



*"Not Against Flesh & Blood"*

57<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-Atlantic  
**District Conference**

October 11 & 12, 2024

Brownsville Church of the Brethren

1911 Rohrersville Rd., Knoxville, MD 21758





*"Not Against Flesh & Blood"*

Logo design by Brandi Puzonia

## Based on Ephesians 6:12

Our theme for the 2024 District Conference is: Not Against Flesh and Blood. The theme comes from Ephesians 6:12, where the Apostle Paul explains that our battle is not against flesh and blood, not against other human beings, but rather against the "authorities...the powers...the spiritual forces of evil" that exist in the world. Of course, if we are to live into such an amazing reality we have to realize that what unites us—the grace, forgiveness, and life that are to be found in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Messiah—is far greater than what divides. We will have much more to say about this theme when we gather October 11-12.

- Moderator Calvin Park

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## Friday Evening, October 11

- Pastor & Spouse Dinner 6 PM
- Installation Service for District Executive Minister Douglas Veal 7:30 PM

**To livestream the Friday night service on You Tube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@brownsvillechurchofthebret1144>

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **General Conference Information**

<a href="#">Theme and Worship</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Schedule</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Personnel</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Workshops</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Exhibitors</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Exhibitor Guidelines</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Prior Conference Moderators</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Alphabet Soup Glossary</a> .....	13
<a href="#">Business Conduct</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Guidelines for Sacred Sharing</a> .....	16
<a href="#">Dedication of Delegates</a> .....	17

### **Slate and Nominee Information**

<a href="#">Sample Slate</a> .....	19
<a href="#">Geographic Areas for District Representation</a> .....	20
<a href="#">Nominee Biographies</a> .....	21

### **District Staff and Ministry Team Reports**

<a href="#">District Executive Minister</a> .....	32
<a href="#">District Interim Executive Minister Team</a> .....	34
<a href="#">District Leadership Team Report</a> .....	35
<a href="#">Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team</a> .....	40
<a href="#">Communications Ministry Team</a> .....	42
<a href="#">Finance and Property Team</a> .....	44
<a href="#">Outreach and Service Ministry Team</a> .....	46
<a href="#">Spirituality and Congregational Life</a> .....	51
<a href="#">Standing Committee</a> .....	52
<a href="#">Camp Mardela</a> .....	57
<a href="#">Shepherd's Spring</a> .....	59
<a href="#">Fahrney Keedy</a> .....	61

### **New Business**

<a href="#">Slate</a> (located in Slate and Nominee Information above, page 19)	
<a href="#">Disorganization of the Welsh Run Congregation</a> .....	64
<a href="#">Disorganization of the Pleasant Ridge Congregation</a> .....	65
<a href="#">Disorganization of the Stone Bridge Congregation</a> .....	66
<a href="#">Disorganization of the Pipe Creek Congregation</a> .....	67
<a href="#">Closing of the Myersville Congregation</a> .....	69
<a href="#">Query – Reducing Harm: Interim Steps to Reduce Suffering</a> ....	70
<a href="#">Proposed 2025 District Budget</a> .....	72



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **District Financial Reports**

Mid-Atlantic District COB <a href="#">Statement of Financial Position</a> .....	75
Mid-Atlantic District COB <a href="#">Statement of Financial Income</a> .....	79
and Expense	
<a href="#">Congregational Outreach</a> Report as of 07/31/24 .....	82
Mid-Atlantic District COB <a href="#">Financial Statements</a> .....	84
Independent Accountants' Review Report	
Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022	

### **Related Agency Reports**

<a href="#">Greetings from the Annual Conference Moderator</a> .....	105
Greetings from the <a href="#">Church of the Brethren General Secretary</a> .....	106
<a href="#">Brethren Disaster Ministries</a> .....	107
<a href="#">Brethren Volunteer Service</a> .....	109
<a href="#">On Earth Peace</a> .....	111
<a href="#">Eder Financial</a> .....	113
<a href="#">Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center</a> .....	115
<a href="#">Bridgewater College</a> .....	118
<a href="#">Bethany Theological Seminary</a> .....	119
<a href="#">Anabaptist Disabilities Network</a> .....	123
<a href="#">Church of the Brethren Report Links</a> .....	124

## **ATTENTION PLEASE**

There will be filming and photography in this general area today. Your presence here constitutes your release, permission and consent to be photographed and/or recorded on any media. Pictures and/or a recording of you may appear in future projects and your presence here grants the right to use your likeness without any compensation whatsoever in perpetuity.

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

## **2024 MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

Saturday, October 12, 2024

Brownsville Church of the Brethren

\*Times are approximate\*

8:00 am	Continental Breakfast	Fellowship Hall
	Registration	Entrance Lobby
	Exhibits – until 3:00 pm	Fellowship Hall
8:50 am	Gathering / Singing	Sanctuary
9:00 am	Seating of Head Table and Greeting	
	Seating of Delegates	
9:10 am	Moderator's Address	
9:25 am	Feet Washing	Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary
9:45 am	Business Session 1:	
	Call to Order / Roll Call	
	Presentation of Slate	
	Slate Approval	
	DEM Report	
	Withdrawing Congregations	
	Leadership Team Report	
	Standing Committee Report	
	Closing Congregation	
	Church of the Brethren Report	
10:45 am	Announcements / Prayer / Directions	
11:00 pm	Workshops	Designated Areas
12:00 noon	Lunch and Exhibits	Fellowship Hall
1:00 pm	Business Session 2	Sanctuary
	Query	
	2024 Budget Presentation	
	Approval of Budget	
	Announcement of Query Vote	
	Reports: SVMC	
	Bethany Seminary	
	Bridgewater College	
	Shepherd's Spring	
	Camp Mardela	
3:05 pm	Youth Presentation	
3:15 pm	Communion	
3:30 pm	Consecration of New Leadership	
	Transition of DC Leadership / Passing of the Gavel	
4:00 pm	Closing	

## **CONFERENCE PERSONNEL**

### **Conference Officers**

Calvin Park	Moderator
Sharon Linton	Moderator-Elect
Judy Braun	Clerk

### **Program and Arrangements Committee**

Ryan Dommer	Doris Grossnickle
Sue Ellen Wheatley	

### **District Staff**

Doug Veal, District Executive Minister  
Jo Ann Landon, Administrative Assistant

### **Friday Night Service**

Installation Service for District Executive Minister Doug Veal

### **On-site Coordinator**

Laura Frye  
Brownsville Church of the Brethren

### **Parliamentarian**

James Benedict

***Thank you*** to the staff and many volunteers at Brownsville Church of the Brethren for their time and tremendous effort to make their home church a welcoming and comfortable home for the Mid-Atlantic District Conference.

## **WORKSHOPS 11:00 am to Noon**

### **Bible Stories for Adults**

Do you find yourself teaching nothing but epistles to the adults while leaving stories like David and Goliath to the kids? These stories have so much to teach adults if we only know how to read them! Here we will learn how to interpret Biblical narrative for everyday application and why Bible stories make for such great discussions."

*Presenter: Joey Moss*

### **Fighting Problems, Not People**

Our conference theme is drawn from Ephesians 6, which tells us that our fight as Christians is not "against flesh and blood," but against the powers of darkness and forces of evil. But how do you fight a force of evil? And what do you do with all that anger you have at the people doing the evil? This workshop will explore how to put Ephesians 6 into practice using the tool of Kingian Nonviolence.

*Presenter: Mandy Park*

### **The Places We Meet: Using Storytelling to Build Bridges, not Barriers**

We will gather together to discuss the power of storytelling and the relationships that can grow from each story told.

*Presenter: Mandy North*

### **Fresh Expressions**

This workshop will offer an introduction to the concept of Fresh Expressions of church. Jesus made the mission really simple: go make disciples. The goal of Fresh Expressions is to inspire churches to take hold of that mission right where they are. How can our churches and district reach out in fresh ways and think of doing church outside of the box?

*Presenter: Shannon Kiser*

Go to [Workshop Registration](#) PDF for registration forms.

## **EXHIBITS**

Friday from 5:00 pm

Saturday 7:45 am – 3:00 pm

*Visit the following exhibits in the Fellowship hall:*

Bethany Theological Seminary

Brethren Disaster Ministries

Camp Mardela

Eder Financial

On Earth Peace

Part Time Pastor; Full Time Church - Office of Ministry

Shepherd's Spring

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC)

## **Mid-Atlantic District Conference Guidelines** **For Exhibit Space and Literature Distribution**

**PURPOSE:** District Conference exhibits are primarily for the purpose of information and interpretation of District, denominational and related agencies.

While District Conference is a forum bringing together Brethren with a variety of interest and opinions, it is not a public forum like the “public square” where practically no limits on speech and activity are permitted. We come together as a Christian communion – that part of Christ’s Body called “The Church of the Brethren” – which calls for some discipline as to the kinds of activity and information permitted. In academic and secular settings, constitutional rights and the need for stimulation of clashing ideas will be protected. At District Conference, we come as those already affirming that Christ is Lord, and we are convened as the faithful people of God.

In light of traditional views about non-resistance, for example, it would be inappropriate to extend exhibition space to the Army recruitment office or events urging war or military action. Nor would it be appropriate to provide space and a forum for persons promoting atheism or the banning of Bibles. Clearly, some limitations for use of space are appropriate.

As the group charged with responsibility for planning and organizing District Conference activities each year, the Program and Arrangements Committee is faced with trying to establish appropriate limits. It has adopted the following statement of policy as to limits:

**All information and literature distributed by exhibitors should be compatible with authorized District Conference activities and in support of the unity of the body. District Conference Program and Arrangements Committee reserves the right to restrict the distribution of information or literature which it judges threatens the unity of the body.**

In some cases, like the examples used above, there is such clear Church of the Brethren statements or traditions that the correct decisions are easily made. In other cases, the decisions are not as clear.

The following guidelines will be applied by the Program and Arrangements Committee as it seeks to evaluate requests for space.

1. Priority will be given to exhibits of District and denominational programs and agencies which are directly connected to those programs which support the ideals, purposes, and principles of the Church of the Brethren.
2. All printed material will be distributed to the delegates and to others within the arena where business is being conducted only by Conference appointed tellers and ushers and with the approval of the Conference officers.

3. No person or group, other than District Conference Officers and Ministry Teams and District Leadership Team is to distribute literature or use space in the Conference facilities except by authorization of the Program and Arrangements Committee.
4. No person or group having authorization for space or distribution of literature shall extend the use of that authorization to others or use it for the distribution of literature of others without prior consent of the Program and Arrangements Committee. Unauthorized use of space may cause the forfeiture of the right of the authorized user.
5. Unless literature or other information is clearly similar to materials or information traditionally distributed by Exhibitors at District Conference, it must be cleared by Program and Arrangements Committee.
6. Program and Arrangements Committee may restrict or exclude exhibitors or materials which:
  - a. Conflict with Annual and District Conference statements;
  - b. Appear to lobby for particular action on business pending at District Conference (this is not intended to prevent the distribution of information on the issues);
  - c. Disrupts or threatens to disrupt the Bond of Peace, the Unity of the Body, by personal criticisms, disparagement of others, or lack of kindness to those with differing views;
  - d. Goes beyond the scope of activities for which the particular exhibitor or organization is authorized.
7. Sales are limited by those groups meeting the above standards and special approval from Program and Arrangements Committee 60 days prior to District Conference. Groups selling articles will accept full responsibility for the security of the items and any monies involved.
8. Any objection to decisions of the Program and Arrangements Committee can be appealed, in writing, to the District Leadership Team. The decision of the Leadership Team is final.

Adopted by Program and Arrangements Committee  
March 4, 1997

Affirmed by Program and Arrangements Committee  
March 28, 2005

### **Prior Conference Moderators**

Harry M. Gardner	1967	Fred Wilhelm	1996
Earl M. Zigler	1968	C. Henry Hunsberger	1997
DeWitt L. Miller	1969	Ann Eberly	1998
Paul W. Kinsel	1970	John Earl Hutchinson	1999
Carl F. Smith	1971	Scott Duffey	2000
Glenn F. Timmons	1972	Linda Barkdoll	2001
C. Henry Hunsberger	1973	Ken Wenger	2002
Ralph L. Detrick	1974	Jim Benedict	2003
Byron Berkey	1975	Charlotte Bear	2004
Mary Smeltzer	1976	John Thompson	2005
Floyd R. Mason	1977	Jeffrey Carter	2006
Edward K. Ziegler	1978	Gretchen Zience	2007
Louise D. Bowman	1979	Dale Posthumus	2008
J. David Eberly, Jr.	1980	Michael Staubs	2009
Paul L. Groff	1981	Cinda Showalter	2010
Wendell Flory	1982	James Lohr	2011
Sue Snyder	1983	Kimberly McDowell	2012
Wayne F. Buckle	1984	Kathy Benedict	2013
James S. Flora	1985	Craig Stutzman	2014
Carol Spangler	1986	Glenn McCrickard	2015
David Fouts	1987	Lois Ann Glessner	2016
Paul D. Steiner	1988	Brian Bachman	2017
Beverly W. Kline	1989	Linda Lambert	2018
J. Paul Wampler	1990	Sona Wenger	2019
J. David Eberly, Jr.	1991	Allen O'Hara	2020
Connie B. Davis	1992	Allen O'Hara	2021
John Thompson	1993	Ellen Wile	2022
Donna F. Steiner	1994	Melvin Cheshire	2023
Mary Louise Dotterer	1995		



## **Alphabet Soup / Glossary**

As with any good-sized organization, the Church of the Brethren has defined some acronyms we use to simplify the way we talk about ourselves. For those new to our church, it can be a bit confusing. Below is a list of some of the acronyms we use in our denomination, as well as some that are specific to the Mid-Atlantic District.

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
AC	Annual Conference
ACC	Annual Conference Council
BDM	Brethren Disaster Ministries
BP	Brethren Press
BPF	Brethren Peace Fellowship
BSC	Brethren Service Center
BVS	Brethren Volunteer Service
CCMT	Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team
CETT	Continuing Education Task Team
COB	Church of the Brethren
CODE	Council of District Executives
CORE	Church Outreach, Renewal and Evangelism
EFSM	Education for Shared Ministry
EYN	Church of the Brethren in Nigeria
FPMT	Finance and Property Ministry Team
HPI	Heifer Project International
LCT	Leadership Calling Team
LT	Leadership Team
MAA	Mutual Aid Association
MITT	Ministry Interviewing Task Team
MRF	Ministry Report Form
NCP	New Community Project
NOAC	National Older Adult Conference
NYC	National Youth Conference
OSMT	Outreach and Service Ministry Team
OEP	On Earth Peace
OMA	Outdoor Ministries Association
PATT	Program and Arrangements Task Team
PJTT	Peace and Justice Task Team
RfM	Readiness for Ministry
SCLMT	Spirituality and Congregational Life Ministry Team
SS	Shepherd's Spring, Inc.
SVMC	Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center
TRIM	Training in Ministry

## **Business Conduct**

No one shall speak more than twice on the same question. The first speech shall be limited to three minutes and the second to two minutes. This shall not include the explanation of a report or a paper called for by the Moderator.

All appeals from the rulings of the Moderator shall be decided by the voting body.

**Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard for any point not covered by these rules.**

### **Parliamentary Procedures in Brief**

In order that the delegate body may participate readily in the parliamentary aspects of the business sessions, the following summary of the more common kinds of action may be helpful.

When you want to bring before the Conference for its consideration a particular subject or item of business:

The proper motion is: MAIN MOTION – A main motion requires a second, is debatable, is amendable, and requires a majority vote to pass (or two-thirds vote if previously agreed on by Conference action.)

FORM: "I move that...." Or "I move the adoption (acceptance, approval) of this report."

When you want to modify or in some way appropriately dispose of a matter of business, you may (motions listed in ascending order of precedence):

#### ***MOVE TO LAY ON THE TABLE, OR TAKE FROM THE TABLE***

(Requires a Second, is not debatable, is not amendable, simple majority to pass)

OBJECT: to lay aside business in such a manner that its consideration may be renewed later.

FORM: "I move that this matter be laid on the table" or "I move to take from the table...."

#### ***MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION***

(Requires a Second, is not debatable, is not amendable, two-thirds vote to pass)

OBJECT: to stop debate on the immediately pending question.

FORM: "I move the previous question." Please note that merely calling "question" from the floor is not the same as a motion for the previous question and does not obligate the moderator take a vote.

#### ***MOVE TO POSTPONE TO A SET TIME***

(Requires a Second, is debatable, is amendable, simple majority to pass)

OBJECT: unlike tabling, the business is considered at a later time without needing to be "taken from the table."

## **Business Conduct** *(continued)*

FORM: "I move that this matter be postponed to...."

### ***MOVE TO COMMIT, REFER, OR RECOMMIT***

(Requires a Second, is debatable, is amendable, simple majority to pass)

OBJECT: to place the business in the hands of a few for later reporting to the Conference (for major changes)

FORM: "I move that this matter be referred to a committee of ...to be names by... with instruction..."

### ***MOVE TO AMEND***

(Requires a Second, is debatable, is amendable, simple majority to pass)

FORM: "I move to amend the motion by striking out...."

"I move to amend the motion by inserting...between...and..."

"I move to amend the motion by adding....after...."

"I move to amend the motion by striking out....and inserting...."

"I move to amend by striking out... and substituting this (read or state the substitute.)"

When you want to take an action governing the conduct of business, you may *introduce*:

### ***PRIVILEGED AND INCIDENTAL MOTIONS***

Although they are not related to the pending question, these motions take precedence over the current business. These motions are not debatable.

### ***MOVE TO ADJOURN OR RECESS***

OBJECT: to dismiss a meeting or to provide for an intermission

FORM: "I move that we adjourn... (recess while...or until...)"

### ***RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE***

OBJECT: to get the attention of the moderator at once, to ask a question, or to attend to some matter that cannot wait.

FORM: "I rise to a question of privilege."

### ***RISE TO A POINT OF ORDER***

OBJECT: to raise the question as to whether there has been a breach of order.

FORM: "I rise to a point of order."

## **Guidelines for Sacred Sharing**

Conversation is a key building block of relationships. Genuine conversation isn't about persuading others to our point of view. It is about sharing our story and perspective with others, and respectfully listening to the stories and perspectives of others. It is about developing empathy for another human being who has had different life experiences. Genuine conversation can help us move beyond conflict, placing it in perspective as we discover shared pain and shared passions, shared hurts and shared hopes.

Such sharing must be approached with care and delicacy. We are called to witness with compassion and care in our conversations. To that end, here are a few guidelines for sacred sharing:

**Transparency** – Create an environment of transparency in these conversations by sharing with honesty, allowing others to get to know you as well as God knows you.

**Use "I" Statements** – It's easy to talk about the Church or others around you, but in the interest of building relationships, we want you to put yourself out there. Try to use "I" statements rather than "you", "they", "the conservatives", "the liberals", or "the church,"

**Don't Name Names** – It is important to speak from personal experience; however, wherever possible, talk about situations or events in your life without naming names. This allows our experiences to be instructive while avoiding gossip.

**Don't Convince** – We encourage you to share your opinion. A difference in opinion is welcome; unity does not equal uniformity. However, remember that the purpose of conversation is not to convince others to your way of thinking, but to seek understanding.

