interim directors as they have worked with changes in staff structure and the development of the CATs. The Global Mission office also benefits from the Brethren World Mission group, which raises funds for mission and supports the mission work of this office.

Global Mission allocated a total of $783,816 in 2020. Some expenditures were

decreased in 2020 because of the inability to travel and concern that pandemic-challenged economies and congregations leaving might result in decreased giving to the denomination.

These included:

- $105,403 for salaries of staff and contract workers in four countries
- $28,563 for education and scholarships in six countries
- $44,125 for church construction in three countries
- $109,907 for ongoing program costs in six countries
- $289,525 for the Haiti Medical Project
- $145,891 through the Global Food Initiative
- $60,401 for additional special projects in seven countries: Spain received $10,094, Haiti $8,005, Venezuela $15,669, South Sudan $3,200, Dominican Republic $3,900, Vietnam $4,533, and Nigeria $15,000.

Another way to look at Global Mission expenditures (apart from Global Food Initiative) is by country: Brazil $23,364; China $24,000; Dominican Republic $39,618; France $2,400; Haiti $319,000; Honduras $1,057; India $6,015; Lebanon $500; Mexico $1,001; Nigeria $47,122; Rwanda $27,490; South Sudan $97,447; Spain $18,094; Uganda $91; Venezuela $25,669; and Vietnam $4,533.

Global Food Initiative

One constant in a world of great change is that people need to eat, and, for people to eat, farmers need to plant. Locally produced food became even more important in 2020 as the transport of food across long distances was hampered by border closings and travel restrictions globally, leading to rising food prices.

In 2020 the activities of the Global Food Initiative (GFI) Fund centered on supporting churches and organizations dedicated to growing food and serving neighbors in need. Income to the fund was $205,877. The sum of all funds given to both international and domestic partners through GFI was $145,890.

GFI works to keep administrative percentages low in awarded grants, but as the year progressed the struggles facing international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) came into sharp focus. Special administrative grants of $5,000 were awarded to four GFI partners: Proyecto Aldea Global in Honduras, Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services in Burundi, Bittersweet Ministries in Mexico, and Fundación Brethren y Unida in Ecuador.

Other international grants were given to support agricultural development work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, and Venezuela. Projects included animal raising, tree planting, soil conservation, water harvesting, appropriate scaled mechanization, and crop production. International allocations totaled $107,159.

In the US, grants were given to churches and organizations in Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio, and Virginia. These domestic grants are connected primarily to church-based community gardens. Total allocations of domestic grants equaled $21,989.

GFI supports advocacy work on food sovereignty through yearly contributions to Bread for the World, Growing Hope Globally, and the National Farm Worker Ministry, with contributions tallying $16,742.

SERVICE MINISTRIES

The spread of COVID-19 heightened the need for Service Ministries in the US and throughout the world. At the same time, programs had to adjust to live out their mission in new ways. The focus on equipping individuals and congregations to address humanitarian needs safely helped these ministries have a significant impact.

During 2020, the Service Ministries programs were separated from Global Mission and carried out under the leadership of executive director Roy Winter, who also directs Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM).

Brethren Disaster Ministries

"If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday" (Isaiah 58:10). This scripture text provided encouragement and inspiration to develop two pandemic grant programs funded through the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF).

A grant program for US congregations and districts provided 44 grants across 11 districts. In total, $174,062 assisted community-based ministries serving vulnerable people. A global grant program provided seven global Brethren communions and four Church of the Brethren mission points with $208,550 in critical humanitarian support for impoverished people. These international grants were in Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Spain, and Venezuela.

An especially destructive hurricane season and other disasters, combined with the global pandemic, provided the backdrop for observing 60 years of Church of the Brethren humanitarian response through EDF. The pandemic caused the cancellation of the three district-run disaster auctions that provide major funding for the fund, reducing resources for programing in 2021. In response, a fundraising campaign, "Rise Up Brethren," was initiated in the fall.

BDM office manager Sharon Franzén provides administrative support, and Darlene Hylton gives database support. as program assistant, resigned at the end of the year.

Despite travel restrictions, rebuilding in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria was completed in 2020, as planned. The project, in partnership with Puerto Rico District, was led by Carrie Miller and construction assistant Carmelo Rodriguez, in collaboration with district disaster coordinator José Acevedo and the district recovery committee. In 2020, 59 volunteers traveled to Puerto Rico and 58 families were served.

Rebuilding led by project leaders Kim Gingerich and Steve Keim took place in two North Carolina locations that served

Home Rebuilding

Although fewer volunteers were able to serve with the Home Rebuilding program, many protocols and mitigation efforts were put into place so that disaster survivors, some of whom had waited two years, could finally have work completed on their homes. Throughout the year, 618 rebuilding volunteers, including 46 project leaders, committed 38,368 hours of service to survivors in three states and Puerto Rico. Valued at $1,043,609, this work assisted 125 families needing repairs or rebuilding. The rebuilding ministry was led by director Jenn Dorsch-Messler. Terry Goodger, who served

survivors of hurricanes Matthew and Florence. Despite an early closure in Lumberton in March, 133 volunteers served 19 families. When the Coastal North Carolina site opened in September with extensive COVID-19 mitigation measures, 77 volunteers were able to serve 14 families.

A rebuilding project in the Tampa, Fla., area served 21 families affected by Hurricane Irma. Sammy Deacon and Jerry Moore served as leaders for the site, where 125 volunteers repaired homes from January to March.

In July, a new site opened in Dayton, Ohio to help with recovery from a 2019 tornado. Project leaders Deacon, Rex Miller, and BVS volunteer Evan Ulrich provided support for this site that began solely with local Southern Ohio/Kentucky District volunteers. A pandemic-modified housing location opened in August, allowing for weekly volunteers from outside the area. Over five months, 219 volunteers safely worked on 12 homes before the site was paused at Thanksgiving.

Children's Disaster Services

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) expected 2020 to be a milestone celebration of 40 years serving children and families after disasters. The year turned out quite differently, with the limitation of in-person trainings and deployments due to the pandemic.

The year started strong, with associate director Lisa Crouch traveling to New York City to initiate a new Red Cross pilot program. Project leaders were given intensive training so they could lead small teams caring for children in daily deployments to pop-up shelters. While this program will eventually allow CDS to help children in metropolitan areas facing local disasters such as building evacuations, transportation incidents, and fires, it was put on hold due to the pandemic.

Two trainings were held in early March in Bridgewater, Va., and La Verne, Calif., with 59 new volunteers trained. The remaining training schedule was postponed until 2021. CDS ended 2020 with 842 certified volunteers.

To adapt to the needs of non-congregate sheltering, CDS designed an Individual Kit of Comfort (IKOC) to be distributed to children through Red Cross operations for the disaster season. IKOCs were deployed to California and Colorado wildfires, Tropical Storm Hannah (Texas), Hurricane Laura (Louisiana), and Missouri flooding. Over 2,500 kits were distributed to children in 2020, with 1,000 sent through new partner Partnerships with Native Americans to tribal communities hit hard by COVID-19.

A newly formed Children and Family Task Team gave families facing pandemic-related isolation a social media support group, devotional videos, and resources for coping with quarantine. Program assistant Sherry Chastain assisted with this committee, CDS programing, and special pandemic response activities.

International response

The COVID-19 response program and Nigeria Crisis Response were key features of international programing. Early in 2020, grants supported Church World Service (CWS) responses to Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas ($25,000) and flooding in Kenya ($25,000).

Lebanon was already struggling with high unemployment, a failed economy, and the pandemic, when an August explosion in the port of Beirut caused widespread destruction in the city. Working with IMA World Health and the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development, the Church of the Brethren provided $35,000 in EDF funds for emergency food, medical care, and livelihood recovery.

Smaller flood responses in Venezuela and the DR Congo were followed by

devastating hurricanes Eta and Iota, which struck Central America in November. Grants totaling $45,000 provided emergency food, shelter, and medical care through CWS, Proyecto Aldea Global (Project Global Village), and new partner Christian Solidary Program for Honduras.

Nigeria Crisis Response

The Nigeria Crisis Response continues to aid our global neighbors affected by the violence from Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria, which began in 2009 and has resulted in the displacement of 70 percent of members of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). The significant recovery of EYN and continued relief programing contrasts with the violence that is spreading throughout Nigeria.

In more stable areas, EYN churches, families, and communities are rebuilding. In other areas, the burning of churches, killings, kidnappings, banditry, food shortages, and malnutrition are regular challenges. The pandemic has made all these situations worse, so additional grants were made for pandemic relief.

Working in partnership with EYN and the European organization Mission 21, BDM is helping lead an extensive program that includes sponsorship of four camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, training of one-on-one counselors, home repairs for the most vulnerable, and continued development of a long-term soybean program.

Financial details

Donations to BDM, CDS, the Nigeria Crisis Fund, and the Emergency Disaster Fund totaled $1,136,978 in 2020, which was about half of average annual donations over the last five years. This giving and EDF reserves provided for all BDM expenses, including staff, programs, and allocations for disaster response totaling $1,835,546.

The special COVID-19 relief programs, including domestic and global grants, totaled $422,612. Other expenditures included $127,469 for the Puerto Rico hurricane response; $221,552 for other US responses, including Home Rebuilding and CDS; $287,548 for the Nigeria Crisis Response; and $166,000 for other international responses.

Brethren Volunteer Service

Many Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) workers had to cut short their terms of service in early in March or April because of the pandemic. This included all German volunteers who were in the US through BVS partner organization EIRENE.

Nevertheless, orientations were able to be shifted to a virtual process, and BVS welcomed 18 new volunteers in 2020. Staff shifted the volunteer placement process so that the two-week virtual orientation could double as quarantine at the volunteers' new project sites.

Interim orientation coordinator Pauline Liu and assistant Kara Miller led orientations in the summer and fall. A unit with the Brethren Revival Fellowship was held in Newsmantown, Pa.

At the end of the year, 58 volunteers were serving in 5 countries, 12 states, and Puerto Rico. The annual Partners in Service Award was given to SnowCap Community Charities in Portland, Ore. Jocelyn Siakula resigned mid-year after five years as orientation coordinator.

Faith Outreach Expeditions
(formerly Brethren Workcamps)
The theme "Voices for Peace," based on Romans 15:1-6, encouraged workcamp participants to consider how God is calling them to use their distinct voices and skills to advocate for peace and justice in their communities. Workcamps were scheduled in 12 states and in Rwanda, with 321 people registered.

After in-person workcamps were canceled due to the pandemic, the workcamp team offered seven weeks of virtual workcamp experiences. For an hour each week, workcamp staff, leaders, youth, and advisors gathered by Zoom to hear a reflection, engage in discussion, play games, and create memories.

The 2020 season was organized by assistant coordinators Kara Miller and Liana Smith, serving through Brethren Volunteer Service, and Hannah Shultz, coordinator of short-term service. In August, BVSers Alton Hipps and Chad Whitzel began work on the 2021 season.

After a lengthy discernment process, staff changed the workcamp name to Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX) to better speak to the spiritual component of the program, the emphasis on service, and the sense of adventure in traveling to provide ministry.