**Listen** – Be sure to listen while others are speaking. Resist the temptation to think about what you want to say next and don't have a side conversation with someone else. Really listen. This is an expression of value and respect.

**Pause** – After a person shares, leave a pause to allow the entire group to feel the weight of what was shared. No one should feel rushed to get their thoughts out during the discussion time.

**Don't Fix or Rescue** – When someone is sharing a deeply personal or painful story, we often rush to offer advice or make them feel better about the situation. Resist this temptation. This usually stops people from sharing any further and hinders them from going deeper than they might have gone. Simply sit with and listen to them as they share. If you feel led to reach out, ask for permission to enter in, to offer an expression of comfort, to pray with them.

## **DEDICATION OF DELEGATES**

### 2024 Mid-Atlantic District Conference

#### **Moderator:**

You have each been chosen by your congregations as representatives of the Mid-Atlantic District conference. We come together to worship, to fellowship, to review, and establish the ministries of the District. This body has the final authority on District polity, program, and procedure. Will you faithfully carry out the duties of a Mid Atlantic District Conference Delegate?

#### **Delegates:**

I will faithfully fulfill all the requirements asked of me, as a District Conference Delegate.

#### **Moderator:**

May each of you walk in the ways of the Lord. Walking in a manner pleasing to God the Father, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

#### **Delegates:**

I will follow God and live for him, relinquishing self-will and self-ambition, making every effort to be pleasing to Him.

#### **Prayer**

God the Father, thank you for guiding this Delegation in the ways that we should go. Be with this Body today and we undertake the duties as delegates of the Mid Atlantic District. Help us to walk in your ways and be a blessing to you.

In Jesus Name,

Amen

## **SLATE AND NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**SLATE / BALLOT**  
**2024 MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT CONFERENCE**

For terms beginning in 2025

October 12, Brownsville COB

Candidates	Affirm ✓	Do Not Affirm ✓
<b>Moderator Elect:</b>		
Frank Lezotte (Denton) 2025		
<b>Leadership Team:</b>		
Area 3 - Jan Siegle (University Park) 2027 (1)		
Area 4 - Terrie Cox (Manassas) 2027 (1)		
Area 6 - Danny Rumpf (Grossnickle) 2027 (2)		
<b>Leadership Team At- Large:</b>		
Ben Bear (Nokesville) 2027 (2)		
Everett Fisher (Arlington) 2027 (2)		
<b>Leadership Calling Team</b> (called by Leadership Team)		
Area 2 - Yakubu Bakfwash (GraceWay) 2027		
Area 4 - Charlotte Bear (Nokesville) 2027		
<b>Standing Committee Representatives</b>		
Scott Linton (Union Bridge) 2027 (1)		
<b>Program and Arrangements</b>		
Britnee Linton (Union Bridge) 2027 (1)		
<b>Camp Mardela Board, At-Large</b>		
<i>Currently Vacant</i>		

## **Geographic Areas for District Representation**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Member Congregations</b>
<b>1</b>	Bethany, Community of Joy, Denton, Easton, Fairview, Greenhill, Ridgely
<b>2</b>	GraceWay, First Baltimore, Friendship, Long Green Valley, Reisterstown, Woodberry
<b>3</b>	Arlington, Flower Hill, University Park, Washington City
<b>4</b>	Dranesville, Hollywood, Manassas, Midland, Nokesville, Oakton, Woodbridge
<b>5</b>	Bush Creek, Edgewood, Glade Valley, Meadow Branch, Piney Creek, Pipe Creek, Sam's Creek, Union Bridge, Westminster
<b>6</b>	Frederick, Grossnickle, Harmony, Locust Grove, Monocacy, Myersville, Pleasant View, Thurmont
<b>7</b>	Beaver Creek, Broadfording, Brownsville, Downsville, Hagerstown, Longmeadow, Manor, Sharpsburg, Welty
<b>8</b>	Allensville, Fellowship, Johnsontown, Moler Avenue, Mountain View, Pleasant Ridge, Stone Bridge, Welsh Run

## **TOTAL NUMBER OF CHURCHES IN THE**

**MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT = 59**



## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Frank Lezotte

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Moderator-Elect

**CONGREGATION:** Denton Church of the Brethren

**VOCATION:** Customer Service Engineer

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:** Annual Conference Delegate

**Present:** None

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:** District Conference Delegate

**Present:** None

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Present and past:** Board Chair

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past:

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:

Reducing human prejudices that block our connection to God

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH** : To serve God to our fullest and be a voice of balance in our world

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Janice Siegel

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Team, Area 3

**CONGREGATION:** University Park Church of the Brethren

**VOCATION:** School Psychologist/Administrator (retired)

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

None

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Present:** I am currently serving on the District Leadership Team for the first time.

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Present and past:** During most of my adult years in the church, I have served on the local church board. Church Board responsibilities have included church board chair (past) and nurture commission chair (present). I have served on search committees for the church in times of transition and taught Sunday School for many years.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES Present and Past:** Our family has been actively involved in the life of our church for many years. In addition to church board responsibilities, I have assisted our local church as we housed refugees in the church house and with our current ministry of providing a monthly lunch for individuals experiencing homelessness or food insecurity. I served on the committee which provided leadership and resources to our church as we moved to become a more open and welcoming church for LGBTQ individuals.

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:**

Christian education, church growth and outreach ministries.

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH** : I love the Church of the Brethren's vision of being "Jesus in the Neighborhood," and I think it is my vision as well. I envision the church as a vibrant group of people who share God's love in their everyday lives and through the community of church. It is a place where all people should feel accepted and nurtured; and sometimes when this is difficult because of our individual differences, I view the church as a place where we strive to manage conflict in a loving way. My career as a child psychologist was dedicated to assisting children and families with special needs. I see the church as offering children (and all people) additional resources—knowledge of the Bible, and the power of the love of God as modeled through a Christian community-- that are not taught in our schools.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Terrie S. Cox

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Team, Area 4

**CONGREGATION:** Manassas

**VOCATION:** Retired Teacher of students with disabilities

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:** Annual Conference Table Teller (various years - 1990 - 2019), Annual Conference Office Volunteer (2023), Annual Conference Choir Member (2008)

**Present:** Annual Conference Table Teller

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:** Young Adult Cabinet (1989-1993)

**Present:** NA

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Present and past:** Interim Christian Education Coordinator, Deacon, Vacation Bible School Co-coordinator, Choir Librarian, Kitchen Co-coordinator, Church Board Member, Annual Conference Delegate, Youth Advisor, Sunday School Teacher

**OTHER ACTIVITIES related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past:** Church Choir, Handbell Choir, crochet baby blankets and lapghans for community in need, volunteer at local food pantry, blood donor

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:**

Disaster Response Ministries and work camps (Faith X) show the heart of the church to others in the neighborhood. This is where relationships are built and maintained. This is where we show a third way of living.

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH :** I would like to see the denomination come together to show love and acceptance to all our neighbors as Jesus showed us and taught us. I see a community of care and kindness. Relationships matter foremost.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Danny Rumpf

**SLATE POSITION:** Leadership Team, Area 6

**CONGREGATION:** Grossnickle

**VOCATION:** Secondary Principal

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:**

**Present:**

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Past:** Leadership team Area 6 and District Search Committee team member

**Present:**

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Present:** Church Board Chair, Senior High Sunday School teacher, Preaching Fellow and Deacon

**Past:** Various committees, Annual and District Conference delegate, board chair, VBS director, Pastoral Search committee.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body present and past:**

I have been involved with the CoB since 2000. I have attend national events such as NYC, NYAC, and Annual conference. I was a High School math teacher before becoming an administrator and currently teach math at the local community college. When I am not working for the church or my vocation I enjoy cooking delicious (hopefully) BBQ for my wife and three children.

### **SPECIFIC MINISTRIES or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:**

Vision and mission planning, Mentoring those interested in the path of Christ and those taking on leadership positions.

### **YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH:**

Through our prayers, mentoring, actions, love and support we seek to lead others to discovering their full potential through our savior Jesus Christ.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Ben Bear

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Team, At-large

**CONGREGATION:** Nokesville Church of the Brethren

**VOCATION:** Landscaping; Recreation Guide; Cook

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Youth Peace Travel Team; Brethren Volunteer Service – Assistant for Public Relations & Recruitment, Orientation Assistant; Workcamp Director; National Youth Conference Worker; National Older Adult Conference Minion

Present: Outdoor Ministries Association – Chair

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: District Youth Cabinet; Summer Camp Staff (Swatara, Peaceful Pines, Brethren Woods)

Present: District Leadership Team – Chair

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and past: Church Board – Chair, Worship; Youth Advisor; Camp Liaison; Worship Leader; Children's Storyteller; Hymn Leader; Pulpit Supply; Nokesville Day Coordinator

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past: Volunteer through Brethren Volunteer Service; Bridgewater Pantry Garden; Roundtable workshop presenter, small group leader; Dunker Punks Podcast team

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you: Outdoor ministries; Ecumenical engagement; Creation care; Justice work; Liturgical writing

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH:** The Church of the Brethren comes from a solid core of beliefs and practices, yet sometimes struggles to translate those ideals into practical ways of living out our faith in today's world. My hope for this district – and the denomination as a whole – is that we can recognize the base intentions for how we have been the church for 316 years, and not be afraid to reimagine them in this day and age.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Everett Fisher

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Team

**CONGREGATION:** Arlington

**VOCATION:** Retired

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Annual Conference Insight Sessions, Presenter; Annual Conference Song Leader; Annual Conference Delegate

Present:

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Leadership Team; Finance & Property Ministry Team, Chair; Camp Shiloh Board, Chair, Treasurer; Camp Counselor and Director, Shiloh, Woodbrook, Shepherd's Spring

Present: Leadership Team; Finance & Property Ministry Team, Chair

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and past: Church Board, Chair; Chair of Commissions/Leadership Teams; Moderator; Deacon, Chair; Choir Director; Sunday School Teacher

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past: Arlington County Public Schools Student Services Advisory Committee, Chair; Arlington County Public Schools Health & Physical Education Advisory Committee, Chair

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH** : We continue to struggle with our differences. My work over many years with individuals who have had experiences or hold views unlike mine, gives me insight into working with others to reach common goals.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Yakubu Bulus Bakfwash

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Calling Team, Area 2

**CONGREGATION:** GraceWay International Community Church

**VOCATION:** Pastor

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Annual conference delate 2018, 2019

Present: None

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Served as member of District search committee for DEM

Present: None

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and past: I currently serve as church planter and Pastor for GraceWay Int'l community church congregation. This has offered me the chance to meet with church boards; also, to connect with the larger denomination as well as the communities in which we minister.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past: I volunteer as Baltimore Police chaplain, community organizer, and have worked together with more than two dozen pastors and churches on ecumenical worship every February. Also, I do advocacy for International Religious Freedom, Capital Hill, D.C., and lastly, I love community gardening.

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:

Spiritual formation, evangelism, and preaching and teaching and leading Bible study, etc.

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH** : For our church to be a GOING church for a coming Christ.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Charlotte Bear

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Leadership Calling Team, Area 4

**CONGREGATION:** Woodbridge

**VOCATION:** Interim Pastor

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Directed Annual Conference Children's Activities and Music (2001)

Present:

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Moderator (2004), Outdoor Ministries Chair, Spirituality and Congregational Life Ministry Team Chair, Continuing Education Task Team, Ministry Interview Task Team, Leadership Calling Team, Jr High Ministry, several special task teams.

Present: Ministry Interview Task Team

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and Past: Various roles of leadership which have included chairing Church Board, Music and Worship, Christian Education, Witness, and Facilities; District Conference delegate, Annual Conference delegate, and more recently, Interim Pastor

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body – Present and Past: Weekday Preschool Program teacher and co-director at Nokesville Church of the Brethren (35 years), have served as volunteer Camp Counselor and/or Director for camps at Shiloh, Mardela, Shepherd's Spring, and Swatara, retreat planning and leadership.

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you:

Children's Ministry, Christian Education, Music, Pastoral Care

### **YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH :**

My vision is that the church will be willing to change and remain adaptable as needed to be ready to meet the needs of people in our ever-changing world. I pray that, within our congregations, we will be nurtured and rejuvenated by our love for Christ and one another, which will then inspire and empower us to follow Jesus' example as we carry that love beyond our doors to serve as his hands and feet in our communities and beyond.



## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Scott Linton

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Standing Committee

**CONGREGATION:** Union Bridge Church of the Brethren

**VOCATION:** Pastor

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: None

Present: None

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: None

Present: Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team (Current Chair)

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and past: At Union Bridge I have served as Pastor and participated in all the activities that could be associated with the position. By the District Conference I will have completed 5 years at Union Bridge.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past: At Frederick Church of the Brethren I have been Annual Conference Delegate, Audit Committee (Chair), Endowment Committee (Chair), and served in youth and young adult ministry leadership teams both for 12 plus years.

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you: Biblical Studies and Theological studies are some of my greatest passions so leading bible studies and preparing curriculum are among my greatest strengths. In my time at FCOB most of my time was spent either in youth and young adult ministries or related to finance. At UBCOB I have gained considerable experience working with an aging congregation and doing visitation. This last year along with Calvin Park I co-lead a Deacon training opportunity for the district.

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH:** My vision for the Church is to be a place where we can teach, share, read about, and experience the Gospel message. A place where we can encounter the Word of God and experience the love of Jesus while being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Then taking the inner Word and expressing it as the outer Word. Carrying the message and love of Christ into a world that so desperately needs it. The Word is salvational, redemptive, and transformative all at once. The Church should inwardly and outwardly be a place of peace, hope, joy, and love.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**NAME:** Britnee Linton

**SLATE/BALLOT POSITION:** Program and Arrangements

**CONGREGATION:** Union Bridge Church of the Brethren

**VOCATION:** Pastor

### **NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: none

Present: Clergy Women's Breakfast shared speaker role at Annual Conference, Planning Team of Clergy Women's Retreat (happens every 5 years)

### **DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Past: Camp Coordinator (2010-2011) and Program Director at Shepherd's Spring (2016-2017)

Present: Chair of Spirituality and Congregational Life Ministry Team, Mentor of Licensed Pastor, Co-led workshop at District Conference,

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Present and past: Brownsville CoB – Youth Leader; Frederick CoB- Youth Director; Union Bridge CoB – co-pastor

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** related to church or community that would be of interest to the delegate body - Present and Past: Help plan town Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas at the Square with Dream Big Union Bridge, pulpit supply for a variety of congregations before time at UB, Organized vision for Community Garden (Plot of Hope) in Union Bridge,

**SPECIFIC MINISTRIES** or areas of ministry within the life of the church of interest to you: Bethany Seminary, On Earth Peace, Part Time Pastor/Full Time Ministry, Outdoor Ministry Association, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Women's Caucus,

**YOUR VISION FOR THE CHURCH** : We are currently walking through a time of the unknown. As we share of our conversations together of how Jesus is leading us, everyone's passion and desire is different. It should be. We are created in our own unique ways to serve Christ in a world that is so dramatically diverse, but this diversity must come together in the name of Christ. As we continue to move forward with an open heart and open mind in Spirit, I believe we can embrace this unknown time with a spark that begins to ignite clarity, strength, and hope. Together, we can move forward fearlessly with creative new ideas and best practices to nurture each other and what is to come. Today we may be healing, but tomorrow we will be the love of Christ to all.

**DISTRICT STAFF AND MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS**

## **District Executive Minister Report 2024 District Conference**

It has been a great joy for me this year as I have stepped into the role as your new district executive minister. In accepting the call to this position, I recognized that it comes with great responsibility to work with all of the members of the district to promote the wonderful ministries that are happening in each of our congregations.

I began my time here in the district on June 25<sup>th</sup>. I immediately had a wonderful time of meeting and sharing with the interim team of Joe Detrick, Eddie Edmonds, Kim McDowell, and Gretchen Zience. In our meetings, the interim team shared a great deal of information about their work over the last two years, and helped orient me to what is going on here in the district. I am thankful for their acceptance of God's call to carry out their work over the last several years, and their faithfulness to that call.

Shortly after I began, I attended meetings of the Council of District Executives (CODE) prior to Annual Conference. It was an awesome opportunity to begin to know and share in the work of the other district executive ministers across our denomination. I look forward to future opportunities to meet with and work with this group in future years. Annual Conference gave me the opportunity to really begin meeting the people of our district. It was also a time of moving worship services and important discussions of the business of our denomination.

I had the joyous opportunity to lead the ordination service for Paul Leatherman III at the Longmeadow congregation on July 13. Celebrating Paul's ordination after a long journey through the ordination process helped to kick off my work on a good note.

Over these first few months, I have begun meeting with and getting to learn more about the various committees and task teams that are an integral aspect of our district's ministry. I have also had the opportunity to participate in my first meeting of the Leadership Team as your district executive minister. I look forward to continuing to work with the many leaders engaged in this important work that helps to guide and shape our district.

Coming into this role, I set a goal for myself of visiting and worshiping with each congregation in our district at least one time in the first two years of joining the district. It is my hope to be able to accomplish this sooner, but also recognizing that it will take time to do so. I have either

## **District Executive Minister Report** (continued)

attended services or scheduled a time to do so as of August 7th with the following congregations: Longmeadow, Westminster, Baltimore 1<sup>st</sup>, Grossnickle, Denton, Thurmont, Manor, Washington City, Oakton, and Manassas. I look forward to finding times to visit and worship with all of the congregations in our district. It is a distinct honor to worship with our congregations and to see the many varied expressions of worship across the district. I welcome invitations to individual congregations, including Sunday morning services as well as other times of worship you may have.

Coming in having never served in a congregation in the Mid-Atlantic District, I am continuing to seek opportunities to meet and get to know the district, its congregations, pastors, and church members. I am committed to providing opportunities for the district to know me, and for me to get to know our congregations and members.

I am always happy to set up times to discuss the work of the district, to learn what is happening in local congregations, and to build relationships within the district. If you would be interested in a time to meet with me, please be in touch with the district office.

Jo Ann Landon, our district Administrative Assistant, has been an invaluable resource person for me as I have begun my work as your district executive minister. Her work in the office, and knowledge of the district happenings and goings-on, has helped me to begin to understand the district as well as providing support to my work in the district office.

It is my hope and prayer that I can be a resource that our district uses to empower our congregations and our district as a whole to be faithful to our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us pray that this upcoming year will allow us to build greater connections across the district so that we can continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, and together.

Your brother in Christ,



District Executive Minister  
Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren

**District Interim Executive Minister Team**  
**Report to 2024 District Conference**

As the Mid-Atlantic District welcomed new DEM Doug Veal, our Interim DEM team completed our work together on July 1. With a mix of gratitude and sense of loss (and with some relief), we have stepped away from the relationships with pastors, congregations, and District leadership that shaped our time since July 2022.

For all of us, it was a privilege to serve in these roles over the past two years. Denominational encouragement to meet Jesus in the neighborhood took on a different form for us, as we met Jesus over and over in the churches and members of the Mid-Atlantic District!

That happened in visits with pastors and congregations and in work with search committees and church boards. It happened in experiencing the creative and committed engagement of the District Leadership and Ministry Teams. It happened even in the painful work of communication and decision-making around withdrawing congregations or conflict in churches.