Material Resources

Material Resources (MR) program staff responded to needs in 24 states and 22 countries. Their 114 shipments totaled 590 tons of hospital supplies, quilts, health kits, school kits, baby kits, cleanup kits, and other supplies and were valued at $5.7 million.

During January and February, 156 volunteers supported the ministry, and local volunteer Jerry Duble baled 30 tons of cardboard for recycling. But volunteering stopped in March, and Material Resources was closed through May except for limited staffing for deliveries, shipments, and coordination with partners. The contact with volunteers was greatly missed, and their absence significantly slowed the processing of donated kits.

Loretta Wolf directed Material Resources, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operations. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Melissa Fritz, Brenda Giles, and Trent Turner packed items for shipping. Ed Palsgrove managed the trucks, delivered shipments, and picked up donations. Medical supplies were sorted and prepared for shipment by Winni Wanionek and Jeffrey Brown.

On behalf of CWS, kits and/or blankets were sent in response to hurricanes Delta, Dorian, Eta, Kito, Laura, and Sally, as well as to Puerto Rico earthquake relief efforts. In shipments to a dozen states, Material Resources sent supplies for homeless people and refugees and for responses to floods and COVID-19.

CWS and International Orthodox Christian Charities collaborated to ship school kits to Romania and Armenia. Lutheran World Relief shipments sailed to the Bahamas, Bosnia, Chile, Republic of Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe. Donations of hospital supplies shipped to Dominican Republic, Haiti, Italy, Liberia, Nigeria, Panama, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe on behalf of Brothers Brother Foundation. In October, Material Resources began receiving items for an airplane hangar that will be shipped to Liberia in 2021.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

Discipleship Ministries seeks to equip the people of God, new and renewed, to embody and articulate their faith. The team of Joshua Brockway, Stan Dueck, Becky Ullom Naugle, LaDonna Sanders Nkosi, and Randi Rowan serves the Church of the Brethren through planning events and building relationships. Nkosi joined the team as director of Intercultural Ministries. A pastor and church planter, she adds experience in ministry in addition to skills in building intercultural communities in both religious and academic settings.

Because of the pandemic, all in-person events planned for 2020 made significant transitions. The National Young Adult Conference and the New and Renew Conference deferred their onsite agreements to 2021 and hosted digital resources and community building spaces. Ministry Summer Service continued in 2020 by providing Zoom meetings for learning and formation while interns served in their home communities. A generous grant from the Gahagen Trust supported these interns financially and funded the resource leaders.

Discipleship Ministries partnered with several organizations. Brockway co-taught a course on urban ministry in Atlanta through Bethany Theological Seminary and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. The team supported a webinar series from Freedom Road on the Latinx church. Church of the Brethren leaders received financial assistance to attend the Inhabit Conference organized by the Parish Collective. Dueck led a course through the Ventures initiative hosted by McPherson College.

Videoconferencing capabilities made it possible for a number of conversations to take place across the church. Some were simple conversations for pastors as they transitioned their congregations into online worship. Others were extended dialog and study opportunities such as the Healing Racism book studies hosted by Nkosi. She facilitated a conversation around the book *Everyday Ubuntu,* and hosted the author of the book, Mungi Ngomane. Nkosi also facilitated a journaling workshop with Dana Cassell, Thriving in Ministry program manager.

The team's use of social media increased with creation of a Facebook page for Discipleship Ministries. It joins existing pages for youth advisors, young adults, church planters, and intercultural ministries, along with pages for events such as National Youth Conferences and National Older Adult Conference.

Staff continued to train leadership and offer consulting ministries with congregations and districts. With co-presenter Kayla Alphonse, Nkosi led a session on Healing Racism for the Mission and Ministry Board. She also worked with the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District race relations team. Dueck worked with eight congregations and provided 105 hours of coaching for pastors and leaders. Brockway preached at the Idaho/Montana district conference and met with pastors groups interested in resources available through the church's partnership with the Christian Community Development Association. He and Traci Rabenstein of Mission Advancement researched online giving guidelines and recommendations for congregation.

Staff administered grants from the Brethren Faith in Action Fund and the Health Education and Research Fund. The latter was tapped for a special one-time

disbursement of $500,000 that was shared among all Church of the Brethren retirement communities for increased costs due to the pandemic. The fund regularly provides continuing education grants for member communities of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes and scholarships for nursing students.

The discipleship team continued planning for conferences and events in 2021. Both National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) and the New and Renew Conference will take place virtually in 2021. The events are made possible by countless hours of volunteer time from people across the denomination. These working groups include the NOAC Planning Committee, New and Renew Team, Young Adult Steering Committee, National Youth Cabinet, National Junior High Conference Committee, Intercultural Ministries Advisory Committee, and Spiritual Directors Advisory Team.

Two key contractors also expand the team's capabilities: Christy Waltersdorff leads the planning for National Older Adult Conference. Rebekah Flores serves as a disabilities ministries advocate and represents the Church of the Brethren on the Anabaptist Disabilities Network board.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Organizational Resources, which supports all staff and ministries of the Church of the Brethren, consists of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Information Technology. Shawn Flory Replogle is executive director, and Ed Woolf is director of finance and treasurer.

Brethren Historical Library and Archives

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA), directed by Bill Kostlevy, is the official repository for Church of the Brethren records documenting the ministry of the church. Allison Snyder, who began in June as BHLA intern, was instrumental in planning and executing several virtual library tours with participants from as far away as India and Germany. Jessi Marsiglio provided regular volunteer assistance in the archives.

Even with pandemic restrictions, the archives provided the following services: 294 written requests, 103 phone requests, 28 onsite researchers, and tours for 9 people. Staff processed about 135 feet of archival material. Among the important collections received and processed were the papers of Eugene Roop and the records of the Geneva, Switzerland, office of Brethren Service and Brethren Volunteer Service, 1959-2019. One special project included scanning hundreds of photographs concerning Brethren missions, service, events, personalities, and institutions.

Buildings and Grounds

Salvador Campero and Francie Coale oversee the care and maintenance of the Church of the Brethren properties. Campero directs the Buildings and Grounds team at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Coale directs the team at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., assisted full-time by Felix Hill, maintenance assistant. Both locations experienced prolonged closures to all staff except those deemed essential. During those closures, Buildings and Grounds staff developed and implemented plans to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 and prepared the buildings for eventual reopening.

In Elgin, with fewer people in the building, extensive servicing of the heating, cooling, and ventilation systems was undertaken, extending the sustainability of the systems for many years to come. Over 2,000 donation boxes were received on behalf of Church World Service and transferred by semi-trailer to New Windsor. In addition, a new Brethren Volunteer Service house was purchased closer to the General Offices. It was renovated and made ready for volunteers to move in by July. The old BVS house was sold in December.

In New Windsor, while Material Resources staff were out of the building, the packing area was painted and tables were resurfaced. Old lighting was replaced with LED lighting throughout the warehouse. Other upgrades included improvements to staff areas in the kitchen, installation of personal lockers, and replacement of dock doors.

Finance

During the uncertainty of 2020, the finance team was a stable presence, providing the same quality information about the financial health of the organization as they would in any year. Ed Woolf managed estate giving, split-interest gifts, pastors' housing fund accounts, corporate credit card accounts, corporate insurance policies. He also provided financial, budget, and accounting services.

Pat Marsh, accountant and assistant treasurer, oversaw the annual audit and provided budget support, financial reports, and cash management services. Lynn Phelan, accounts payable specialist, provided financial and administrative support in processing and reporting all types of payments and funds transfers. Barb Watt, financial operations specialist and payroll manager, provided accounts receivable, accounts payable, and financial reporting services to staff in New Windsor. Nancy Watts, donation and accounts receivable specialist, managed invoicing, along with all donations and gifts received for the Church of the Brethren and its ministries.

Information Technology

The work of Information Technology proved especially important in March, when all office staff were sent to work at home until further notice. The IT team made sure every staff member had access to a laptop computer and was connected to the virtual private network so that the work of the organization could continue. The team also updated server storage space. Audiovisual equipment in the main conference room in the Elgin offices was upgraded to be ready for a Zoom world, and this upgrade was

used by the Mission and Ministry Board for its virtual meeting in October.

Francie Coale is director of information technology for the organization, overseeing IT at both the Elgin and New Windsor facilities. Fabiola Fernandez is manager of information technology in Elgin. They provide computer, telephone, internet, and audiovisual support for all staff.

Financial results for 2020

Shortly into the pandemic, the Mission and Ministry Board approved a revised budget for Core Ministries in 2020. In this new budget, expected income was lowered by $446,960 and expected expenses were lowered by $339,850. With these changes, the Core Ministries Fund ended the year with a net surplus of $127,487, with the church able to set aside funds for future budget shortfalls and for costs associated with implementing the new strategic plan.

While giving was $143,942 above the revised budget, total giving to Core Ministries was down $52,330 from 2019. Congregational giving totaled $1,682,892, a decrease of $81,187. Individual giving rose by $28,857 to $574,050.

The denomination's Self-Funding Ministries were drastically affected by the pandemic. For Material Resources, a significant drop in service fees and processing income led to a deficit of $121,958. The Conference Office was helped by more than $70,000 in donated registration fees, but the cancellation of Annual Conference caused a deficit of $116,366. For Brethren Press, sales fell sharply when congregations could no longer meet in person, but a fundraising campaign brought in more than $117,000—enough that the publishing house finished the year with only a small deficit of $4,648.

Giving to both the Global Food Initiative and the Emergency Disaster Fund decreased sharply, especially because of the cancellation of district fundraisers. Donations to Brethren Disaster Ministries totaled $1,136,987, a decrease of $865,948. Giving to the Global Food Initiative Fund totaled $205,877, down $57,540.

Despite the volatility and uncertainty of 2020, investments increased over $1.6 million to finish the year at $36.1 million. Total net assets were $42.3 million, an increase of $1.5 million from the start of the year. Approximately $1 million in grants from the Ministry Assistance Fund, Emergency Disaster Fund, Global Food Initiative Fund, Brethren Faith-in-Action Fund, and other designated funds were given in this season to provide much-needed support for the larger church.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2020 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren Inc. audit report published in June 2021.]

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, David Steele, serves as staff for the Mission and Ministry Board and oversees the employees and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. He also represents the church in its various ecumenical commitments. Nancy Miner is manager of the Office of the General Secretary.

Mission and Ministry Board

The Mission and Ministry Board serves as the board of directors of the Church of the Brethren, carrying out the direction set by Annual Conference.

The board gathered in Greenville, Ohio, for its March meeting. Unfolding COVID-19 restrictions necessitated canceling plans to meet at the Brethren Retirement Community, and the board met instead at Oakland Church of the Brethren. Despite the last-minute change of venue and the inability to worship with area congregations as planned, the board affirmed the value of holding offsite meetings every five years and decided to do so again in 2025.

In response to the pandemic, the board approved grants totaling $500,000 from the Health Education and Research Fund to support increased costs incurred by Church of the Brethren retirement communities, and $195,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund for congregations and districts to provide relief for congregational and community members. In addition, through the end of 2020, the matching funds requirement for Brethren Faith in Action grants was waived and eligibility expanded to include Church of the Brethren camps.