We've seen Jesus again and again among you. There is much life and health and faithful discipleship happening in the Mid-Atlantic District! We recognize the challenges facing all of us: declining cultural interest in the church, membership, pastoral placement, and financial struggles, and continuing division over theologies that once held together. But we have also decisively known the presence of the Spirit among us, leading to new expressions of faithfulness. Some of those remain a mystery to be lived.

With a new DEM taking on the roles that four of us shared, our hope is that there will be strong support for Doug in managing the multiple responsibilities of relating to the whole District. There's too much to do alone. His gifts will be best claimed (and he will be best able to thrive) with active partners in this work.

We're especially grateful for the experience of being a team for this time. The blessings of that model were unexpected and rich. We're also extremely thankful for the collaboration with Jo Ann Landon and Barb Watt, such skilled and committed people. And for the many others whose care and involvement in serving Christ find expression in serving the District.

Thank you for this time together. May God lead, strengthen and hold you!

Kim McDowell, Joe Detrick, Eddie Edmonds, Gretchen Zience  
Interim District Executive Minister Team

## District Leadership Team Report

Greetings to all who invest in and support the Mid-Atlantic District (MAD) and its congregations! I was a bit surprised last fall when the consensus of the Leadership Team (LT) was to call me to the role of chair. I know many of us who are active in our local congregations have had similar moments of uncertainty over the years, wondering just how our name ended up at the top of the list for a role we didn't see as being our strong suit or in our wheelhouse. Despite that trepidation, our Creator places us in these positions for a reason. It may not make sense initially, but there are plenty of biblical examples of God's people trusting the nudge of the Holy Spirit to step into the unknown: Ruth following Naomi into foreign lands; Matthew walking away from being a tax collector to be a disciple of Jesus; Noah building an ark; Mary trusting the message of an angel about the child she carried. With those examples in mind, into the year we went.

We continue to have the incredible fortune of gifted and gracious leadership in our district. Our Administrative Assistant, Jo Ann Landon, is an invaluable asset to the work we undertake. A gracious and humble servant, her work behind the scenes touches just about everything we do, and she makes us look good while doing it. Similarly, our Treasurer, Barb Watt, has been a gem in a season when there were more financial documents before us than a usual year. Her diligence and matter-of-fact approach to the financial matters of this district have served us incredibly well.

Just shy of two years, June 30 marked the completion of Joe Detrick, Eddie Edmonds, and Kim McDowell serving as our team of Interim District Executive Ministers (IDEMs). It is difficult to fully encapsulate the weight and breadth of what these three did for the cohesiveness and spiritual health of our district. At the time of their departure, they collectively represented *more than 115 years of ministry experience*, truly an immeasurable resource to pull from in their work. Their heartfelt and earnest conversations, respective areas of expertise, and willingness to step outside their own comfort zones to further the ministries of our district will reverberate through the echoes of their work for years to come. Each of them came out of retirement to accept this calling to serve, and we are incredibly grateful for that sacrifice. A special note of thanks is deserved as well for Gretchen Zience who volunteered her time to serve in an administrative role for the interim team from all the way out in Washington state.

Following nearly two years of discernment, listening, searching, and interviewing, the district called Doug Veal on March 9 as our next District Executive Minister (DEM). His first day in this role was June 25. Since

## **District Leadership Team Report** (continued)

then he has worked to make the transition as smooth as possible from an interim team of three back to a single person in that role. The Search Committee “enthusiastically and unanimously” recommended Doug for this position upon their initial interactions with him, and he continues to fit well into this new calling. As Doug becomes familiar with the geography, culture, and people that make up this district, please assist him however you can by reaching out when you believe you or your congregation could use his guidance, and introduce him to the people and programs that make up your local congregation and faith community.

Another group I would like to specifically highlight is the Search Committee that did the heavy lifting in every aspect of seeking out our next DEM. Called in early 2023, these members met every other week for two hours over Zoom to shepherd this process from infancy to completion, investing more than 500 hours (estimated value: \$15,000-20,000) of their collective time along the way. They considered various staffing models, personally solicited information from every pastor in the district, created a position description, pored over submitted profiles, completed initial screenings of candidates, and joined the Leadership Team for the final interview this past March. This group came from a variety of congregational settings, lived experiences, theological perspectives, and social demographics, yet provided a beautiful example of how resilient the church can be when united for a common cause. It is with deepest gratitude that we thank these members of the Search Committee for their commitment and vision: Ruth Aukerman, Yakubu Bakfash, Nancy Sollenberger Heishman (Office of Ministry), Britnee Linton, Paul Munday (Chair), Dianne Nelson, Mandy Park, Matt Rittle, Danny Rumpf, and Gene Walbridge.

One of the major undertakings of the district this year has been working through the process of seeking to understand and engage with the query received from the Arlington congregation addressing harm reduction in the LGBTQ+ community within and beyond our denomination. In order to fulfill our due diligence, a Query Engagement Subcommittee (QES) was called in August 2023 to work through understanding the content and ensuring it was discussed throughout the district prior to this District Conference. In addition to myself as the chair, the group included Kim McDowell, Erin Olinger, Calvin Park, Matt Rittle, and Jan Siegel. They promoted dates and times for gathering to discuss the query, created an informational sheet to simplify and clarify the content, and facilitated the actual conversations throughout the district between November 2023 and February of this year. More than 120 members of the district hailing from approximately 30 congregations participated in at least one of the five Engaging the Query conversations, representing much of the



## District Leadership Team Report (continued)

diversity contained amongst our congregations. Most of the participants took part in good faith, seeking to truly understand our current denominational stance and our Christian responsibility for considering what changes – if any – might be needed. Four of the five conversations played out as one might hope, with a variety of perspectives shared, hopes and fears conveyed, and respectful listening during personal testimonies. Disappointingly, the gathering with the greatest attendance (~60) did not enjoy the same decorum. Leadership was ignored, conversations were redirected, and hurtful language was utilized. Speaking with both pastoral and laity participants days or weeks later, some still winced or choked up when recalling their experience in that gathering. *This is not how we are to be the church Jesus calls us to be.* It is my earnest hope that all future dialogue within our district – on this topic or any other where convictions may vary – be approached in a manner of sincerity, humility, and gracious love. Upon completion of the engagement sessions and a time of discernment, Arlington did choose to revise their query, largely by means of editing for clarity and brevity. I am grateful to the members of the QES for their work to prepare us for the conversations we will have.

In a year with some major staff transitions, there are some smaller changes within the district worth mentioning. The District Office moved from the basement level of Westminster Church of the Brethren to the third floor. The building does have an elevator, so the office remains accessible for any who wish to visit. As a result of the move, a Records Retention Committee consisting of Everett Fisher, Jan Flora, and Jo Ann Landon was called to establish a policy for the district regarding best practices for retaining documents and other records.

After many years of relatively stable congregation numbers, we did see four of our longtime congregations complete their process of leaving the denomination this past year. That process was quite involved, testing the scope of our understanding of legal documents and interpretation of district and denominational guidance. When combining that experience with the reality that some of our congregations are or may soon be closing, it was determined that a Transitions Team would be created to shepherd and guide congregations through those logistics. While the team is still taking shape at the time of this writing, we are grateful that Eddie Edmonds has agreed to continue in this one facet of district leadership and lead the initial organization of the Transitions Team. It is our hope that streamlining this process will allow for those departing to experience less pain and confusion and lean more into the celebration of their time of ministry in our district, looking forward to the future they are called to pursue.

## **District Leadership Team Report** (continued)

We have had a unique opportunity this past year to engage in conversations and envisioning unlike anything we have done before or might have anticipated. This came about due to a request the IDEMs received from Bridgewater Church of the Brethren (BCoB) in March of 2023. After years of discernment, attempts at reconciliation, and mediation facilitated by denominational staff, the Bridgewater congregation and the Shenandoah District (SD) have been unable to find a common path forward, a recognition echoed by the involved denominational leadership. The fracture stems primarily from the congregation's decision to become an open and affirming congregation, including supporting their pastoral team in performing same-sex weddings. This decision was determined by the SD to not be in line with understanding of denominational polity and Annual Conference (AC) denominational statements. As a result, all members of the Bridgewater congregation were removed from leadership positions within the district and their church facility was no longer permitted to host district events such as the SD Conference.

A number of ways forward were suggested by denominational leadership, some of which have already run their course to no avail. While the Bridgewater congregation earnestly desires to find reconciliation and remain in and a part of the SD, they also recognize how unlikely that scenario currently is, as well as the pain that the district's decisions have caused their congregation. Because of this, they have explored an untested, theoretical option that had been presented to them: pursue joining a neighboring district that would not seek punitive actions toward congregations that engage in choices not in line with denominational polity and AC statements. To be clear, this type of realignment has not been done before and it is unclear whether it would be deemed a legitimate option by AC leadership. The only other course of action available to the Bridgewater congregation at this time is to approve and pass a query through the SD and AC that resolves these denominational conflicts (which they are actively pursuing). After much conversation and a number of meetings – including a face-to-face gathering in April between the boards of the MAD and BCoB – the following statement was drafted and approved by our LT in July:

*The Mid-Atlantic District Leadership Team has been in conversations with the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren congregation since March 2023 to explore the logistics and feasibility of the Bridgewater congregation leaving the Shenandoah District and joining the Mid-Atlantic District at some point in the future. The Mid-Atlantic District*

### **District Leadership Team Report** (continued)

*recognizes that there is no immediate timeline for action, but is open and willing to continue exploring what the future of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren and the Mid-Atlantic District might become.*

While the Bridgewater congregation – and, subsequently, this district – have been more open about these conversations taking place, we do recognize the emotional and spiritual magnitude interwoven with this discernment process. Please hold this information considerately and without speculation. Should more decisions or forward progress occur, our district leadership will disperse those updates accordingly.

Lastly, I am grateful to our Moderator, Calvin Park. He has often been the thread that connected congregations and denominational ministries and disparate theologies and cultural awareness, allowing us to engage in the ministries of this district as effectively as possible.

May we step into the coming year with a boldness we have forgotten exists within us, empowered by the love of a God who will not lead us astray.

*- Ben Bear, Leadership Team Chair*

## **Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team Report**

CCMT is regularly engaged in the process of assisting new candidates that are beginning the discernment process into ministry. Our work continues as discerners may choose to advance into the licensing process. This process then culminates with an individual completing the educational and interview requirements to finally become either ordained or commissioned into the ministry in the Church of the Brethren.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, our team as well as the Ministry Interview Task Team and our District Executive participate in the relicensing process for our licensed ministers; this will be the first in- person meeting of this team since the inception of the Covid-19 pandemic. This day is a series of interviews with every licensed but not ordained minister to establish if they remain on track for ordination/commissioning and to ensure the licensees are continuing to reach ministry goals.

We work with Donna Rhodes at SVMC to review educational credentials to track the educational process that goes on for our ACTS and TRIM students. Jody Gunn has continued in leadership of our district TRIM Program. And we are in the process of renewing our relationship with Don Booz who has conducted Readiness for Ministry interviews to diagnose the aptitude for those in the discernment process.

Over the last 2 years CCMT has seen a tremendous surge in our licensed ministers completing their work and moving toward or completing ordination. Over the past few years this team has been over inundated with credentialing tasks. We are preparing to engage in a new push to work with our district congregations to encourage creating cultures of calling within our churches. This will help us work toward addressing our critical shortage of new ministers in our district.

Every 5 years CCMT participates in our reordination process to ensure our already ordained and commissioned ministers are keeping up with educational and credentialing requirements. We are preparing for this task which will occur next year.

This team appreciates the guidance and wisdom that we received from our Interim District Executives Kim McDowell, Eddie Edmonds, and Joe Detrick as well as Administrative Assistant Jo Ann Landon. We have already begun working with our new District Executive Doug Veal as we establish how we move forward in this time of transition as a ministry team in this district. I would also like to write a word of appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our CCMT members- Jenn Flora (secretary), Rachel Black, Janet Myers, and Calvin Park. Your prayers

## **Calling and Credentialing Ministry Team Report** (continued)

are appreciated as we continue to the work we have been called to perform on this team.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Scott Linton, CCMT Chair

## **Communications Ministry Team (CMT)**

**September 2023–August 2024**

The goals of the CMT are to develop ways to connect with all the Mid-Atlantic District (MAD) churches, to promote MAD events, and to improve communications among our churches. The team was originally formed in 2012 and made significant progress in achieving these goals in the five years that followed formation. The team previously made strides in redesigning the MAD website, creating and subsequently updating the MAD Facebook page, and developing informational materials describing the work of the MAD.

During 2023 and early 2024, we again made progress meeting several of the CMT's stated goals. Erin Olinger provided enthusiastic support in organizing the team, helping the team strategize about future goals, and recruiting new members. We focused energy on distributing an informational document to the churches about what the District Leadership Team was focusing on in their periodic meetings, called "Connecting with the Mid-Atlantic District." We continued to recruit new members and welcomed Jan Flora, John Fleming, Louise Scalzi, and Ben Bear (ad hoc member).

In February 2023, the team distributed the MAD's newsletter, *The Journey*, to all the churches after nearly 2 years without publication. Everyone on the team participated in writing articles, interviewing folks, reaching out to churches about their interesting activities, resourcing pictures to accompany articles, and formatting the document. Jo Ann assisted us throughout the process by sending us news events that she received and distributing the newsletter.

The CMT looks forward to achieving several other goals in the coming months. We would like to work more closely with Jo Ann to help her maintain the MAD website. Congregations could assist in this task by reviewing your church's page in the directory section of the site and letting us know of changes that should be made. We are also in the process of updating an informational brochure about the MAD that we will make available to the churches.

Finally, please contact the current CMT chair if you share our view of this team's importance to the District and would like to help us make a difference. We are always looking for new members and with an ever-expanding team, we can continue to improve communications among the MAD churches.

## **Communications Ministry Team (CMT)** (continued)

**CMT Membership**—Members of the team are the following: John Fleming (Manassas), Jan Flora (Westminster), Erin Olinger (Midland) (liaison to MAD Leadership Team), Louise Scalzi (Westminster), and Gretchen Zience (chair) (Oakton). There are other members serving in ad hoc roles, such as Ben Bear, who assist as needed.

## **Finance and Property Ministry Team Report**

The District ended 2023 with a loss of \$5,282. Receipts from congregations totaled \$135,840. Some churches contributed in greater amounts than what they had pledged; however, others were at or below the level of their initial pledges for the year. Congregational giving through July of this year does not reach the level needed to meet the 2024 budget. We realize churches are struggling and we appreciate all that you are able to give toward District operations.

Please keep in mind that increased costs at the District level are necessary to maintain our excellent staffing. Even with numerous volunteers at all levels throughout the District, we continue to rely heavily on the District Executive Minister and the Administrative Assistant, working out of the District Office in the Westminster Church of the Brethren. Funding for Conference and Travel expenses is also important.

Thank you to all congregations for your financial support throughout the year. We especially appreciate receiving quarterly contributions, which helps the District stay up-to-date on bill payments. As congregations work toward budgets for the coming year, we encourage you to increase your level of District giving. If the Mid-Atlantic District is not currently a line-item in your church budget, it will help us if you add an amount designated toward the District. It is important that we have all contributions in by December 31 of each year so that our audit can be completed soon after the beginning of the following year.

One major accomplishment during the spring of 2024 was completion of the construction work and relocation of the District Office to the third floor of the Westminster Church. Finance and Property connected with the Faithful, Assisting, Building Brethren (FABB) group at the Westminster Church who handled the project. The move has resulted in a much brighter and more attractive office space.

Finance and Property team members, along with the Interim District Executive Ministers met with leadership of the Myersville Church of the Brethren, as plans were developed for closing the congregation. Sale of the property and distribution of congregational assets were discussed, working to be sure that Church polity was followed in the closing process.

The beginning of new District Executive Minister Doug Veal's service just before Annual Conference went smoothly other than difficulties with a computer laptop purchase and security issues. Following conversations



## **Finance and Property Ministry Team Report** (continued)

with Francie Coale, the Director of Information Technology for the Church of the Brethren, everything was eventually resolved and Doug is now able to work more efficiently.

The Finance and Property Ministry Team would welcome new members to this group. If you are interested in joining this team, please contact Everett Fisher or the District Office.

The Finance and Property Ministry Team

Everett Fisher, Chair

Doug Potvin

Danny Rumpf

Gene Walbridge, Consultant

Barb Watt, Treasurer

## Outreach and Service 2024

### Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Coordinator's Report for 2024

We sincerely thank all the volunteers who continue to give of their time and talents supporting Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM)! Your willingness to help provide childcare, rebuild homes, provide household support, cook meals, or help support BDM and its volunteers through your prayers, encouragement, donations, or other means, have made a tremendous difference to those whose lives have been impacted by natural disasters and other tragic events, as well as to those who volunteer.

The Mid-Atlantic District (MAD) continues to be well represented by its volunteers working on BDM rebuild project sites in Dawson Springs, KY (tornado response) and Letcher County in eastern KY (flood response), who have served approximately 190 volunteer work-days through July 2024, and are scheduled to serve another 185 work-days this fall.

New this year, Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is in the process of establishing volunteer CDS Area Coordinators throughout the country to help promote, coordinate, and communicate CDS activities and training in their area of the country, and to identify needs for CDS volunteers to respond to local needs. Ms. Laurene Holsinger has graciously volunteered to be the MAD CDS Area Coordinator, and can be reached at [lholsinger162@comcast.net](mailto:lholsinger162@comcast.net).

Brethren Disaster Ministries provides help to people in need of childcare and/or assistance to regain full use of their home after it has been damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. The program provides a helpful and safe environment for volunteers to assist in the repair or rebuilding of homes and childcare, and hope to the homeowners. This is a great opportunity for people to use their talents and gifts, teach others construction and household skills, learn new skills, enjoy the comradery of fellow volunteers, and help those who are hurting. Volunteer housing is provided, often at local churches or community buildings, where weekly volunteers and leaders stay, eat, and become more connected with the community. Volunteers DO NOT have to be COB members. If you have a heart for service and disaster relief and recovery or a desire for a new challenge, please contact us and we can acquaint you with what to expect during a volunteer week and get you started toward a very rewarding experience. If you wish to volunteer, please contact your church BDM advocate or Jeffrey McKee, Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Coordinator, by email: [jamckee26@msn.com](mailto:jamckee26@msn.com) or cell phone: 443-547-5958. More information on BDM and on current work locations may also be found online at: <http://www.brethren.org/bdm/> or by calling 800-451-4407.

## **Outreach and Service 2024** *Continued*

### **Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Coordinator's Report** (continued)

There are still needs for volunteers to travel to Dawson Springs, KY, in 2024 during the weeks shown below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Group Size</u>
Sep 15-21	Dawson Springs, KY	7
Nov 3-9	Dawson Springs, KY	4
Nov 17-23	Dawson Springs, KY	4

Volunteers are still needed for the following weeks in 2025:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Group Size</u>
Feb 2-8	Letcher County, KY	15
Mar 16-22	Letcher County, KY	7
May 11-17	TBD	15
Jun 22-28	TBD	7
<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Group Size</u>
Aug 3-9	TBD	7
Aug 24-30	TBD	15
Aug 31 – Sep 6	TBD	7
Sep 21-27	TBD	15
Oct 5-11	TBD	7
Nov 2-8	TBD	15
Nov 9-15	TBD	15
Dec 7-13	TBD	7

Weeks not listed above have already been assigned, but there may be openings for individuals or small groups within those weeks, and there may be opportunities for work at a second project. If you have the desire to volunteer for a specific week, please let me know and I'll check on availability.