A new strategic plan, adopted in July, aligns with the compelling vision being considered by 2021 Annual Conference delegates. The plan, titled "Jesus in the Neighborhood," will guide the work of the board and staff over the next 5-10 years, beginning with strategies to pursue Christ's call to discipleship, embody the biblical command to love our neighbors, seek God's racial justice, and reclaim New Testament models of giving.

Following a previous board directive to explore relocation of the BVS house in Elgin, the board approved the purchase of a house near the General Offices. It houses Elgin-based volunteers and interns.

In other actions, the board named Ed Woolf as treasurer; supported continued hurricane response in Puerto Rico and the Carolinas; approved a new project for tornado rebuilding work in Dayton, Ohio; extended support of farmer training efforts in Burundi; approved a plan to ensure long-term support of ministry programs by limiting future draws from the BSC Quasi-Endowment fund; tabled a recommendation to write off Brethren Press's negative net asset balance, allowing staff time to work on a systematic plan for the publishing house; and supported the Healing Racism program of The Gathering Chicago with a distribution from the Wieand Family Trust. The board's Living Together as Christ Calls Team paused its work in order to observe the continuing Compelling Vision Process before discerning next steps.

In October, the board called David Steele to a second 5-year contract term as general secretary, running to September 2026.

The elected membership of the Mission and Ministry Board consists of 8 women and 9 men. One member is Indo-American, one is Hispanic, two are African American, and 13 are white.

Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy (OPP) in Washington, D.C., has focused its efforts on policy supporting peacebuilding, Nigeria, the Middle East, and a range of other topics articulated by Annual Conference. In 2020, additional attention was placed on COVID-19 response and economic peacemaking.

OPP director Nathan Hosler hosted interns Priscilla Weddle in January and Galen Fitzkee in May; both completed their internships remotely. In August, Manchester University graduate Naomi Yilma joined the office through Brethren Volunteer Service.

Oversight of the Death Row Support Project (DRSP) moved to OPP. DRSP director Rachel Gross added more than 300 letter writers, bringing to over 13,000 the pen pal relationships established to date. Gross continued to advocate for an end to the death penalty, issuing action alerts and circulating petitions.

The Church of the Brethren representative to the United Nations, Doris Abdullah, spoke at "The Church in Black and White," an event hosted by the Brethren and Mennonite Heritage Center. Abdullah's UN involvement has centered on human rights and understanding women's perspectives during COVID-19.

OPP worked with Church of the Brethren colleagues to coordinate response to the pandemic. The office has also been active in Advocacy Network for Africa's COVID-19 working group, which has been advocating for the release of funds to help with COVID response and equitable vaccine distribution.

OPP convenes the Nigeria Working Group, which this year hosted two roundtables with the State Department and a series of action items on End SARS, a movement in Nigeria to protest police brutality. The office facilitated the drafting of letters to Nigerian President Buhari, the US administration, and the international community.

In November, Hosler began as Church of the Brethren representative on the board of Heifer International and as official proxy to the National Council of Churches governing board on behalf of the general secretary. Susu Lassa, former BVSer now studying at Bethany Theological Seminary, is proxy to partner organization Creation Justice Ministries and contributed to Earth Day resources.

In December, Hosler and Yilma participated in PeaceCon 2020, hosted by the Alliance for Peacebuilding and Policy. They have also written a series of blog posts and articles on the broader theme of economic peacemaking, with a focus on economic justice, racial justice, and climate justice.

Annual Conference Office

The past year was like none other in the 233 years of recorded annual meetings of the Church of the Brethren. Acting on a recommendation from Program and Arrangements Committee and the Leadership Team, Standing Committee voted for the first time ever to cancel Annual Conference.

In its meeting May 7 by videoconference, Standing Committee deferred the theme, program, and resource leaders to 2021. The committee also decided to defer the ballot, with the understanding

that those with terms expiring in 2020 would be asked to serve an additional year; those elected in 2021 would serve one year less, except for the moderator-elect; and another ballot would be prepared to replace people whose terms concluded in 2021.

Negotiations with the convention center and the hotels in Grand Rapids resulted in the waiving of $665,000 in cancellation penalties in exchange for the church's commitment to return to Grand Rapids for Annual Conference 2024, the next available year.

Some churches and individuals chose to donate their registration refunds to the Annual Conference budget. Even with those generous donations, Annual Conference expenses for fixed costs such as rent and staff salaries resulted in a deficit for 2020, which necessitated a reduction in staffing.

Though Annual Conference could not meet, a special online denominational worship service and an online concert featuring Brethren musicians were offered on the evenings of July 1-2. Both events were planned by the Program and Arrangements Committee.

Planning for the 2021 Conference began immediately with staff support from Annual Conference director Chris Douglas and registration coordinator Debbie Noffsinger and guided by the mission statement, "Annual Conference exists to unite, strengthen and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus."

Brethren Press

In a unique project, Brethren Press published *We Bear It in Tears: Stories from Nigeria,* with interviews by Carol Mason and photographs by Donna Parcell. This full-color volume, developed in collaboration with the Global Mission office, is a collection of first-person accounts of Nigerians who have suffered from Boko Haram.

Other books published in 2020 were *Small Wonders: Stories for Worship with Kids,* by Kate Finney, and *La iglesia no tan grande* (a Spanish translation of *The Not-So-Big Church*). The 2020 Covenant Bible Studies were *God's Steadfast Love in the Psalms,* by Christina Bucher, and *Birth of Jesus,* by Richard Gardner. Devotionals, published in two sizes of print editions and two digital editions, were *Holy Manna* (Lent), by Paula Bowser, and *Give Light* (Advent), by James Benedict. Brethren Press also published the Living Word Bulletin Series and the 2020 Yearbook.

The largest focus for Brethren Press is curriculum, with new materials written each year for *Shine: Living in God's Light* and *A Guide for Biblical Studies.* Once congregations couldn't meet in person for worship and education, Brethren Press immediately offered a number of spring quarter resources digitally at no charge. By summer, the Shine curriculum—co-published with MennoMedia—had shifted teacher's guides to digital products and produced two extra resources, Shine Connect and Shine at Home, to help congregations teach online. With preparations begun long before the pandemic, Shine unveiled a new round of curriculum for fall and a new vacation Bible school curriculum, *Great Big Beautiful World,* for summer.

Sales were hit hard by the upheaval in congregational life. To help fill the gap, Brethren Press developed a number of new products for individuals, including face masks, a jigsaw puzzle of the Eder River, and an updated Forerunners card game and mug. The publishing house also launched a #ReadThisDay campaign and recommended

books on racial justice. Eventually, Brethren Press had to eliminate two half-time positions. Many people gave bountifully to a year-end fundraising campaign that raised more than $117,000, making it possible for the publishing house to come close to breaking even.

Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press and communications, completed a term as president of the Protestant Church-owned Publishers Association. Other members of the Brethren Press team are James Deaton, managing editor; Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales; Karen Warner, customer service specialist; Jim Miner, Yearbook specialist; and Karen Stocking, finance and production assistant for both Brethren Press and Communications.

Communications

The pandemic and racial justice were top themes in *Messenger* magazine in 2020, as the magazine adjusted to address the issues of the day. A new effort called "Messenger Radio" now features audio recordings, the largest of which is 11 episodes of a podcast series "Speaking Truth to Power," hosted by Anna Lisa Gross. Issues of *Messenger* from 2000 to 2019 are being added to a new online collection, filling in a gap following the digitizing years ago of volumes from 1851 to 1999 on Archive.org.

The magazine's editorial team consists of communication staff Wendy McFadden, Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Jan Fischer Bachman, along with Walt Wiltschek, contracted as part-time at-large editor. Diane Stroyeck is subscriptions specialist. The magazine won honorable mentions from the Associated Church Press for three articles in 2019: coverage of Annual Conference, a humorous article called "Will it blend?" and a theological reflection titled "Creation and the cross."

In 2020, news representing the breadth and depth of the denomination was distributed through Newsline—an email news service sent free to individual and congregational subscribers—as well as online news stories at Brethren.org, the Newsline Digest in each issue of *Messenger* magazine, and social media. For much of the year, news director Brumbaugh-Cayford doubled the frequency of Newsline because of the pandemic-related volume of news.

In 2020 the web team of website producer Fischer Bachman and media support specialist Russ Otto finished the massive project of moving the Church of the Brethren website to WordPress, a less expensive and more robust platform. When the pandemic struck, they created a new website with related resources, https://covid19.brethren.org. In addition to larger projects, the team produced and updated web pages, created and scheduled bulk email messages, designed and edited online forms, and assisted with Church of the Brethren online video and social media.

The annual report theme "Living Letters," which spoke to the distancing forced by the virus, was carried out in both video and print form with postcards that drew from the New Testament epistles to convey the ministries of the church in 2020.

Human Resources

The office of Human Resources, staffed by manager Shamek Cardona, oversees the organization's employment policies and services, ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

Employees hired in 2020 were LaDonna Sanders Nkosi, director of Intercultural Ministries; Norman and Carol Spicher Waggy, interim co-directors for Global Mission; Harold Kline, temporary truck driver for Material Resources; Shawn Flory Replogle, interim executive director of Organizational Resources; and Pauline Liu, interim volunteer coordinator for Brethren Volunteer Service. Later, Flory Replogle and Liu transitioned from interim to permanent status.

Staff departing were Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission and Service; Andie Garcia, Information Technology systems specialist; Jocelyn Siakula, orientation coordinator for Brethren Volunteer Service; Jon Kobel, conference assistant; Margaret Drafall, customer service specialist for Brethren Press; and Steve Bickler, warehouse/shipping specialist for Brethren Press and Buildings/Grounds assistant.

Regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs totaled 62. As requested by Annual Conference, the report of ethnic/racial composition of these employees is the following: Asian–2; Black–5; Hispanic–3; white–51; two or more races–1.

In addition, there are 23 contract, shared, and temporary employees, as well as program volunteers.

Ministry

Sustaining ministers during a year of increased demands due to the pandemic was an important focus of the work of the Office of Ministry throughout 2020. This support began in early January in Scottsdale, Ariz., through a retreat for the denomination's credentialed clergywomen. Pastor and author Mandy Smith of Cincinnati, Ohio, led a three-day experience offering rest, reflection, and spiritual nourishment centered on the theme "Treasure in Clay Pots."

In February, the Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church program, staffed by program manager Dana Cassell, hosted a training event in Richmond, Va., for eight "circuit riders"—a team of ministers from across the country who now serve as companions and connectors for the 77 percent of Church of the Brethren pastors who work in multivocational roles. Referred to as "MVPs," or multivocational pastors, more than 25 have joined the program since March.

The pandemic made in-person visits impossible, but circuit riders have been persistent in connecting via email, phone, and video calls; supporting the varied ministries of these leaders; and learning how multivocational ministry is enabling innovative and faithful discipleship in congregations. Circuit riders have connected pastors with resources on financial planning, mental health, grief counseling, and urban ministry, and a dozen MVPs participated in an extended study of G. Jeffrey MacDonald's book, *Part-Time Is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy*.