For opportunities to volunteer with Children's Disaster Services, please contact Laurene Holsinger at [lholsinger162@comcast.net](mailto:lholsinger162@comcast.net), or contact CDS at 800-451-4407, email [cds@brethren.org](mailto:cds@brethren.org) or check out the CDS website for information and training opportunities <http://www.brethren.org/cds/>

Peace and Blessings,  
Jeff McKee  
Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Coordinator

## Outreach and Service 2024 *Continued*

### Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction Committee Report 2024

The Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction Committee held its annual Benefit Dinner on April 6 and Disaster Response Auction on May 6, 2024. The Benefit Dinner was attended by 118 people and raised a total of \$6,026, \$4,516 from the dinner and \$1,510 from the delicious baked goods auctioned at the dinner. We thank all of those who attended, donated baked goods and other items for the dinner Auction, and particularly the volunteers from Bush Creek COB and Union Bridge COB who continue to host and prepare the scrumptious dinners!

The Disaster Response Auction was very successful as well, raising \$55,801. The Auction Booklet raised an additional \$20,560. We continue to be amazed by so many who attend the Auction and continue to donate their time, talents, and financial resources to support Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) and the Mid-Atlantic District. Thanks to all who give generously and support the Auction through purchases, Auction Booklet and Patron Ads, and donations. Thanks to you we donated \$72,000 to the BDM Emergency Disaster Fund in 2024, which brings the total amount donated to BDM over the last 44 years to almost \$2.3 million.

The Auction Committee thanks those who continue to make and donate auction items, including quilts, comforters, wall hangings, and other pieces, theme baskets and specialty items, and food items; patrons and advertisers in the Auction booklet; participants who make financial donations and purchase items; and the many volunteers who help at the Auction and Benefit Dinner. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to those who served on the Auction Committee: Lester Boleyn, Doretta and Jim Dorsch, David Fogle, Lou Gloyd, Bruce Hollenberg, Laurene Holsinger, Alice Houck, John Laudermilch, Jim Lohr, Daryl Long, Frances Miller, Jack Myrick, Brenda Palsgrove, Arnold Platou, Dorothy Saville, Myrtle Sturtz, Jimmy Weller, Connie Welsh, and Robert Wilson.

**The Committee needs churches/volunteers who would be willing to take over the Smoothies/Pretzel Booth, Popcorn/Water/Candy Booth, and Ice Cream Booth at the Auction.** The Committee is always in need of volunteers and fund-raising ideas and welcomes new members to work on advanced planning for the Auction and other activities. We also need help on Friday before the Auction and the day of the Auction to set up, clean up, and help move auction items.

## **Outreach and Service 2024** *Continued*

### **Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction**

#### **Committee Report 2024** (continued)

Thanks to everyone who continues to support the Mid-Atlantic District and Brethren Disaster Ministries. Your contributions make a huge difference in the lives of those impacted by natural and man-made disasters!

We look forward to seeing you at the following 2025 events. Please mark your calendars!

- MADDRA Benefit Dinner at Bush Creek COB – April 5, 2025, at 6:30 pm
- MADDR Auction – May 3, 2025, 7:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Carroll County Agricultural Center, Shipley Arena, Westminster, MD

Peace and Blessings,

Jeff McKee

Chairperson, Mid-Atlantic District Disaster Response Auction Committee

### **Meat Canning Report 2024**

The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meat Canning Project is a joint effort of the Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania Districts. The goal of the canning project is to help feed people in need, both locally and overseas. The canning portion of the project took place April 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> at Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) in Ephrata, PA. Volunteers from both Districts, approximately 139 for the week, had a good time working and fellowshiping together. Mid-Atlantic District volunteers had a good turnout, with some new volunteers on the schedule. This we are grateful for and thankful for those who came.

Through the generosity of congregations, Mid-Atlantic's 2024 contribution to the Meat Canning Fund was \$17,000.00. Again, thank you for those donations that help to make this project happen. With combined funds from both Districts, approximately 17,920 lbs. of chicken were purchased and processed (9,725 cans). Chicken costs: \$26,924.80 (\$1.5025/#) This year's distribution was approximately 135 cases (3,240 cans) each to Mid-Atlantic and Southern PA Districts and approximately 135 cases to

**Outreach and Service 2024** *Continued*

**Meat Canning Report 2024** (continued)

Brethren Disaster Ministries to be transported to Gilbert Romero's ministry in California and Mexico.

Our team thanks you for all you do to support the Meat Canning Project to feed the world's hungry people.

Meat Canning Committee Mid-Atlantic members,  
Lou Gloyd, Steve Horr, Brenda Thomasson

## **Spirituality & Congregational Life Ministry Team (SCLMT)**

Our Ministry Team meets every other month for 90 mins to 2 hours. We continue to move forward in accomplishing the goals we have set for ourselves alongside input we receive from the district throughout the year.

Last year we hosted a deacon retreat in September. This year we hoped to offer a workshop called Re-imagining Youth Ministry. Our hope by offering this training was something that could assist in nurturing our congregations, supporting our pastors, and spiritually renewing the programs that are offered in congregations. We hoped participants would be able to walk away with new ideas that are helpful for congregations with large youth groups and those with no children. Sadly, we had very few sign up and we had to cancel the workshop. Another goal is to develop a Pastors Retreat. Our pastors work tirelessly to serve God's Kingdom in new ways while continually nurturing and teaching their congregants. Being a pastor these days is very diverse and rest is often needed. We hope to have the Pastors Retreat in 2025. We also plan to have a Fearless Conversations session at District Conference every year. People often find it intimidating to share their new ideas and talk about vulnerable topics because they fear they will be shot down, made fun of, ridiculed, or more. Our goal for this workshop will be to offer a space to have necessary conversations in a loving and compassionate manner. This workshop may involve story telling and reflection, insight on areas of justice, or leadership development.

Mandy North, Jackie Bear, Missy Sumbry (middle school age), Gabe Dodd and Jan Walker (high school age) are still working together inviting youth and young adults to grow in their walk with Christ.

We have very much enjoyed working together to establish the worship services. We would like to have another one in the future, but this year we are putting that on hold so we can really focus on some of these other areas to strengthen our congregations. If you have any interest in helping to develop a Pastor's Retreat or know of good leaders to lead workshops in these areas, please do not hesitate to contact Britnee Linton, the chair of the committee: [britnee.linton@gmail.com](mailto:britnee.linton@gmail.com).

Blessings,

The Spirituality and Congregational Life Ministry Team  
Mark Tinsman, Mandy North (Jr. High Youth Rep), Jan Walker (Senior High Youth Rep), Britnee Linton (chair), Mandy Park, M Gresh, Matt Welch, Kim McDowell (DE rep), Jan Flora (LT rep)

## **2024 Standing Committee Report**

The Annual Conference Standing Committee met June 30-July 3, just prior to the start of the 2024 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren meeting in Grand Rapids, MI. As representatives from Mid-Atlantic District, we joined delegates from 23 districts in the denomination; our meetings were led by officers Madalyn Metzger (Moderator), Dava Hensley (Moderator-Elect), and David Shumate (Secretary). In addition to handling our committee business, we also participate as district delegates to the full Annual Conference meetings.

The Standing Committee reviews and makes recommendations on business items ahead of the Annual Conference sessions, hears reports from staff and agencies, and serves as the judicial authority for the Church of the Brethren. Later, the entire Annual Conference delegate body, with representation from all denominational congregations and districts, then acts on business by voting to reject, amend, or accept the recommendations that come from Standing Committee.

Each Standing Committee session began with a time of worship led by several of our members. After some time of getting to know one another, Standing Committee delegates shared joys and challenges from their districts — out of which emerged common struggles related to churches discerning departure from the denomination and calling leadership. But beyond our troubles, we also shared stories of creative partnership, particularly facilitated by technology.

During its meetings, Standing Committee received several reports from its subcommittees and task teams addressing a variety of topics, including: Negotiating Agency Covenants, Reviewing Organizational Structure, and Process for Addressing Concerns with Annual Conference Agencies. Standing Committee acted with great lament to officially close the Puerto Rico District since those churches have left the Church of the Brethren.

Standing Committee considered and made recommendations on a variety of old and new denominational business items. The Annual Conference later:

- Received an Interim Report from the Standing with People of Color Committee.
- Received an Interim Report from the Breaking Down Barriers-Increasing Access to Denominational Events Committee and extended their term to 2025 in order to conduct a feasibility study.



## **2024 Standing Committee Report** *Continued*

Received an interim Report from the Calling Denominational Leadership Study Committee.

- Adopted the Mandate for the Review and Evaluation Committee.
- Adopted a One-Time Change in Tenure to the Review and Evaluation Committee, extending that committee's work by potentially 2 years.
- Adopted Housing Equity Fund Recommendations.
- Accepted the concerns of the Query: A New Model of Denominational Structure and be referred to the Review and Evaluation Committee.
- Adopted two separate polity updates related to agencies: On Earth Peace and Bethany Theological Seminary
- Adopted a 3.3% Cost of Living Adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors.
- Adopted a one year extension for the Negotiating and Drafting Agency Covenants Sub-committee.

Except for handling denominational appeals and nominating activities, our work is normally conducted during the few days prior to Annual Conference. However, we held two zoom meetings in this working year as we finalized subcommittee work related to agencies and denominational structure.

Tim was elected to Chair the Nominating Committee in preparation for Annual Conference 2025. In the Church of the Brethren we share in the task of calling leadership to serve Christ's Church. We encourage all district congregations and individuals to give serious consideration to nominating people. The nomination process is simple, and you can find information and document links about the open positions at <https://www.brethren.org/ac/nominations/>. We highlight that our district has an opportunity to call someone to the Mission and Ministry Board, to which we have not have a representative in 10 years.

Craig continues to serve on the Standing Committee task team reviewing the denomination's organizational structure. Additionally, former Standing Committee Member from MAD, Ellen Wile, continued to serve on the Agency Covenant Subcommittee.

Serving on Standing Committee is a privilege as we discern the mind of Christ amidst our beloved denomination. Please continue to hold the

## **2024 Standing Committee Report** *Continued*

work of the Standing Committee, the Annual Conference, our district, and the entire denomination in your prayers!

Thank you!

Craig Stutzman (finishing 2nd term with final AC in 2024)

Tim Hollenberg-Duffey (serving 1st term with final AC in 2025)

Standing Committee representatives

## **2024 Standing Committee Report *Continued***

### **Request for Nominations for Denominational Offices**

The calling of denominational leadership begins when members of our congregations nominate gifted individuals for the next year's Annual Conference ballot. Your nominations help shape the future of the Church of the Brethren! As you prayerfully consider the open positions, who is the Lord prompting you to nominate for leadership in our denomination?

Please share this request with the leaders and members of your congregation and encourage them to submit nominations. Nominees are needed from every part of the church!

The offices to which leaders will be elected this coming year are listed on the next page of this document, along with our election procedures. More detailed information about each office open for nominations is provided at [www.brethren.org/nominations](http://www.brethren.org/nominations). Please note that some nominations must be made according to specific categories and that certain areas of expertise are needed for some offices. If you know people who work in one of the areas from which nominees need to come, please make a special effort to submit the names of those who could make a valuable contribution to our ministry and mission.

Please review the “*Call to Accountability*” charts, which can also be found at [www.brethren.org/nominations](http://www.brethren.org/nominations) – these demonstrate how we are working toward a balance of gender, age, racial/ethnic, rural/urban, theological, and professional representation among our leadership. The delegate body decided many years ago – and has reaffirmed several times – that this is an important aspirational goal.

**Please submit nominations online via the “2025 Nominations” link at the [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac) website.**

Note: ***You must provide the email address*** of the person you are nominating, so we can send an email to invite your nominees to submit their information online. We cannot consider those who do not respond. Please follow up with those you nominate to make sure they received our email. Please contact us if they did not.

If you do not have internet access, you may request a paper nomination form from the Annual Conference Office ([annualconference@brethren.org](mailto:annualconference@brethren.org) or 847-429-4364 or 800-323-8039 (and select Annual Conference Office from the menu).

Submit all nominations **by December 4, 2024.**

The earlier, the better! Thank you for your help.

The Nominating Committee depends upon your knowledge of the gifts and availability of diverse persons who can serve. We ask you to be diligent in your prayers and in your discernment of those who can lead and inspire us in our efforts to follow Jesus together.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact:

The Annual Conference Office at [annualconference@brethren.org](mailto:annualconference@brethren.org)  
or 847-429-4364 or 800-323-8039

or the Annual Conference Secretary at [acsecretary@brethren.org](mailto:acsecretary@brethren.org)

## **2024 Standing Committee Report Continued**

### **Offices Open for Nomination for the 2025 Ballot**

**Moderator-elect** (one person, 3-year term) Ineligible (past four moderators): Paul Munday, David Sollenberger, Tim McElwee, Madalyn Metzger

**Annual Conference Program & Arrangements Committee** (one person, 3-year term)  
Ineligible (member completing a term in 2025): Jacob Crouse

**Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board** (one person, 5-year term)

**from Area 1:** Atlantic Northeast, Southern PA, Middle PA, *Western PA, Mid-Atlantic\**

*Districts not represented the past 5 years are shown in italics. \*no representation for the past 10 years*

**Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board** (one person, 5-year term)

**from Area 4:** Missouri-Arkansas, Northern Plains, *Southern Plains\**, Western Plains

*Districts not represented the past 5 years are shown in italics. \*no representation for the past 10 years*

**Review and Evaluation Committee** (five persons, 2-4 year term)

**Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee - Laity** (one person, 5-year term)

### **Election Procedures**

1. From July until December each year, the Nominating Committee gathers *nominations* from across the denomination. This process seeks balance among the nominees between female and male, younger and older, rural and urban, geographic location, theological perspectives, and skill sets.
2. The Nominating Committee meets in early January to prepare a *ballot* of four names for each position. That ballot is distributed only to the current Standing Committee members (those who served at the previous Annual Conference), who keep that ballot confidential. The Standing Committee's vote reduces the ballot to two nominees per position. This is the tentative final ballot that will be presented at the Annual Conference. It is announced to the denomination at large in February (*AC Minutes 2001*).
3. Anyone *making a nomination from the floor* of Annual Conference is required, before presenting the name of a nominee, to offer a rationale for why the existing ballot for a particular position is inadequate. The Annual Conference delegates will be asked to vote on whether to accept a new nomination based on the presented rationale. If a majority of delegates vote to approve, the person may then present the name of an additional nominee. If the motion fails, the intended nomination shall not be presented nor named (*AC Minutes 2023*). If/when a nomination is allowed, biographical information and written consent by the nominee must be submitted to the Annual Conference secretary immediately for publication and distribution (*AC Minutes 1979*).
4. Each year the Nominating Committee explains the *goals*, needs, and procedures of our election process to the Standing Committee and the delegate body. Delegates are reminded to work towards a balance of age/gender/ethnic representation (*AC Minutes 2001*) – see the *Call to Accountability* report at [www.brethren.org/nominations](http://www.brethren.org/nominations). Standing Committee's 1983 "Call to Accountability of Representation on Annual Conference Ballots" also authorized Nominating Committee to use at-large categories in the structure of ballots to correct any imbalances of representation.
5. Congregations, districts, and agencies are called to do quality *leadership development*, giving leadership experience to a wide variety of persons to prepare them for possible denominational leadership, in particular to identify and call forth ethnic/minority leadership. All nominees for denominational leadership are encouraged to have participated in at least one *intercultural experience* in the past five years (*AC Minutes 2001 and 2007*).

## Camp Mardela Report 2024



CAMP MARDELA

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This year, we talked about being "Linked in Love". The key verse that brought this theme together was 1 John 4:10-12 - "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

As we have reflected on what it means to be linked in love in this way, we realized just how many links of love Camp Mardela has in this community and this denomination. We were amazed to see just how many people have been positively impacted by Camp Mardela's ministry over 75+ years. We represented this in a chain that everyone who came to camp this year added to. Right now we have over 50 feet of paper chain - and it's still growing. That is a lot of lives impacted for Christ! We are blessed to be able to share the love of God with everyone who joins us here at Camp Mardela.

**Programs:** Almost every year since 2021, we have seen our camp programs growing. We had about a 10% increase from last year. Our goal was 25%, but we are still very pleased that we saw growth, and every camper who came was blessed by their experience. We had 2 winter retreat camps and for the first time we were able to use Krabill Hall for these camps with the newly-installed heat and air conditioning system! The air conditioning was also a BIG help in the record-breaking heat of this summer. We are very excited about the program possibilities we now have now that this building can be used year-round. We were able to give about \$5,000 in scholarships to campers who needed financial assistance. This program is a big part of our outreach to ensure that all campers who want to come to camp can, and that money is not an obstacle for them to experience God at camp.

We also have camps for adults that we were excited to host! We had Family Camp on Labor Day weekend with guest speaker Barbara Lewczak. We also had our second annual Birding Retreat the first weekend in October led by Doug & Sally Ruby. With greater winterized spaces, we hope to offer more retreats for adults and children.

**Projects:** We have continued to make many improvements to our property and our facilities. The biggest projects have been installing heat and air conditioning in Krabill Hall, and making environmental improvements around camp. We've received grants to help replant trees, native plants, gardens, and improve the walking paths around camp. We've also improved our parking areas and added more storage. Next year we are looking to replace a lot of our equipment that is getting old - our camp van that broke down this summer, golf carts, an ice machine, and washing machines and dryers. We also hope to improve the RV areas by making a few new sites, cleaning up the existing sites, and expanding the bath house.

**Volunteers & Staff:** This year we had 14 program staff throughout the year, and 100 program volunteers. 35% of our staff were new, and the rest were returning staff from previous summers. As camp enrollment increases, our need for staff and volunteers increases. This year we finally felt that we had sufficient staff to run our program smoothly. We were blessed to have a lot of staff retention and new staff members who jumped in and greatly enhanced our camp program.

Camp Mardela had a BVS volunteer from August 2023-July 2024. He has been one of the greatest blessings to Camp Mardela since the pandemic. Having year-round administrative help has allowed our camp programs to flourish. We hope to get another BVS-er, or find someone to fill an Administrative Assistant position, because we want to ensure that Camp Mardela

## Camp Mardela Report 2024 (continued)



continues to grow, and this year's staff proved that when you have the help and support you need, you have a lot more room to grow.

**Support:** We are immensely grateful for the support we get from the Mid-Atlantic district and the camp community. Individual and Church Donations towards Camp Mardela make up about 50% of our operating budget. We have not reached our fundraising goals and have been under-budget on individual donations, and we felt that impact in our summer program. We are working to have more events and rental groups to provide alternate income streams, but we would greatly benefit from some more generous donors.

Many lives have been touched by the ministry of Camp Mardela. Many have met their spouses, made lifelong memories, lifelong friends, and made commitments to ministry and to a life of faith by being at camp. This is an incredibly valuable ministry in the lives of the individuals who come here, and it is worth sustaining. I pray that you join us in supporting this ministry of sharing the love of God through the outdoor ministry of Camp Mardela to see lives transformed in the name of Jesus. We are incredibly grateful for the support we have that has sustained us for over 75 years, and this support plays a vital role in maintaining and growing the ministry of Camp Mardela. We thank those who already support us, and if you are not currently involved, we prayerfully ask you to consider supporting this ministry.

**Stay in the Loop:** If you would like to hear regular updates about what Camp Mardela is doing, there are a few options. You can follow our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/campmardelacobmd](https://www.facebook.com/campmardelacobmd), follow us on Instagram @camp\_mardela, visit our website at [www.campmardela.org](http://www.campmardela.org), or come visit us at 301 Deep Shore Road, Denton, MD and see what we're all about!



## Shepherd's Spring Report 2024

Since January 1, 2024 guests who have signed our wall in the lodge have come to us from:

Nations of the World - 11

Jerusalem, Israel; Medellin, Columbia; London, England; Toronto, Canada;  
Czech Republic; Ecuador; Nigeria; Cameroon; Australia; Venezuela, Vietnam.

Larger Cities 12

Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Boston,  
Washington DC, New York City, Miami, Denver, Atlanta, Houston.

States 23

MD	PA	WV	DC	VA	GA	OH	NY	NC	NH	NJ	VT
IA	KY	IN	TX	CA	FL	WA	MA	MI	ME	RI	

## CAMP

In June we made the unprecedented decision to cancel the first two weeks of summer camp due to our lack of success in recruiting enough counselors for those weeks. In addition we did not have the required nursing staff. The 58 youth who had registered were notified and offered the opportunity to switch to a later week where both the counseling staff and nurses were available. Nineteen of the youth were able to move to a later time leaving 39 to whom we refunded their deposits.

For the past three years camp has been growing. This year was no exception. Recruiting staff in the past has always required an action plan that unfolded over a period of months, typically beginning after Thanksgiving and culminating in early June with a two week training period to prepare for a successful summer. This year the actions that had proven quite successful in the past were once again followed, but this time all failed to yield fruit.

In the past there were times when not enough counselors committed during our search, but at the very last minute the need would be met and camp always went forward. The question has been asked as to why notice wasn't given earlier as to the need. Actually, the need for counselors and nurses was sent out to the churches and the families of registered youth several times leading up to the camp period, however, because of the history of the need always having been met it was not presented that cancellation of the camp itself might be an option. Sincere apologies for not being clearer, but we actually kept expecting it to work out once again.

It is also worth noting that once the need was presented as it finally was we had several persons come forward as counselors and nurses making the rest of the summer possible. It is also noted that those counselors and nurses have been of outstanding quality and have in turn given the campers truly life long memories of the best kind. Be sure our recruitment next year will reflect all of the lessons learned from this year and more.

## Summer Camp in November

Anyone who has ever experienced camp will tell you that the friendships that are formed with other campers are often the most cherished part of the entire experience. Due to our having to cancel two weeks this year we wanted to create an opportunity to enable those who missed out on camp as well as those who attended to come together for a weekend in December and strengthen those bonds with a time of fun and worship. Details will be sent to everyone who was registered for camp this year. **Mark your calendars for Friday, November 8 to Saturday November 9.**

## Shepherd's Spring Report 2024 (continued)

### YURT

Last year we responded to the many requests from groups attending our Global Village to replace the yurt we once had. A yurt is a tent like structure typically found in Tibet and Mongolia. We decided to replace the smaller yurt that had been in the Tibet area of the Global Village with a larger one from Mongolia that was large enough for retreat groups to also use.

When the yurt was delivered to us in early June of last year we had even arranged for the guys bringing it to us to take the lead in helping us set it up. However, by the time they arrived the permitting office and the fire marshal had determined that before we could proceed we needed to have a permit in hand.

Recently the supervisor of the permitting office explained that since we began the process one year ago eleven others have approached them about putting up a yurt. He stated none of them have continued as everyone is waiting to see how it all works out with us. The permitting staff has been trying to figure out how to proceed as this is their first yurt to require a permit. It is probably good that the others have waited as we have only recently been given the green light to proceed. We now have a firm foundation in place (Thanks to Tom and Carl Jouanett at Grossnickle).

When we finally opened the crates holding the yurt, which had been wrapped in plastic tarps, we found that they had leaked and the felt which was meant to act as insulation around, and on top of the entire structure had been damaged beyond repair. Thanks to an anonymous donor who knew of the need we were able to replace the damaged felt and are now ready to proceed with setting it up.

Annual Christmas Banquet:  
Saturday, December 14th  
Make reservations now -  
Cost: Donation

Summer Camp 2024 Reunion  
Friday Nov 8 - Saturday Nov 9





Greetings COB friends!

2024 has been a year of challenges, new beginnings, and hope for our community. We continue to experience downward pressures from the current economic environment coupled with our ongoing workforce challenges. However, we are so grateful for the ongoing support from our friends in the Mid-Atlantic Conference. Your continued engagement in our mission at Fahrney-Keedy is invaluable in our ability to provide excellent care at an affordable rate to our vulnerable seniors.

We continue with the work of our latest expansion of our Independent Living cottages. We continue to work to meet our presale requirements with the Department of Aging. We are going to be breaking ground on a model home in the next month thanks to a very generous donor who has funded the full cost of a model home build.

Our Benevolent care fund continues to grow, and we are grateful for all who have generously given to support those who need our services but do not have the resources to pay for those services. This endowment once fully funded will provide the much-needed ongoing support to meet the needs of those individuals.

In 2023 we announced a partnership with Scout Solar who will be providing 100,000 square feet of solar panels which will be installed in various locations to provide covered parking, and a solar powered and covered outdoor pavilion which will include an outdoor kitchen, seating, lighting and fans. We are pleased to report that this project has finally achieved approval with the county and construction will begin in August 2024. This project will essentially eliminate electrical costs for the main buildings on campus and expand our efforts in becoming a more environmentally friendly community.

2024 has been one of the most challenging years in Fahrney-Keedy's history and while there is much hope and determination for the future, we have, unfortunately, implemented a very progressive expense reduction plan to mitigate the exploding costs of care in the healthcare environment. Our mission is to our seniors, and we are as ever focused on sustaining this community into the next 100 years!

More than ever, we are grateful for all of our partners and supporters and their belief in the mission of Fahrney Keedy. It is because of all of our partners that we are able to continue serving the most vulnerable.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Coetzee, LNHA President/CEO

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Please see the Sample Slate on Page 19**

## **Disorganization Of The Welsh Run Congregation**

### **Background**

On November 30, 2022, the Welsh Run Congregation met with District Representatives to share their reasoning and request to depart from the denomination. On July 10, 2023, the first vote (100% to depart) was taken following the district and denominational guidelines. On January 18, 2024, the second vote (100%) to depart from the denomination was taken which included acceptance of the *Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release*. On April 27, 2024, the Settlement Agreement and Deed Transfer documents were received from the respective attorneys. District representatives authorized to sign legal agreements were present in the Mid-Atlantic District office for notarizing signatures for the official transfer of the legal documents.

### **District Leadership Team Recommendation**

The District Leadership Team, after receiving the notice of “request to withdraw from the denomination” by the Welsh Run Congregation, and following attempts by the District Representatives to achieve a healthy resolution as required by polity, scheduled two votes, engaged the District Attorney, approved the *Settlement Agreement*, and provided the required notarized signatures. The District Leadership Team recommends that District Conference approve the following motion:

***“The Welsh Run Church of the Brethren, in the Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren, shall be disorganized as provided for and in accordance with Church of the Brethren polity.”***

## **Disorganization Of The Pleasant Ridge Congregation**

### **Background**

On December 7, 2022, the Pleasant Ridge Congregation met with District Representatives to share their reasoning and request to depart from the denomination. On July 26, 2023, the first vote (100% to depart) was taken following the district and denominational guidelines. On March 27, 2024, the second vote (100%) to depart from the denomination was taken which included acceptance of the *Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release*. On April 27, 2024, the Settlement Agreement and Deed Transfer documents were received from the respective attorneys. District representatives authorized to sign legal agreements were present in the Mid-Atlantic District office for notarizing signatures for the official transfer of the legal documents.

### **District Leadership Team Recommendation**

The District Leadership Team, after receiving the notice of “request to withdraw from the denomination” by the Pleasant Ridge Congregation, and following attempts by the District Representatives to achieve a healthy resolution as required by polity, scheduled two votes, engaged the District Attorney, approved the *Settlement Agreement*, and provided the required notarized signatures. The District Leadership Team recommends that District Conference approve the following motion:

***“The Pleasant Ridge Church of the Brethren, in the Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren, shall be disorganized as provided for and in accordance with Church of the Brethren polity.”***

## **Disorganization Of The Stone Bridge Congregation**

### **Background**

On January 14, 2023, the Stone Bridge Congregation met with District Representatives to share their reasoning and request to depart from the denomination. On August 2, 2023, the first vote (100% to depart) was taken following the district and denominational guidelines. On March 20, 2024, the second vote (100%) to depart from the denomination was taken which included acceptance of the *Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release*. On April 27, 2024, the Settlement Agreement and Deed Transfer documents were received from the respective attorneys. District representatives authorized to sign legal agreements were present in the Mid-Atlantic District office for notarizing signatures for the official transfer of the legal documents.

### **District Leadership Team Recommendation**

The District Leadership Team, after receiving the notice of “request to withdraw from the denomination” by the Stone Bridge Congregation, and following attempts by the District Representatives to achieve a healthy resolution as required by polity, scheduled two votes, engaged the District Attorney, approved the *Settlement Agreement*, and provided the required notarized signatures. The District Leadership Team recommends that District Conference approve the following motion:

***“The Stone Bridge Church of the Brethren, in the Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren, shall be disorganized as provided for and in accordance with Church of the Brethren polity.”***

## **Disorganization Of The Pipe Creek Congregation**

### **Background**

On March 14, 2023, the Mid-Atlantic District Leadership Team reviewed and approved a policy document regarding congregations requesting to withdraw from the denomination: *Mid-Atlantic District – Church of the Brethren Congregational Withdrawal Process*. (Based on *polity and recommended best practices* prepared by the denominational Leadership Team, March 2019; and *Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity* (February 2023).

On February 21, 2023, the Pipe Creek Congregation met with District Representatives (Reconciliation Team) to share their reasoning and request to depart from the denomination. On April 16, 2023, the first vote (81% to depart) was taken following the district and denominational guidelines. On March 3, 2024, the second vote (87%) to depart from the denomination was taken which included acceptance of the *Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release*. On April 10, 2024, representatives from Pipe Creek COB and their attorney, along with district staff, met in the District attorney's office in Westminster (MD) for the official transfer of legal documents.

### **District Leadership Team Recommendation**

The District Leadership Team, after receiving the notice of “request to withdraw from the denomination” by the Pipe Creek congregation, and following attempts by the District Reconciliation Team to achieve a healthy resolution as required by polity, scheduled two votes, engaged the District Attorney, approved the *Settlement Agreement*, and provided the required notarized signatures at Settlement. The District Leadership Team recommends that District Conference approve the following motion:

***“The Pipe Creek Church of the Brethren, in the Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren, shall be disorganized as provided for and in accordance with Church of the Brethren polity.”***

## **Disorganization Of The Pipe Creek Congregation**

(continued)

To be shared at District Conference:

The congregation worshipping in the red brick meetinghouse near New Windsor, MD, has a long and rich history. Initially known as the Dunkers at Pipe Creek, and later as the Pipe Creek Congregation of the German Baptist Brethren, the congregation traces its beginnings to 1758. They held meetings at the farm adjacent to the church until 1793 when they built a log schoolhouse that was also used for worship services. A meetinghouse was erected in 1806, enlarged in 1866, and rebuilt in 1891. In 1839, Sarah Richter Major preached at the church. John T. Lewis, a friend of Samuel Clemens' (Mark Twain), was a member of this congregation at one time. Abraham Lincoln worshipped here as he traveled back from giving his address in Gettysburg.

Between 1778 and 1867, the Brethren at Pipe Creek hosted at least seven Annual Meetings of the denomination. Over the past 266 years, the congregation established and led many congregations as the "Mother Church." Pipe Creek had a close relationship with Blue Ridge College in New Windsor, where Professor John J. John, our presiding Elder for 25 years and the great-grandfather of two of our current members, was a member of the faculty. The congregation also played a key role in establishing the Home Mission Board of the Eastern District of Maryland and participated from 1926 to 1941. Although we have withdrawn from the Church of the Brethren, we continue to be who we have always been, holding to our Brethren roots. Our mission remains unchanged: "We commit to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; to spread the Word simply and sincerely by giving, loving, and serving our neighbors; and by the manner of our living."



## **Closing Of The Myersville Congregation**

On September 21, 2023, a vote was taken by the remaining members of the Myersville Church of the Brethren to disorganize and close their beloved church. The vote was observed by Eddie Edmonds, at the time part of the Interim District Executive Minister Team. During the meeting it was decided to continue operations through the end of 2023. The decision was made due to declining membership and exhaustion on the part of the remaining few.

On May 7, 2024, District staff and Finance and Property Team met with the Myersville Transition Team members. The primary purpose was to hear experience and concerns of Myersville and to share the District's role in the changing status of the congregation.

Members shared that this congregation has a 110 year history. Myersville early on was yoked with Grossnickle and Harmony congregations. They have had some strong pastoral leadership and always supported Church of the Brethren programs. Even as a small congregation they supported the district and denomination. They supported BVS and had 2 members serve in BVS. The idea of service was also important to the congregation. Myersville has been a nurturing congregation and wanted to serve as "the hands and feet of Jesus". Myersville also sponsored 2 refugee families.

The congregation also put a lot into the physical building and its maintenance. Their outreach seemed to be a natural evolution—Disaster Response Ministries, Food resource bank, Vacation Bible School and others. Giving, even with only 30-40 members, was comparable to the giving of larger congregations; it is a testament to how giving the congregation was and is.

District staff expressed that their heart is with the Myersville congregation as they take this step and can only imagine how hard it is. They see it as courageous and open to the future and God's spirit. They were impressed to hear Myersville's stories. They thanked Myersville for their witness to the core values of the church and will hopefully continue on in other ways; they have a great legacy to be proud of. Memory of that legacy is something to celebrate.

## Query

### Reducing Harm: Interim Steps to Address Suffering

Whereas: “We Are All God’s Children” stated the 2023 Mid-Atlantic District Conference theme, including in its thematic text: “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” (1 Cor 12:26a)

Whereas: Standing Committee identified suffering within the Church of the Brethren, confessing in a 2022 statement there has been “...bullying, violence, and a general sense of dismissal toward one another and specifically toward our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters [and siblings].”

Whereas: This suffering has measurable impacts; LGBTQIA+<sup>i</sup> youth attempt suicide more than four times as often as their peers. Yet, “LGBTQ youth who report having at least one accepting adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt,”<sup>ii</sup> demonstrating that caring relationships offer hope for harm reduction and may help save lives.

Whereas: Three Annual Conference statements offer denominational guidance on human sexuality,<sup>iii</sup> the nature of this guidance is varied and sometimes contradictory.<sup>iv</sup>

Whereas: Specific portions of these three statements have garnered much attention (e.g., the two words “not acceptable”), but significant portions have been overlooked, such as recommendations to be a church that is “advocating the right of homosexuals (sic) to jobs, housing, and legal justice” and “challenging openly the widespread fear, hatred, and harassment of homosexual persons (sic).” (AC 1983)

Whereas: These three statements contain language, science, and recommended practices that have become outdated, despite the recommendation to be a church that “*continues to study and search for the mind of Christ in dealing with the complexities of responsible sexuality,*” using “the guidance of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and *responsible contemporary research*” (italics added). (AC 1983)

Whereas: Outdated science includes but is not limited to the denominational encouragement that “conversion to the heterosexual orientation is another option,” a practice that has been scientifically discredited since 1983.<sup>v</sup> The practice of conversion therapy has been made illegal in 26 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and over 100 municipalities since that time.

Whereas: Outdated language includes but is not limited to the near exclusive usage of “homosexual” to refer to the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>vi</sup> This now-flawed word is used 71 times across three relevant Annual Conference statements — 1983 (63), 2002 (7), 2017 (1).

Whereas: Steps to address these concerns should not create new suffering for LGBTQIA+ people or inflame general tensions across the denomination. We are not of one mind, and study committees should not solidify disingenuous unity and cannot create genuine unity. After all, “we do not create unity or fellowship. They are gifts.” (“Biblical Inspiration and Authority,” 1979)

Whereas: Speaking about a scriptural disagreement within the body, Alexander Mack Jr. once quoted 1 John 2:10. “Anyone who loves a brother or sister abides in the light, and in such a person, there is no cause for stumbling,” saying after his quotation: “The good God, who is the pure impartial love, can and will supply gradually where insight is lacking here or there.” (AC 1979)

Whereas: Until our denomination receives the gift of unity on human sexuality, interim steps towards harm-reduction are warranted to address the bullying, violence, and harm voiced by Standing Committee, as well as their call for the church to “redouble our efforts to live out differences, as

## Query (continued)

individuals and *through our systems of governance*, in ways that *preserve* the humanity, dignity, and deeply held spiritual convictions of *all*" (italics added).

Therefore, we ask: To help the denomination make progress towards the goal of respecting and preserving one another's humanity, dignity, and deeply held spiritual convictions in our collective statements and practices, what can be done at the present time about the outdated language and science, and one now-illegal recommendation, contained within the three cited Annual Conference statements?

An earlier query draft was adopted by the Adlington Church of the Brethren on August 13, 2023 and passed on to the Mid-Atlantic District. After multiple district hearings on the proposed query, this version was edited and readopted by the Arlington Church of the Brethren on June, 30, 2024, and resubmitted to the Mid-Atlantic District.

Gary Reals, Moderator

Everett Fisher, Church Board Chair

Robyn Reals, Clerk

Matt Rittle, Pastor

<sup>1</sup> LGBTQA stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual. The "+" allows visibility and inclusion of additional identities within the community, for example the indigenous term "two-spirit".

<sup>2</sup> Citations: Johns, M. M., Lewy, R., Androgewski, J., Barrios, L. C., Zaidins, D., McManus, T., et al. (2019). "Transgender identity and experiences of violence victimization, substance use, suicide risk, and sexual risk behaviors among high school students—19 states and large urban school districts." 2017. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Johns, M. M., Lewy, R., Haderich, L. T., et al. (2020). "Trends in violence victimization and suicide risk by sexual identity among high school students — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2015–2019. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69, (Suppl 1):19–27. "Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts Among LGBTQ Youth," <https://www.thetransproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Trans-Project-Accepting-Adults-Research-Brief-June-2019.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> These statements are: "Human Sexuality From A Christian Perspective" (1983), "Licensing/Ordination of Homosexual Persons to the Ministry in the Church of the Brethren" (2002) "2017 Report of the Leadership Team and the Council of District Executives on the Authority of Annual Conference and Districts regarding the Accountability of Ministers, Congregations, and Districts" (2017).

<sup>4</sup> The 1983 statement states: "the Church of the Brethren upholds the biblical declaration that heterosexuality is the intention of God for creation," yet also states: "this biblical affirmation of heterosexuality does not automatically exclude every other choice of sexual expression or nonexpression." The 2002 statement states: "homosexual practice (sic) is unacceptable behavior in the church and therefore implied to be sin," yet the 1983 statement (reaffirmed in 2011) states: "scriptures do not deal explicitly with some contemporary questions...[and] about homosexuality (sic) as an orientation."