Beginning in the months in which ministers responded to unexpected increased demands, the office, directed by Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, provided a video

expressing prayer and concern for clergy and also coordinated Annual Conference moderator Paul Mundey's sabbath sermon as a resource for pastors and congregations. Two webinars focused on the themes of the Holy Spirit's work and Intercultural Ministries, respectively, and were both led by Grace Ji-Sun Kim of Earlham School of Religion.

Leading up to Holy Week, the office invited pastors to gather online for sharing ideas and worship resources. A denomination-wide love feast service was initiated and organized with the technical assistance of the Living Stream Church of the Brethren's pastoral staff and was viewed by close to 10,000 "persons/devices." Beginning in mid-March, the office hosted weekly online meetings for district executive ministers for the purpose of mutual support and resourcing among colleagues.

A significant every-five-year task of the office is the credentialed ministers' renewal process. Supported by office manager Mishael Nouveau, this process gathers reports from all 24 districts regarding ministers' credentialing renewals and subsequently issues identification cards.

A major requirement for the renewal is advanced level ethics training. Early in the pandemic, the office shifted to offering these training events solely online. Nineteen sessions were hosted by districts during the year and were led by trainers in multiple languages. Attendees expressed appreciation for the online format, opportunity to engage with ministers from other districts, and flexible nature of the online platform used.

Transitions of district executive leadership are in process in approximately one-third of all districts, with some using an interim team model and others employing traditional, albeit in some cases virtual, interims. Those who concluded their service were Scott Kinnick (Southeastern) and Kevin Kessler (Illinois/Wisconsin). Atlantic Southeast District experienced the untimely death of district executive Terry Grove in early December. Interim executive team arrangements are in place in West Marva, Michigan, Southern Plains, Pacific Northwest, and Southeastern districts. Virtual orientation sessions for new district executive ministers or teams were provided by the office in lieu of onsite events.

The office disbursed six Ministry Assistance Fund grants totaling $11,115 to ministers in need in four districts. Donations to the fund of $10,637 were received from individuals and congregations. Additional donations were received from the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company ($25,000) and the Robert C. Wenger Charitable Trust ($5,000). Scholarship and continuing education grants totaling $5,200 were disbursed to eight ministers.

The number of ministers added to the ministerial body included 40 ordained (24 male, 16 female), 4 commissioned (4 male), and 25 licensed (12 male, 13 female).

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

Equipping leaders through four training programs, the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, directed by Janet Ober Lambert, is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Training in Ministry (TRIM) engaged 29 students, 3 of whom completed the program. The congregationally based training program, Education for a Shared Ministry in English and Spanish (EFSM/EPMC), involved 7 congregations, with a combination of 8 ministry students. Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-CoB), supported 12 students, 3 of whom completed the program. Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) offered

regionally based, onsite courses involving 11 districts.

Through the academy, 64 people took courses or seminars to earn continuing education credits. Three people received credit through a new policy allowing clergy to receive credit for viewing and reporting on prerecorded events. The academy also reviews and certifies programs of other agencies for continuing education credit. In 2020, these certificates totaled 439, in addition to 182 certificates for ministerial ethics.

Aida Lymaris Sánchez joined the Brethren Academy team as coordinator of Spanish-Language Ministry Training programs. Other staff are Carrie Eikler, coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training programs, and Fran Massie, administrative assistant.

Mission Advancement

The Office of Mission Advancement cultivates relationships and passion in order to advance the mission and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. The team focuses on relationship building with congregations and individuals through visits, interpretation, and education about the church's ministries, and provides ways for people of passion to give financially to support those ministries as "a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

Mathew DeBall, coordinator of Mission Advancement communications, and Traci Rabenstein, director of Mission Advancement, reviewed giving trends to inform the way the office works at communications. Staff worked to better educate and equip donors and congregations concerning how financial gifts impacted those the church helped and places where the church served. DeBall represented the denomination on the One Great Hour of Sharing committee, oversaw congregational offering emphases, and coordinated writers for the biweekly eBrethren articles and monthly direct mailings.

With travel halted in March, Mission Advancement advocates Nancy McCrickard and Shannon McNeil worked at relations with individual donors by writing letters and cards and making hundreds of phone calls. As they checked in on donors to see how they were holding up during the pandemic, they also provided updates on the work that denominational staff implemented on behalf of the church, described how staff were making changes due to pandemic restrictions, and offered words of gratitude for all the ways donors support the work of the church.

Rabenstein was able to visit virtually with a few congregations and pastors to provide insight into the work we do together as a denomination. Within the denominational offices, she facilitated staff conversation around data management and worked at reviewing and updating processes and procedures.

CONCLUSION

In a year of adversity, there was nevertheless much to be thankful for. People across the Church of the Brethren joined in ministry, prayed, and sent words of encouragement. They created new ways to widen the church's witness. When events went virtual, geographical barriers fell away and more people could participate. Congregations and individuals gave from the heart.

Members of the Mission and Ministry Board and the denominational staff are grateful for all these partners in the gospel, true living letters within their communities and far beyond. Thanks be to God for the opportunity to bear witness to the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit through the ministries of the Church of the Brethren.

Patrick Starkey, chair
David Steele, general secretary

Bethany
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

2021 District Conference Report





MASST SETS SAIL

For students who hear a clear call and are following a specific path to practical ministry, Bethany has launched a new master's degree program that links spiritual formation with a focus on social change.