<sup>5</sup> Prominent organizations leading this effort include the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American Medical Association (AMA), and the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The ACA states: "conversion or reparative therapy is the discredited practice of using "therapy" to attempt to change someone's sexual orientation...The American Counseling Association opposes conversion therapy because it does not work, can cause harm, and violates our Code of Ethics." The AACAP notes that practices of conversion therapy "lack scientific credibility and clinical utility. Additionally, there is evidence that such interventions are harmful." The AMA notes that "it is clear to the AMA that the conversion therapy needs to end in the United States given the risk of deliberate harm to LGBTQ people...Conversion therapy has no foundation as scientifically valid medical care." Citations: "Conversion Therapy," *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, [https://www.aacap.org/aacap/policy\\_statements/2018/Conversion\\_Therapy.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/aacap/policy_statements/2018/Conversion_Therapy.aspx); "Conversion Therapy Ban," *American Counseling Association*, <https://www.counseling.org/government-affairs/state-issues/conversion-therapy-ban>; Oscar Lopez, "American Medical Association announces support for U.S. ban on conversion therapy," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-lgbt-therapy/american-medical-association-announces-support-for-u-s-ban-on-conversion-therapy-idUSKBN1XT2F>; "APA Reiterates Strong Opposition to Conversion Therapy," *American Psychiatric Association*, <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/new-releases/apa-reiterates-strong-opposition-to-conversion-therapy>.

<sup>6</sup> Psychologists believe usage of the term homosexual "may perpetuate negative stereotypes because of its historical associations with pathology and criminal behavior." Further, it renders other LGBTQA+ identities invisible, such as people who are lesbian or bisexual. Citations: "LGBTQ+ Language: A Guide To Sexuality And Gender Words," <https://www.dictionary.com/e/l/gay-speaks/#its-not-a-gay-lifestyle>; "Avoiding heterosexual bias in language," *American Psychologist* 46, no. 9, <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgn/resources/language>.

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren Proposed Budget Summary 2025						
		2024 Budget	Proposed 2025 Budget	Explanation	% of Change	\$ Change
<b>Income</b>						
4011	Outreach	157,335	144,257	Past 2 yr average of outreach giving	-8.31%	(13,078)
4021	Interest/Dividend Income					
4023	Admin Fee Eder Financial		29,372			
4025	Interest Income from Loan GG	30,444				(30,444)
4034	In Kind Donations					
4042	Individual Contributions					
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>187,779</b>	<b>173,629</b>		-7.54%	<b>173,629</b>
<b>Expense</b>						
	<b>Staff Services &amp; Office Operation</b>					
	<b>District Executive Minister Salary Pkg</b>					
				Salary Pkg. includes housing, medical insurance. Calculated from AC approved COLA increase 3.3%		
500	DEM Salary & Housing	80,000	96,940		21.18%	16,940
502	DEM Pension 11%	8,800	10,663		21.18%	1,863
	DEM- RCWF Pension 1%	800	969		21.18%	169
503	DEM Insurance	5,400	976	Vision, Short Term & Long Term Disability	-81.93%	(4,424)
504	DEM Prof Growth	500	500		0.00%	-
505	DEM Sabbatical Fund	500	500		0.00%	-
	<b>Reginal Assistants -DEM-RA</b>					
	(3) Regional Part-time Assists to DEM	15,000	15,000		0.00%	-
	Social Security/ Medicare Dem Regional Assistants	1,148	1,148	7.65% of Salary	-0.04%	(1)
	<b>Admin Asst Salary Pkg</b>					
530	Adm. Assistant Salary	38,946	40,231	AC2024 approved COLA 3.3%	3.30%	1,285
531	Adm. Assistant Pension	4,284	4,425	11% of Salary	3.30%	141
	RCWF Pension 1%	389	402	1% of Salary	3.30%	13
534	Adm. Assistant Social Security/ Medicare	2,979	3,078	7.65% of Salary	3.30%	98
	<b>Insurance</b>					
5411	Liability/Renters Insurance	1,700	1,750		2.9%	50
5412	Worker's Compensation	650	650		0.00%	-
	<b>Office Expenses</b>					
5422	Computer Services	1,751	1,790		2.23%	39
5423	Office Fees/Subscriptions	500	500		0.00%	-
5425	Office/Warehouse Rent	5,000	5,000		0.00%	-
5426	Postage	250	300		20.00%	50
5427	Supplies/Copies	3,000	2,000		-33.33%	(1,000)
5428	Telephone	1,500	1,500		0.00%	-
5430	Website	400	400		0.00%	-
5433	PayPal Expense	20			-100.00%	(20)
5434	Interest Expense/Bank Fees	50			-100.00%	(50)
5435	Background Checks					-
5436	Conferring/zoom meetings	300	210		-30.00%	(90)
6560	Direct Deposit Charges for Payroll	300	80	QuickBooks charges for Direct Deposit Payroll	-73.33%	(220)
	<b>Professional Services</b>					
5431	Treasurer/Financial Services to COB	7,250	7,325		1.03%	75
5432	Attorney Services					

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren Proposed Budget Summary 2025						
		2024 Budget	Proposed 2025 Budget	Explanation	% of Change	\$ Change
	<b>Travel &amp; Conferences</b>					
5441	DEM Travel, Meals & Conferences	7,000	7,000		0.00%	-
54415	DEM Mileage	7,000	7,000			-
54412	Travel DEM-RA	1,000	1,000		0.00%	-
54413	Travel for Others	500	500		0.00%	-
5443	CODE Dues	950	950		0.00%	-
	<b>Sub-total Staff Services &amp; Office Operation</b>	197,868	212,788		7.54%	212,788
	<b>Other Expenses</b>					
5454	CORE Grants	500	500			
	<b>Sub-total Other Expenses</b>	500	500			
	<b>Total Operation Expenses</b>	198,368	213,288			
	<b>MINISTRY TEAMS</b>					
	<b>Calling &amp; Credentialing</b>					
601	Program	300	300		0.00%	-
602	Ministerial Scholarship	500	500		0.00%	-
603	Susquehanna Valley Satellite	5,000	5,000		0.00%	-
604	TRIM/EFSM	2,500	2,500		0.00%	-
605	Readiness for Ministry	665	665		0.00%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	8,965	8,965		0.00%	8,965
	<b>Finance &amp; Property</b>					
632	Review	4,500	5,200	EST from CPA Firm	15.56%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	4,500	5,200		15.56%	5,200
	<b>Outreach &amp; Service</b>					
641	Program	100	100		0.00%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	100	100		0.00%	100
	<b>District General</b>					
651	Leadership Team	800	800		0.00%	-
653	District Directory	150	150		0.00%	-
654	Standing Committee Delegates	4,200	4,200		0.00%	-
671	Annual Conference Assessment	6,100	5,500		-9.84%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	11,250	10,650		-5.33%	10,650
	<b>Church Extension &amp; Evangelism</b>					
682	CORE				100.00%	500
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	-			100.00%	500
	<b>Spirituality &amp; Congregational Life</b>					
692	Senior High	500	500		0.00%	-
699	NYC	500	500		0.00%	-
	Other	200	200		0.00%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	1,200	1,200		0.00%	1,200
	<b>Communications</b>					
710	Program	500	500		0.00%	-
	<b>Sub-totals</b>	500	500		0.00%	500
	<b>Ministry Teams Total Expenses</b>	26,515	26,615			
	<b>Total Operation &amp; Minsitry Team Expenses</b>	224,883	239,903		6.68%	15,020
	<b>Profit/Loss</b>	(37,104)	(66,274)			(66,274)

**DISTRICT FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren

Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet

As of July 31, 2024

	Jul 31, 24	Jul 31, 23
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1 · CASH ACCOUNTS		
101 · NW\$B Checking	15,585.31	84,910.70
104 · NW\$B Money Market (GG Loan Payments)	103,421.40	184,485.54
13 · Petty Cash	100.00	100.00
Total 1 · CASH ACCOUNTS	119,106.71	269,496.24
Total Checking/Savings	119,106.71	269,496.24
Other Current Assets		
130 · Clearing/ Holding Account	-3,100.00	-3,100.00
Total Other Current Assets	-3,100.00	-3,100.00
Total Current Assets	116,006.71	266,396.24
Fixed Assets		
18 · FIXED ASSETS		
181 · FURNITURE ,FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT		
1811 · Furn. Fixtures & Equip. Cost	13,908.91	13,908.91
1812 · Furn. Fixtures & Equip. Deprec	-13,908.91	-13,908.91
Total 181 · FURNITURE ,FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT	0.00	0.00
Total 18 · FIXED ASSETS	0.00	0.00
Total Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00
Other Assets		
13000 · PREPAID EXPENSES (Expenses that are paid in advan...		
161 · Prepaid Expenses	0.00	2,340.00
Total 13000 · PREPAID EXPENSES (Expenses that are paid in a...	0.00	2,340.00
17 · INVESTMENTS		
171 · EDELMAN FINANCIAL (BBT)		
1711 · Don Rowe Endowment	81,077.27	87,704.84
1713 · General Investment Fund	216,063.26	197,102.76
Total 171 · EDELMAN FINANCIAL (BBT)	297,140.53	284,807.60
190 · ACNB WEALTH ADVISORS (ACNB Wealth Advisors - C...		
1901 · ACNB Gov't Bonds Weath Advisors (CD opened M...	109,362.40	104,000.00
1901-1 · ACNB Mutual funds (\$50,000 CD Invested 3/13/24...	50,771.42	0.00
1902 · ACNB Flexinsured Account (Flexinsured Account)	806.32	648.98
Total 190 · ACNB WEALTH ADVISORS (ACNB Wealth Adviso...	160,940.14	104,648.98
Total 17 · INVESTMENTS	458,080.67	389,456.58
Total Other Assets	458,080.67	391,796.58
TOTAL ASSETS	574,087.38	658,192.82
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2110 · Direct Deposit Liabilities (Direct Deposit Liabilities)	306.75	0.00

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet  
As of July 31, 2024

	Jul 31, 24	Jul 31, 23
2 · LIABILITIES		
20 · SHORT TERM LIABILITY		
203 · PAYROLL PAYABLE		
2025 · Medical Insurance	17.28	0.00
2022 · Pension Payable	529.42	404.97
2031 · Federal Taxes Payable	140.00	138.00
2032 · Medicare Payable	94.10	89.64
2033 · Social Security Payable	402.44	383.26
2034 · Maryland Taxes Payable	605.38	194.08
2035 · Payroll Liabilities	66.36	0.00
Total 203 · PAYROLL PAYABLE	1,854.98	1,209.95
Total 20 · SHORT TERM LIABILITY	1,854.98	1,209.95
Total 2 · LIABILITIES	1,854.98	1,209.95
Total Other Current Liabilities	2,161.73	1,209.95
Total Current Liabilities	2,161.73	1,209.95
Total Liabilities	2,161.73	1,209.95
Equity		
3 · FUNDS		
30 · TEMP RESTRICTED		
375 · Designated Donation (Donation that are designated ...	0.00	3,000.00
301 · AUCTION FUND		
301-4 · AUCTION INCOME HISTORICAL		
301-401 · Interest Income	455.29	455.29
301-402 · Other Income - Auction	847,703.90	815,479.39
301-403 · Quilts	212,072.50	189,272.50
301-404 · Benefit Dinners	33,880.37	27,889.37
301-405 · Booklet Donations	358,258.53	337,698.53
301-408 · Auction Donations	120,474.17	118,393.64
Total 301-4 · AUCTION INCOME HISTORICAL	1,572,844.76	1,489,188.72
301-5 · AUCTION EXPENES HISTORICAL		
301-501 · Admin. Fee	-51,066.07	-48,688.95
301-502 · Postage & Supplies	-7,774.00	-7,621.29
301-503 · Printing/Booklet	-105,299.87	-99,097.91
301-504 · Quilts	-16,467.08	-16,467.08
301-505 · Rent	-40,627.78	-36,507.78
301-507 · Contribution to Program	-1,349,369.00	-1,192,369.00
Total 301-5 · AUCTION EXPENES HISTORICAL	-1,570,603.80	-1,400,752.01
Total 301 · AUCTION FUND	2,240.96	88,436.71
302 · MEAT CANNING FUND		
302-4 · MEAT CANNING HISTORICAL INCOME		
302-401 · Interest Income	832.56	832.56
302-402 · Meat Canning Income	447,881.40	428,614.40
Total 302-4 · MEAT CANNING HISTORICAL INCOME	448,713.96	429,446.96
302-5 · MEAT CANNING HISTORICAL EXPENSES		
302-501 · Admin. Fee & Postage	-23,987.28	-23,130.45
302-507 · Contribution to Program	-439,855.05	-422,855.05
Total 302-5 · MEAT CANNING HISTORICAL EXPENSES	-463,842.33	-445,985.50
302 · MEAT CANNING FUND - Other	19,361.07	19,361.07
Total 302 · MEAT CANNING FUND	4,232.70	2,822.53



Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet  
As of July 31, 2024

	Jul 31, 24	Jul 31, 23
304 · NOAC Activity (NOAC Activity)		
304-401 · NOAC Income	12,867.00	12,967.00
304-501 · NOAC Expenses	-12,755.43	-10,867.00
Total 304 · NOAC Activity (NOAC Activity)	111.57	2,100.00
305 · NEW PASTOR RETREAT ACTIVITY		
305-401 · New Pastor Retreat Income	11,894.47	11,894.47
305-501 · New Pastor Retreat Expenses	-11,468.24	-11,468.19
305 · NEW PASTOR RETREAT ACTIVITY - Other	-1.40	-0.65
Total 305 · NEW PASTOR RETREAT ACTIVITY	424.83	425.63
310 · Salt & Light Ministry	100.00	100.00
311 · Leadership Team Books (Money for books for Lead...	293.80	293.80
Total 30 · TEMP RESTRICTED	7,403.86	97,178.67
33 · MINISTRY TEAM DESIGNATED FUNDS		
330 · NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE FUND	3,956.55	3,456.55
331 · DISTRICT CONFERENCE FUND	2,015.33	1,287.80
332 · CONT.EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND	2,040.86	2,040.86
333 · DISASTER FUND	22,598.69	44,814.19
334 · MINISTERIAL TRAINING EVENT FUND	2,249.14	5,913.07
336 · DON ROWE STUDENT ENDOWMENT FUND		
3361 · Unrealized Gain/Loss Don Rowe (BBT Student E...	59,699.69	52,285.94
336 · DON ROWE STUDENT ENDOWMENT FUND - Other	20,346.56	20,695.38
Total 336 · DON ROWE STUDENT ENDOWMENT FUND	80,046.25	72,981.32
338 · JR. HIGH CONFERENCE FUND	1,806.81	1,768.81
339 · SENIOR HIGH PROGRAM FUND	2,120.80	2,120.80
340 · YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM FUND	146.54	146.54
343 · PEACE & JUSTICE FUND	123.92	123.92
347 · DISTRICT HABITAT FUND	150.00	150.00
Total 33 · MINISTRY TEAM DESIGNATED FUNDS	117,254.89	134,803.86
35 · LEADERSHIP DESIGNATED FUNDS		
351 · OPERATING RESERVE FUND		
351-1 · Operating Reserve Fund (Yr. End Surplus/Defi...	245,593.78	256,323.78
351-2 · GG 25% Operating Reverse (25% Operating Dis...	24,306.65	10,055.09
Total 351 · OPERATING RESERVE FUND	269,900.43	266,378.87
353 · EQUIPMENT & SECY FUND	16,708.65	14,324.02
355 · CHURCH EXTENSION FUND		
3551 · Dundalk Restart (Restart of Dundalk Church Of t...		
3551-20 · 2020 GraceWay Support	-22,000.00	-22,000.00
3551-19 · GraceWay Support 2019	-39,916.05	-39,916.05
3551-10 · Dundalk Restart Support 2018	-33,833.09	-33,833.09
3551-9 · Dundalk Restart Support 2017	-29,256.64	-29,256.64
3551-12 · Dundalk Restart Support 2016	-6,696.58	-6,696.58
Total 3551 · Dundalk Restart (Restart of Dundalk Churc...	-131,702.36	-131,702.36
355 · CHURCH EXTENSION FUND - Other	164,656.21	150,434.40
Total 355 · CHURCH EXTENSION FUND	32,953.85	18,732.04
356 · SPECIAL MINISTRIES FUND	3,102.82	1,078.36
360 · GREATERGRACE/GOOD SHEPHERD FUND		
143 · Greater Grace Church Loan	-757,286.58	-783,771.20
360-3 · GOOD SHEPHERD Principal & Cash (Sale of th...	1,028,268.70	1,028,268.70
362 · Good Shepherd Allocated (paymen	-349,393.16	-292,386.80
370 · Endowment Greater Grace (50%)	171,019.37	142,516.13
Total 360 · GREATERGRACE/GOOD SHEPHERD FUND	92,608.33	94,626.83

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren

Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet

As of July 31, 2024

	Jul 31, 24	Jul 31, 23
380 · Congregation Departing Fees (Money collected for u...	17,206.00	0.00
Total 35 · LEADERSHIP DESIGNATED FUNDS	432,480.08	395,140.12
Total 3 · FUNDS	557,138.83	627,122.65
3900 · Net Assets	39,203.41	41,872.02
Net Income	-24,416.59	-12,011.80
Total Equity	571,925.65	656,982.87
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	574,087.38	658,192.82

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren

Statement of Financial Income and Expense Comparson 24-23

January through July 2024

	Jan - Jul 24	Jan - Jul 23
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
4 · INCOME		
401 · CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH		
4011 · Outreach giving/Pledges	58,066.87	69,717.54
Total 401 · CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH	58,066.87	69,717.54
402 · INTEREST INCOME		
4021 · Interest/Dividend Income	9,732.75	2,691.10
4023 · Admin Fee Eder Financial	-865.67	-785.91
4025 · Interest Income from Loan GG	17,585.97	18,406.42
Total 402 · INTEREST INCOME	26,453.05	20,311.61
404 · OTHER BENEV. GIFTS		
4042 · Individual Contr.	300.00	-685.00
Total 404 · OTHER BENEV. GIFTS	300.00	-685.00
Total 4 · INCOME	84,819.92	89,344.15
Total Income	84,819.92	89,344.15
Gross Profit	84,819.92	89,344.15
Expense		
5 · EXPENSES		
50 · DEM SALARY PKG		
500 · DEM- Salary	7,444.12	0.00
501 · DEM- Housing	1,792.80	0.00
502 · DEM - Pension	924.20	0.00
503 · DEM - Insurance- Vision, STD, L	26.32	0.00
50 · DEM SALARY PKG - Other	52.50	0.00
Total 50 · DEM SALARY PKG	10,239.94	0.00
51-1 · INTERIM DEM SALARY PACKAGE (SALARY PACKAGE F...		
51-2 · Interim DEM Salary (Interim DEM Salary)	18,999.36	20,854.35
51-3 · Interim DEM Pension (Pension for Interim DEM)	1,954.00	2,053.20
51-4 · Interim DEM HOUSING	21,092.28	22,964.25
51-5 · Interim DEM Supplement Pension	2,751.60	2,937.90
Total 51-1 · INTERIM DEM SALARY PACKAGE (SALARY PACKA...	44,797.24	48,809.70
53 · ADMIN. AST. SALARY PGK		
530 · Admin. Asst. Salary	22,718.22	23,064.59
531 · Admin. Asst. Pension	2,795.83	2,737.37
534 · Company S/S & Medi- Admin	1,737.94	1,764.44
Total 53 · ADMIN. AST. SALARY PGK	27,251.99	27,566.40
54 · DAILY OPERATIONS		
541 · INSURANCE		
5411 · Liability/Renters Insurance	1,718.00	1,652.00
5412 · Worker's Compensation Insurance	515.00	630.00
Total 541 · INSURANCE	2,233.00	2,282.00

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Statement of Financial Income and Expense Comparison 24-23  
January through July 2024

	Jan - Jul 24	Jan - Jul 23
<b>542 · OFFICE EXPENSES</b>		
5422 · Computer Services	1,015.00	1,034.00
5423 · Office Fees/Subscription	10.00	0.00
5425 · Office/Warehouse Rent	2,925.02	2,921.10
5426 · Postage	194.37	120.16
5427 · Supplies/Copies	1,065.15	850.33
5428 · Telephone	385.05	469.10
5430 · Web Site (Internet)	257.65	243.65
5433 · Web Donation Fee / Pay Pal Exp (Fee charged by P...	0.00	10.08
5434 · Bank Charges / Finance Charge	0.00	3.23
5435 · Background Checks	0.00	69.00
5436 · Confering/Zoom Meetings	209.90	141.23
6560 · Direct Deposit Fee Payroll Exp. (QB Fee for Direct ...	80.01	169.62
<b>Total 542 · OFFICE EXPENSES</b>	<b>6,142.15</b>	<b>6,031.50</b>
<b>543 · PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>		
5431 · Treasurer/Financial Service Fee	4,229.19	4,229.19
<b>Total 543 · PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>	<b>4,229.19</b>	<b>4,229.19</b>
<b>544 · TRAVEL &amp; CONFERENCES</b>		
5441 · Travel, Meals, & Conference	2,771.12	313.00
54413 · Travel for Others (Travel & Mileage reimbursemen...	0.00	131.33
54414 · DEM Mileage - Interim	6,625.53	9,325.14
5443 · CODE Dues	643.00	945.00
<b>Total 544 · TRAVEL &amp; CONFERENCES</b>	<b>10,039.65</b>	<b>10,714.47</b>
<b>545 · OTHER EXPENSES</b>		
5455 · Search Committee	2,955.41	162.75
545 · OTHER EXPENSES - Other	0.00	1,057.36
<b>Total 545 · OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,955.41</b>	<b>1,220.11</b>
<b>Total 54 · DAILY OPERATIONS</b>	<b>25,599.40</b>	<b>24,477.27</b>
<b>Total 5 · EXPENSES</b>	<b>107,888.57</b>	<b>100,853.37</b>
<b>6 · MINISTRY TEAMS</b>		
<b>60 · CALLING &amp; CREDENTIALING</b>		
601 · Program	37.38	279.37
603 · Susquehanna Valley Ministry Ce	2,500.00	2,511.73
604 · TRIM/EFSM	1,500.05	1,500.10
605 · Readiness for Ministry	0.05	0.00
<b>Total 60 · CALLING &amp; CREDENTIALING</b>	<b>4,037.48</b>	<b>4,291.20</b>
<b>64 · OUTREACH &amp; SERVICES</b>		
641 · Program	0.15	0.30
<b>Total 64 · OUTREACH &amp; SERVICES</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.30</b>
<b>65 · DISTRICT GENERAL</b>		
651 · Leadership Team	52.33	737.75
654 · Standing Committee Delegates	1,529.57	2,340.33
671 · Annual Conference Assessment	5,426.40	5,299.80
<b>Total 65 · DISTRICT GENERAL</b>	<b>7,008.30</b>	<b>8,377.88</b>
<b>69 · SPIRITUALITY &amp; CONGREGATIONAL</b>		
699 · NYC	500.00	500.00
<b>Total 69 · SPIRITUALITY &amp; CONGREGATIONAL</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>

Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Statement of Financial Income and Expense Comparson 24-23  
January through July 2024

	Jan - Jul 24	Jan - Jul 23
70 · COMMUNICATIONS TEAM		
710 · Program	0.00	910.00
Total 70 · COMMUNICATIONS TEAM	0.00	910.00
Total 6 · MINISTRY TEAMS	11,545.93	14,079.38
Total Expense	119,434.50	114,932.75
Net Ordinary Income	-34,614.58	-25,588.60
Other Income/Expense		
Other Expense		
702 · TRANSFERS / INTERFUND EXPENSES (Interfund Expenses)		
4022 · Unrealized (Gain) /Loss Invest. (General Operating Account)	-10,197.99	-13,576.80
Total 702 · TRANSFERS / INTERFUND EXPENSES (Interfund Expens...	-10,197.99	-13,576.80
Total Other Expense	-10,197.99	-13,576.80
Net Other Income	10,197.99	13,576.80
Net Income	-24,416.59	-12,011.80

Outreach as of July 2024

	Pledged	Actual	Actual	Actual
Congregation	2022	2022	2023	2024
Allensville				
Arlington		3,937.50	3,150.00	1,750.00
Beaver Creek		4,000.00	5,000.00	2,000.00
Bethany		1,000.00	1,000.00	
Broadfording		3,000.00	3,000.00	1,625.00
Brownsville		10,284.00	8,997.00	2,332.00
Bush Creek	2000	1,845.00	2,000.00	500.00
Columbia United		500.00		
Comm. Of Joy			2,774.95	
Denton		2,500.00	2,500.00	1,000.00
Downsville		450.00	750.00	250.00
Dranesville		2,600.00	3,000.00	1,600.00
Dundalk				
Easton		3,500.00	4,000.00	2,000.00
Edgewood		500.00	500.00	
Fairview		5,700.00	5,700.00	5,700.00
Fellowship		2,400.00	2,450.00	100.00
First Baltimore		1,100.00	900.00	750.00
Flower Hill				
Frederick		10,000.00	10,000.00	
Friendship				
Glade Valley		1,230.00	1,230.00	600.00
Greenhill	1750	1,750.00	1,750.00	900.00
Grossnickle		6,500.00	6,500.00	4,875.00
Hagerstown	5000	6,300.00	4,875.00	3,350.00
Harmony		500.00	500.00	500.00
Hollywood				
Johnsontown	1575	1,575.00	1,575.00	1,575.00
Locust Grove				
Long Green Valley		1,150.00	1,100.00	460.00
Long Meadow		400.00		
Manassas		16,059.00	11,571.75	5,290.00
Manor		1,000.00	1,000.00	
Meadow Branch		500.00	500.00	
Midland	2500	2,992.59	2,806.47	2,037.87
Moler Avenue		1,600.00		
Monocacy		100.00		
Mountain View		1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Myersville		1,900.00	1,900.00	
Nokesville		2,000.00	2,000.00	
Oakton		5,200.00	3,900.00	1,962.50
Piney Creek		1,200.00	1,200.00	
Pipe Creek				
Pleasant Ridge				
Pleasant View				
Reisterstown				
Ridgely		6,000.00	1,000.00	250.00
Sam's Creek		500.00		
Sharpsburg		300.00	300.00	150.00
Stone Bridge		150.00		
Thurmont		1,000.00		1,000.00

Outreach as of July 2024

	Pledged	Actual	Actual	Actual
Congregation	2022	2022	2023	2024
Union Bridge		11,750.00	11,750.00	2,937.50
University Park		3,500.00	2,400.00	4,200.00
Washington City		1,000.00		
Welsh Run		1,131.00		
Welty		1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00
Westminster		13,750.00	11,500.00	3,000.00
Woodberry		1,000.00	1,000.00	
Woodbridge		4,938.00	4,160.00	2,772.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12,825.00</b>	<b>152,892.09</b>	<b>134,863.17</b>	<b>58,066.87</b>

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District  
of the Church of the Brethren  
Financial Statements and  
Supplementary Information**

**Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022**



**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District  
of the Church of the Brethren  
Financial Statements and  
Supplementary Information**

**Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Table of Contents**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>Independent Accountants' Review Report</b>	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>Financial Statements</b>	
Statements of Financial Position	<b>3</b>
Statements of Activities	<b>4</b>
Statements of Functional Expenses	<b>5</b>
Statements of Cash Flows	<b>6</b>
Notes to the Financial Statements	<b>7 - 13</b>
<b>Supplementary Information</b>	
Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Fund	<b>14 - 17</b>



# STURGILL & ASSOCIATES LLP

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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## Independent Accountants' Review Report

### Leadership Team

The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Westminster, Maryland

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren (a nonprofit organization) which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements. A review includes primarily applying analytical procedures to management's financial data and making inquiries of management. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion regarding the financial statements as a whole. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

### Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error.

### Accountants' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to conduct the review engagement in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services Committee of the AICPA. Those standards require us to perform procedures to obtain limited assurance as a basis for reporting whether we are aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We believe that the results of our procedures provide a reasonable basis for our conclusion.

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Members: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants • Private Companies Practice Sections

Westminster  
20 Liberty Street, P.O. Box 546  
Westminster, MD 21158

**Independent Accountants' Review Report – continued -**

We are required to be independent of Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our review.

**Accountants' Conclusion**

Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

**Supplementary Information**

The accompanying supplementary information included in the Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Funds is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from, and relates directly to, the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The supplementary information has been subjected to the review procedures applied in our review of the basic financial statements. We are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the supplementary information. We have not audited the supplementary information and do not express an opinion on such information.

*Sturgill & Associates LLP*

Westminster, Maryland  
September 9, 2024

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Statements of Financial Position**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

	<u><b>2023</b></u>	<u><b>2022</b></u>
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 252,192	\$ 204,689
Investments	398,565	366,372
Prepaid expense	1,260	-
Note receivable - GGCF	<u>773,183</u>	<u>798,706</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 1,425,220</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 1,369,767</u></u>
<b>Liabilities and net assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Payroll liabilities payable	<u>\$ 1,778</u>	<u>\$ 727</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	1,778	727
<b>Net assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	1,228,806	1,220,418
Without donor restrictions - board designated	<u>98,967</u>	<u>128,090</u>
Total without donor restrictions	<u>1,327,773</u>	<u>1,348,508</u>
With donor restrictions	<u>95,669</u>	<u>20,532</u>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<u><u>1,423,442</u></u>	<u><u>1,369,040</u></u>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 1,425,220</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 1,369,767</u></u>

See accompanying notes and independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Statements of Activities**  
**Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>Net assets without donor restrictions</b>		
Support		
Congregational support	\$ 144,110	\$ 158,724
Investment income (net)	63,881	(15,661)
Revenue from activities	<u>16,493</u>	<u>10,204</u>
Total support	224,484	153,267
Net assets released from restrictions		
Restrictions satisfied by payments	<u>34,691</u>	<u>175,858</u>
Total unrestricted support	259,175	329,125
Expenses		
Activity funds	89,068	203,841
Support services	<u>190,842</u>	<u>207,697</u>
Total expenses	<u>279,910</u>	<u>411,538</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets without donor restrictions	(20,735)	(82,413)
<b>Net assets with donor restrictions</b>		
Contributions	109,828	109,287
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(34,691)</u>	<u>(175,858)</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets with donor restrictions	<u>75,137</u>	<u>(66,571)</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets	54,402	(148,984)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>1,369,040</u>	<u>1,518,024</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u><u>\$ 1,423,442</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 1,369,040</u></u>

See accompanying notes and independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Statements of Functional Expenses**  
**Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022**

	2023			2022		
	Activity Funds	Support Services	Total	Activity Funds	Support Services	Total
Administrative fees	\$ 3,236	\$ -	\$ 3,236	\$ 3,321	\$ -	\$ 3,321
Annual conference	-	-	-	7,672	-	7,672
Calling and credentialing	6,801	-	6,801	6,637	-	6,637
Church extension and evangelism	1,281	-	1,281	750	-	750
Communications team	410	-	410	-	-	-
Conference expense	4,737	-	4,737	2,398	-	2,398
District general	-	10,035	10,035	-	6,025	6,025
Finance and property	-	5,100	5,100	-	4,400	4,400
Insurance	-	2,282	2,282	-	3,491	3,491
Junior high	200	-	200	-	-	-
Office	2,138	8,552	10,690	237	8,959	9,196
Outreach and services	48,114	-	48,114	166,437	-	166,437
Printing	6,807	-	6,807	7,060	-	7,060
Professional services	-	11,012	11,012	-	7,250	7,250
Rent	5,675	5,008	10,683	4,168	5,008	9,176
Salaries and benefits	-	130,609	130,609	-	163,155	163,155
Scholarships	4,785	-	4,785	3,735	-	3,735
Senior high	-	-	-	900	-	900
Spirituality and fellowship	269	-	269	34	-	34
Supplies	61	-	61	359	-	359
Training	4,554	-	4,554	133	-	133
Travel	-	18,244	18,244	-	9,409	9,409
Total expenses	<u>\$ 89,068</u>	<u>\$ 190,842</u>	<u>\$ 279,910</u>	<u>\$ 203,841</u>	<u>\$ 207,697</u>	<u>\$ 411,538</u>

See accompanying notes and independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Statements of Cash Flows**  
**Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Increase (decrease) in net assets	\$ 54,402	\$ (148,984)
Adjustments to reconcile increase (decrease) in net assets to net cash used in operating activities		
Realized (gain) loss on sale of fixed assets	(3,000)	-
Unrealized (gain) loss on investments	(27,596)	51,381
(Increase) decrease in prepaid expenses	(1,260)	-
Increase (decrease) in payroll liabilities payable	1,051	(465)
Increase (decrease) in deferred revenue	<u>-</u>	<u>(150)</u>
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<u>23,597</u>	<u>(98,218)</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Proceeds from sale of fixed asset	3,000	-
Proceeds from note receivable	25,523	24,523
Proceeds from investment account	-	3,343
Funds reinvested	<u>(4,617)</u>	<u>(3,062)</u>
<b>Cash provided by investing activities</b>	<u>23,906</u>	<u>24,804</u>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	47,503	(73,414)
<b>Beginning cash and cash equivalents</b>	<u>204,689</u>	<u>278,103</u>
<b>Ending cash and cash equivalents</b>	<u><u>\$ 252,192</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 204,689</u></u>

See accompanying notes and independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note A. Organization and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**Organization**

The Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren (the Organization) operates as a religious corporation and serves its member churches within the District, currently totaling 59, spanning a geographical area including portions of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. The affairs of the Mid-Atlantic District are managed by the District Leadership Team, and individual congregations are served by the District Executive who assists and gives oversight to pastors and congregations, and guidance related to pastoral placement, evaluations, etc., in accordance with denominational polity.

The Organization is exempt from income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code under the exemption granted to the General Board of the Church of the Brethren.

**Method of Accounting**

The Organization's financial statements are prepared using the accrual method of accounting and accordingly reflect all significant receivables, payables and other liabilities.

**Basis of Presentation**

The financial statements of The Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren have been prepared in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles ("US GAAP"). In accordance with ASU 2016-14, The Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren is required to report net assets according to the following:

**Net assets without donor restrictions:** Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions and may be expended for any purpose in performing the primary objectives of the organization. These net assets may be used at the discretion of The Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren's management and board of directors.

**Net assets with donor restrictions:** Net assets subject to stipulations imposed by donors, and grantors. Some donor restrictions are temporary in nature; those restrictions will be met by actions of The Mid-Atlantic District of the Church of the Brethren or by the passage of time. Other donor restrictions are perpetual in nature, where by the donor has stipulated the funds be maintained in perpetuity.

Donor restricted contributions are reported as increases in net assets with donor restrictions. When a restriction expires, net assets are reclassified from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities.

See independent accountants' review report.



**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note A. Organization and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies – continued**

**Use of Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

**Fair Value of Financial Instruments**

The Organization has a number of financial instruments, none of which are held for trading purposes. The Organization estimates that the fair value of all financial instruments at December 31, 2023 and 2022 does not differ materially from the aggregate carrying values of its financial instruments recorded in the accompanying statement of financial position. The estimated fair value amounts have been determined by the Organization using available market information and appropriate valuation methodologies.

**Investments**

The Organization carries investments in marketable securities with readily determinable fair values and all investments in debt securities at their fair values in the Statement of Financial Position. Unrealized gains and losses are included in investment income in the accompanying Statement of Activities.

**Property and Equipment**

Acquisitions of property and equipment in excess of \$1,000 are capitalized. Computer equipment, which is deemed immaterial, is expensed. Property and equipment are carried at cost and depreciation is computed using primarily the straight-line method. Depreciation expense for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 was \$-0-.

**Contributions**

Contributions received are recorded as net assets without donor restrictions or net assets with donor restrictions, depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor restrictions. Donations to Board Designated activities are recorded as net assets without donor restrictions.

A special event of the Organization that is restricted to raising funds for a specific purpose is reported as net assets with donor restrictions. When a restriction expires, the net asset with donor restriction is reclassified to net assets without donor restrictions and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note A. Organization and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies - continued**

**Contributed Services**

The Organization receives a substantial amount of services donated by its members in carrying out the Organization's ministry. No amounts have been reflected in the financial statements for those services since they do not meet the criteria for recognition.

**Cash and Cash Equivalents**

The Organization defines its cash and cash equivalents to include all monies in banks and highly liquid investments with original maturity dates of less than 3 months. The carrying value of cash and cash equivalents approximates fair value because of the short maturities of those financial instruments.

**Note B. Availability and Liquidity**

The following represents the Organization's financial assets at December 31, 2023 and 2022:

Financial assets at year-end:	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 252,192	\$ 204,689
Notes receivable	773,183	798,706
Investments	<u>398,585</u>	<u>366,372</u>
Total financial assets	1,423,960	1,369,767
Less amounts not available to be used within one year:		
Long-term receivable	746,621	773,183
Net assets with board designations	98,967	127,371
Net assets with donor restrictions	<u>95,669</u>	<u>20,532</u>
	<u>941,257</u>	<u>921,086</u>
Financial assets available to meet general expenditures over the next twelve months	<u>\$ 482,703</u>	<u>\$ 448,681</u>

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note C. Notes Receivable**

In June 2018 the Organization sold the property known as Good Shepherd to Greater Grace Christian Fellowship, Inc. (GGCF) for the sum of \$1,000,000. The Organization received \$100,000 in cash and a \$900,000 note from GGCF. The note bears interest at 4% per year for the first five years, requiring monthly payments of \$4,750.53. After the fifth year GGCF may pay off the loan in full or part. If not paid in full, interest will be renegotiated every five years until paid in full. The balance as of December 31, 2023 and 2022 is \$773,183 and \$798,706, respectively.