The Master of Arts in Spiritual and Social Transformation (MASST) degree program launches in the fall of 2021 and will significantly broaden the Seminary's offerings to students who want to focus and specialize their ministries. The program is designed to serve individuals pursuing careers in non-profit leadership, social services, or spiritual direction. This new program is uniquely positioned to link Bethany's Brethren heritage to the interests and needs of current students. According to Academic Dean Steve Schweitzer, MASST is a natural outgrowth of Bethany's mission and draws on the strengths of the Seminary's stellar faculty. The program is also a thoughtful response to trends across theological education in the U.S., and it is only the second master's program in the United States to focus on spiritual and social transformation in this combination and integrative way.

Students in the MASST program can choose from five "Paths" or concentrations of courses, including Non-Profit Leadership (in partnership with Eastern Mennonite University) and two programs in Spiritual Practices and Direction (in association with Oasis Ministries). Other focus areas are History as Argument and Meditation and Public Theology and Witness. All concentrations will benefit from Bethany's existing strengths, and students will learn alongside those who are seeking certificates, other M.A. degrees, and the M.Div.

As is true for all Bethany degree programs, MASST students will have access to generous financial aid, including the Pillars and Pathways Residential Scholarship, which allows students to earn a graduate degree without taking on additional student or commercial debt.

HELPING STUDENTS ANSWER THEIR CALL

Bethany remains focused on keeping Seminary education accessible and affordable for all. As we celebrated commencement — honoring graduates from both 2020 and 2021 — we were happy to note that our Pillars and Pathways program is helping many of our students earn Bethany degrees without taking on additional student or consumer debt. The Class of 2021 included seven individuals who earned the Master of Divinity degree, as well as eight individuals who earned the Master of Arts or Master of Arts in Theopoetics and Writing degrees. In addition, 11 people earned certificates from the Seminary, including the first cohort of four students who completed their studies at the Technology Centre in Jos, Nigeria. The class includes alumni who will seek ordination in the Church of the Brethren as well as those who minster through writing, social justice advocacy, and additional graduate study.

A RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

Bethany students and faculty will return to face-to-face classes in fall 2021. After a year of courses held via videoconferencing due to concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, the Seminary will allow vaccinated students and faculty to gather in person for the August intensive and fall semester courses. Bethany continues to invest in robust technology, and some students will still join classes via Zoom, but the Seminary looks forward to having faculty back in the classroom, meeting in person with residential and connections students.

"We will continue to follow health and safety guidelines in order to protect everyone in the Bethany community," notes President Jeff Carter. "Our priority is to provide an exceptional educational experience to our students, and we believe in-person classes are a great benefit to students and professors alike."

Pacific Northwest District Conference

Bethany At-a-Glance

DEGREE PROGRAMS

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

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Certificate of Achievement in Theological Studies
- Certificate of Achievement in Biblical Peacemaking
- Certificate in Intercultural Biblical Interpretation
- Certificate in Just Peace and Conflict Resolution
- Certificate in Theopoetics and Theological Imagination

BETHANY ACADEMY FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

- Education for a Shared Ministry
- Training in Ministry
- Educación para un Ministerio Compartido
- Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano-de la Iglesia de los Hermanos

BETHANY QUICK FACTS

- **726** licensed or ordained pastors in the Church of the Brethren are graduates of Bethany Theological Seminary.
- **10 OF 24** Church of the Brethren District Executives are Bethany graduates.
- **22** students graduated with degrees or certificates from Bethany in May 2021 and another **4** completed training through Bethany Academy for Ministerial Leadership.
- **10** percent of our financial support in 2020 came from districts and congregations.
- **4** graduates from Nigeria earned the Certificate in Biblical Peacemaking in 2021 — the first cohort to earn Bethany degrees while taking courses at the Technology Centre in Jos.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT CONFERENCE

- Current students: **1**
- Financial support during fiscal year 2021 (as of June 30, 2021):

  $2,050.00 FROM 11 DONORS

Bethany
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A Report of the Pacific Northwest District Envisioning Team

May 2021

As a result of 14 months of study, research, and thoughtful discernment, the Envisioning Team shares these learnings, clarifications, and conclusions.

1. Having evaluated the three person, volunteer approach to filling the District Executive/Minister role and researching, considering other options, we affirm the effectiveness of the three person, volunteer model and recommend its continuation.

2. Acknowledging the long standing concern for better communication and the need for help in accomplishing administrative tasks, we encouraged and supported the formation of an Administrative Assistant staff position. 2020 District Conference adopted a proposal to create this position and Daniel Klayton was hired and effectively serves as Administrative Assistant.

3. We studied Pacific Northwest District financial assets from the perspective of sustainability. As part of the study, we had conversations with other districts concerning their situations and also took into account an awareness of larger conversations concerning district roles and functions at the denominational level. That led us to conclude that, with the volunteer model for District Executive and action to make designated funds available for use, PNW District resources are sufficient to function into the foreseeable future.

4. Exploring the option of merging with another district brought a fresh realization of the uniqueness of the Pacific Northwest District and our strong commitment to the District's stated values. We also recognize that our District's voice, while often contrary to Annual Conference views, is important and valuable in the larger conversation. We recommend maintaining that voice and working to amplify its message by building stronger relationships with allies across the denomination.

5. In the course of our work, we sensed a growing vision of the District as a container of values and voice that extends beyond physical space. While we affirm the value and importance of in-person gatherings, we recognize the opportunities and necessity of using available technologies to include people from a distance. That conclusion is supported by discussed ideas like adapting membership concepts to more fully include Brethren who live in areas beyond a local congregation, raising awareness of Living Stream as an on-line church, hosting gatherings open to interested people beyond District geographic boundaries, and supporting the movement to participate remotely in Annual Conference. In these and other ways, we encourage the expansion of our concepts of church and of the district to engage distant horizons.