**Note D. Property and Equipment**

Property and equipment at December 31, 2023 and 2022 consists of the following:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	\$ 13,909	\$ 13,909
Vehicle	-	15,628
	<u>13,909</u>	<u>29,537</u>
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(13,909)</u>	<u>(29,537)</u>
	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

**Note E. Investments**

The Organization's investments at December 31, 2023 and 2022 are as follows:

	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>	
	<u>Face Value</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Face Value</u>	<u>Market Value</u>
Brethren Foundation:				
Balanced fund	\$ 128,933	\$ 267,394	\$ 125,142	\$ 236,296
Short term fund	21,396	26,520	20,635	25,470
Certificate of deposit	<u>104,671</u>	<u>104,671</u>	<u>104,606</u>	<u>104,606</u>
	<u>\$ 255,000</u>	<u>\$ 398,585</u>	<u>\$ 250,383</u>	<u>\$ 366,372</u>

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note E. Investments - continued**

The Organization applies Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) 820, Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures, which defines fair value, establishes a framework for measuring fair value, and requires certain disclosures about fair value measurements. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to observable inputs (level 1 measurements) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3 measurements). The three tiers of the fair value hierarchy under FASB ASC 820-10 are described as follows:

Level 1: Quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices such as quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities; quoted prices in markets that are not active; or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect a reporting entity's own assumptions that market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability.

The organization's investments are considered as Level 1 in the fair value hierarchy.

The following schedule summarizes the investment return and its classification in the Statements of Activities for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Interest and dividends	\$ 38,564	\$ 38,035
Investment fees	(2,299)	(2,315)
Unrealized gains (losses)	27,617	(51,381)
Total investment income-unrestricted	<u>\$ 63,881</u>	<u>\$ (15,661)</u>

**Note F. Commitments and Contingencies**

Effective June 1, 2016, the Organization entered into a seventeen-month lease agreement with the Westminster Church of the Brethren requiring monthly payments of \$350. Upon expiration of the initial term, the lease automatically renews each year unless either party gives written notice of intent not to renew. Total rent for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 was \$4,200.

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note G. Restrictions on Net Assets**

Net assets available for the following purposes at December 31:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>Without donor restrictions:</b>		
Church extension fund	\$ 24,920	\$ 11,450
Continuing education scholarship fund	2,041	2,041
Disaster fund	22,249	43,947
District conference fund	2,017	1,424
District habitat fund	150	150
Don Rowe student development fund	78,675	72,920
Equipment and secretary fund	14,324	12,604
Good Shepherd fund	712,129	769,136
Greater Grace	154,392	125,889
Junior high conference	1,607	1,709
Ministerial training events	1,809	5,903
National youth conference	3,456	2,957
Operating reserve	304,512	294,908
Peace and justice fund	124	124
Senior high program	2,121	2,121
Special ministries	3,103	1,078
Young adult program	147	147
	<u>\$ 1,327,776</u>	<u>\$ 1,348,508</u>
<b>With donor restrictions:</b>		
Auction fund	\$ 88,437	\$ 12,269
Meat canning	3,446	7,440
NOAC Activity	111	-
Office move	2,853	-
Pastor retreat	425	426
Salt & Light Ministry	100	100
Leadership team book	294	294
	<u>\$ 95,666</u>	<u>\$ 20,529</u>
<b>Release from restrictions:</b>		
Auction fund	\$ 13,290	\$ 159,027
Office move	148	-
Meat canning fund	18,864	16,831
NOAC conference	2,389	-
	<u>\$ 34,691</u>	<u>\$ 175,858</u>

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Notes to the Financial Statements  
December 31, 2023 and 2022**

**Note H. Subsequent Events**

The Organization has evaluated subsequent events through September 9, 2024, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.

See independent accountants' review report.

## **Supplementary Information**

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Funds**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	Without Donor Restrictions	W/O Donor Rest Board Designated	Total W/O Donor Rest	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>Revenues, gains, and other support</b>					
Congregational support	\$ 137,465	\$ -	\$ 137,465	\$ -	\$ 137,465
Benevolent gifts from individuals	3,345	-	3,345	-	3,345
Other income	<u>3,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,300</u>
Total congregational support	144,110	-	144,110	-	144,110
Investment income (net)	63,881	-	63,881	-	63,881
<b>Revenue from board designated activities</b>					
Church extension	-	250	250	-	250
Disaster fund	-	8,416	8,416	-	8,416
District conference	-	3,535	3,535	-	3,535
Equipment and secretary fund	-	3,234	3,234	-	3,234
Junior high program	-	98	98	-	98
Ministerial training events	-	460	460	-	460
National youth conference	-	500	500	-	500
<b>Revenue from temporarily restricted activities</b>					
Auction	-	-	-	89,458	89,458
Office move	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Meat canning	-	-	-	14,870	14,870
NOAC conference	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>2,500</u>
Total before release from restrictions	\$ 207,991	\$ 16,493	\$ 224,484	\$ 109,828	\$ 334,312
Release from restrictions	<u>34,691</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,691</u>	<u>(34,691)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenues, gains and other support	\$ 242,682	\$ 16,493	\$ 259,175	\$ 75,137	\$ 334,312

See independent accountants' review report.



**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Funds – continued**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	Without Donor Restrictions	W/O Donor Rest Board Designated	Total W/O Donor Rest	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Total revenues, gains, and other support	\$ 242,682	\$ 16,493	\$ 259,175	\$ 75,137	\$ 334,312
<b>Expenses and losses</b>					
Calling and credentialing	6,801	-	6,801	-	6,801
Church extension and evangelism	1,281	-	1,281	-	1,281
Communications Team	410	-	410	-	410
District general	10,035	-	10,035	-	10,035
Finance and property	5,100	-	5,100	-	5,100
Spirituality and fellowship	269	-	269	-	269
Staff services and office operation	175,707	-	175,707	-	175,707
<b>Expenses for board designated activities</b>					
Church extension	-	1,031	1,031	-	1,031
Disaster fund	-	30,114	30,114	-	30,114
District conference	-	2,942	2,942	-	2,942
Don Rowe endowment fund	-	4,785	4,785	-	4,785
Equipment and secretary fund	-	1,514	1,514	-	1,514
Junior high program	-	200	200	-	200
Ministerial training events	-	4,554	4,554	-	4,554
Special ministries fund	-	476	476	-	476
<b>Expenses for donor restricted activities</b>					
Auction	13,290	-	13,290	-	13,290
Office move	148	-	148	-	148
Meat canning	18,864	-	18,864	-	18,864
NOAC conference	2,389	-	2,389	-	2,389
Total expenses	234,294	45,616	279,910	-	279,910
Change in net assets from operations	8,388	(29,123)	(20,735)	75,137	54,402
Net assets at beginning of year	1,220,418	128,090	1,348,508	20,532	1,369,040
Net assets at end of year	\$ 1,228,806	\$ 98,967	\$ 1,327,773	\$ 95,669	\$ 1,423,442

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren  
Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Funds  
Year Ended December 31, 2022**

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>W/O Donor Rest Board Designated</u>	<u>Total W/O Donor Rest</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Revenues, gains, and other support</b>					
Congregational support	\$ 150,142	\$ -	\$ 150,142	\$ -	\$ 150,142
Benevolent gifts from individuals	8,405	-	8,405	-	8,405
Other income	177	-	177	-	177
PPP contribution	-	-	-	-	-
Total congregational support	158,724	-	158,724	-	158,724
Investment income (net)	(15,661)	-	(15,661)	-	(15,661)
<b>Revenue from board designated activities</b>					
Church extension	-	317	317	-	317
Disaster fund	-	1,900	1,900	-	1,900
District conference	-	2,982	2,982	-	2,982
Equipment and secretary fund	-	3,200	3,200	-	3,200
Graceway fund	-	960	960	-	960
National youth conference	-	60	60	-	60
Senior high program	-	285	285	-	285
Staff sabbatical fund	-	500	500	-	500
<b>Revenue from temporarily restricted activities</b>					
Auction	-	-	-	94,086	94,086
Meat canning	-	-	-	15,201	15,201
Total before release from restrictions	\$ 143,063	\$ 10,204	\$ 153,267	\$ 109,287	\$ 262,554
Release from restrictions	175,858	-	175,858	(175,858)	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	\$ 318,921	\$ 10,204	\$ 329,125	\$ (66,571)	\$ 262,554

See independent accountants' review report.

**The District Board of the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren**  
**Schedules of Revenues and Expenses by Funds - continued**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2022**

	Without Donor Restrictions	W/O Donor Rest Board Designated	Total W/O Donor Rest	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Total revenues, gains, and other support	\$ 318,921	\$ 10,204	\$ 329,125	\$ (66,571)	\$ 262,554
<b>Expenses and losses</b>					
Calling and credentialing	6,637	-	6,637	-	6,637
Church extension and evangelism	250	-	250	-	250
District general	6,025	-	6,025	-	6,025
Finance and property	4,400	-	4,400	-	4,400
Spirituality and fellowship	34	-	34	-	34
Staff services and office operation	197,272	-	197,272	-	197,272
<b>Expenses for board designated activities</b>					
Annual conference	-	7,672	7,672	-	7,672
Cash flow/operating reserve	-	500	500	-	500
Continuing education scholarship	-	540	540	-	540
Disaster fund	-	3,708	3,708	-	3,708
District conference	-	2,203	2,203	-	2,203
Don Rowe endowment fund	-	3,195	3,195	-	3,195
Equipment and secretary fund	-	237	237	-	237
Graceway fund	-	960	960	-	960
Junior high program	-	45	45	-	45
Ministerial training events	-	133	133	-	133
Senior high program	-	900	900	-	900
Special ministries fund	-	969	969	-	969
<b>Expenses for donor restricted activities</b>					
Auction	159,027	-	159,027	-	159,027
Meat canning	16,831	-	16,831	-	16,831
Total expenses	390,476	21,062	411,538	-	411,538
Change in net assets from operations	(71,555)	(10,858)	(82,413)	(66,571)	(148,984)
Net assets at beginning of year	1,291,973	138,948	1,430,921	87,103	1,518,024
Net assets at end of year	\$ 1,220,418	\$ 128,090	\$ 1,348,508	\$ 20,532	\$ 1,369,040

See independent accountants' review report.

**RELATED AGENCY REPORTS**



## Church of the Brethren

Dear Siblings in Christ in the Mid-Atlantic District,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My prayers are lifted for you as you prepare your hearts and minds for District Conference. As the community of God, may these special meetings and worship times honor our Lord and celebrate the many ways each of you and your congregations are carrying forth the message of the Good News of Jesus. Sharing Christ's love and the gospel is still our call and mission. May we together move forward with God's Spirit and guidance to share love with God and all our neighbors.

I am looking forward to our 238<sup>th</sup> recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, scheduled for July 2-6, 2025, in Greensboro, North Carolina. There will be business sessions, bible studies, equipping session, worship, and many opportunities for fellowship and celebration as the Body of Christ gathers. Annual Conference exists to unite, strengthen, and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.

One of the core values of the Annual Conference is to continue building loving relationships with one another, despite any differences we may have. Love seems to be having a hard time in our world and in the church. We are called to love and respect each other in the divisive times we find ourselves. At times, agape love, a love embodied by God's love for all humankind in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ seems impossible. Rabbi Harold S. Kushner theologian shares, "If we are brave enough to love, strong enough to forgive, generous enough to rejoice in another's happiness, and wise enough to know there is enough love to go around for us all, then we can achieve a fulfillment that no other living creature will ever know." I pray we embrace the words of 1 Corinthians 13 as our focus to love as Christ loves us. May we be able to say, "And now, faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13: 13.

I look forward to seeing each of you in Greensboro as we gather as the wider church to continue the love and work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.

Blessings and love to you all,  
Dava Hensley  
2025 Annual Conference Moderator



## Church of the Brethren

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of Christ our Savior!

I am filled with gratitude for the remarkable ministries and transformative work being carried out by the Church of the Brethren in your local congregations and through the work and ministries of denominational staff on your behalf. Your unwavering commitment to serving God and our communities has been an inspiration and a testament to the enduring power of faith and compassion.

You will find much about our denominational mission and ministries reflected in two printed resources available to you at your district conference and on the Church of the Brethren website ([www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)). The *Church of the Brethren Annual Report* offers a glimpse of the ministries over the last year, and the *Advocating Generosity* booklet invites you to partner with us in our current ministries. You will also find these resources, together with our recent Church of the Brethren video report, at [www.brethren.org/annualreport](http://www.brethren.org/annualreport).

The Jesus in the Neighborhood vision calls us to “*develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.*” As we live into that vision, we are currently evaluating much of what we do, wanting to make certain that we are supporting the needs of our congregations and leaders as best we can. To that end, if you have questions or needs, please let us know.

The challenges that we face as a Church can be daunting at times, especially if we get distracted by all the noise around us. I continue to be drawn to the vibrant church reflected in Acts 4:32-35. That vibrancy was centered in Christ and in caring for one another and their community. It reflected a radical generosity that ensured that all the needs were met within the community. In the same way, our own communities need the grace and love that we have to offer. While the needs of each of our communities may look different, they need the same radical generosity that we have to offer as followers of Jesus. Let’s not overthink it, but simply do what Jesus did. God’s grace is and will be transformational for the community through our witness of Jesus’ love.

Again, 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 vibrant 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.

Your servant in Christ,

David Steele  
General Secretary

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

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



## Church of the Brethren

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (NIV)*

Responding through volunteers and partners in the US and globally, Brethren Disaster Ministries relies on the power, strength, joy, and peace of God to bring hope and healing to brothers and sisters caught up in the chaos of both natural and human-caused disasters. In 2023, BDM supported relief and recovery from tornadoes, floods, wildfires, and a typhoon in the United States and its territories, and to natural disasters, war, and other humanitarian crises around the world, by walking side by side with survivors as they rebuilt their lives.

And yet, it is not only disaster survivors who are blessed when BDM responds to a need. Those who serve are also blessed—indeed, some are changed forever. One volunteer who served on a rebuilding site in Kentucky commented that “an unexpected experience was the overwhelming presence of the Spirit of God. I expected the experience to be faith based, but it was an amazing week for me.” Another declared, “I came home with my cup running over, what an experience, I am ready to go again.”

In 2023, Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) faced back to back challenges responding to disasters in the Pacific, both at the invitation of partner Red Cross. Typhoon Mawar caused destruction and displacement of people when it hit the US Territory of Guam in May. A team of six volunteers traveled to Guam, serving in shelters for three weeks and caring for 563 children. In August, when a devastating wildfire destroyed much of the town of Lahaina on Hawaii’s island of Maui, CDS volunteers were called there to care for children in assistance centers. Over a six-week period, three teams of volunteers made 457 child contacts. While the typical CDS volunteer serves for two weeks at a time, these two groups of volunteers served for three weeks each, due to the distance and other logistical concerns.

CDS responded to seven other disasters in 2023, including an apartment fire, a home explosion, and tornadoes. They also cared for children of asylum seekers. In October, a team of CDS Critical Response Childcare (CRC) volunteers, who are specially trained to support traumatized children and families after mass casualty events, traveled to Lewiston, Maine, following a mass shooting there. The need for peace and hope in all of these situations was great and CDS volunteers brought their calm and reassuring presence as a beacon to the children and their families. A total of 44 CDS volunteers engaged with 1,185 child contacts during the year.

The BDM Rebuilding Program project sites in 2023 were located in two areas of Kentucky. BDM partnered with Habitat for Humanity of the Pennyrile Region for the entire year to support the rebuilding of the town of Dawson Springs, which had suffered through deadly and destructive tornadoes in December 2021. As groups of BDM volunteers helped to build houses for first-time homeowners who had lost so much when their rental properties were destroyed, they wrote Bible verses and messages of support and hope on the lumber framing the structures and prayed for the

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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

families who would eventually live there. This project site is scheduled to continue until at least June 2024.

In partnership with the Eastern Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church Disaster Response, BDM volunteers spent a total of 12 weeks during 2023 in Eastern Kentucky rebuilding and repairing homes damaged during massive flooding that occurred in July and August of 2022. A total of 708 volunteers and project leaders served 52 families in 2023 on these two Kentucky sites.

The BDM Global Response supports relief and recovery for vulnerable people around the world facing war, violence, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters and humanitarian crises. In partnership with the Global Churches of the Brethren (CoB) and other international agencies, the challenge to respond is matched by the knowledge that Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants bring hope and joy where both may be hard to find. In 2023, these EDF grants equaled \$695,700. The majority of these grants were in response to conflicts in the countries and communities of the Global Church of the Brethren family. This includes the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$94,500), Haiti (\$60,200), South Sudan (\$40,000), and Nigeria (Nigeria Crisis Response, \$220,000). An additional \$220,000 was granted to three partners serving populations displaced by the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Nigeria Crisis Response continues as a partnership with Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 and remains strong amidst continued violence in the country. The response program includes continued support for internally displaced people, food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, distribution of seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, and home repairs for the most vulnerable.

The total BDM programmatic expenses in 2023 were \$1,103,235. This includes the expenses from EDF allocations that support specific programs such as \$184,064 for U.S. responses (Rebuilding, CDS, etc.); \$237,447 for the Nigeria Crisis Response; \$305,424 for other Global CoB partners; and \$376,300 for all other global responses, including the Russia-Ukraine war and the Turkey-Syria Earthquake Response.

Brethren Disaster Ministries and all whom we serve are forever grateful for the steadfast and faithful support to these ministries, as well as the tireless and persistent work of the many volunteers without whom the event could not happen. Our ministry supporting hope and healing is but an extension of the compassion and love that comes from God and is demonstrated by each person who serves in God's name. It is the result of the body of Christ coming together to share God's blessings with survivors of disasters and with each other. We thank you for your part in this work!

It is our prayer that through our ministry, with your support, God's glory will be known.



Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries

*On behalf of BDM staff: Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Sharon Franzén, Kim Gingerich, Carolyn Neher, and Michael Scalzi*

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024 BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE

## THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY AND COUNTING

### Marking a milestone: Events commemorate BVS' 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary

The past year was a year of celebration, as communities around the country held events to mark a milestone: The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service.

Gatherings took place in California, Kansas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere during the year, bringing BVS alumni and friends together to share stories, enjoy fellowship, and lift up the ministry of BVS.

In addition, the 2023 Annual Conference included a special recognition of BVS' diamond jubilee during business, and a sellout BVS luncheon during the Conference added to the



festivities. A new book from author Jim Lehman and Brethren Press, *A Year of Living Differently*, also helped mark the occasion. BVS director Chelsea Goss

Skillen said it was a chance to "honor the legacy of those who have dedicated their time, skills, and hearts to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

### BVS BY THE NUMBERS

Volunteers currently serving:

**26**

*(19 in the US, 2 in Europe,  
4 in Asia, 1 in Africa)*

Active BVS project sites:

**About 55**

Number of US states home to BVS  
project sites:

**16 (plus Washington D.C.)**

Current BVS monthly stipend:

**\$250**

### BVS goes remote

It was announced this spring that Brethren Volunteer Service would be going remote for the first time in its history, as director Chelsea Goss Skillen relocated to her home in Richmond, Va.

All other full-time staff in the department were already working remotely. BVS will continue to maintain a small office presence in Elgin, Ill., with some part-time work and occasional volunteers located there.

### STAFF UPDATES

**Virginia Rendler** began in July 2023 as interim volun-



teer coordinator for BVS. Working remotely from N. Manchester, Ind., she connects

regularly with volunteers through the year and plays a key role in making orientation plans.

**Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred** had the "interim" removed from her title last fall as she continues to serve as coordinator for FaithX.

## Units 333 and 334 join the chorus with orientations in 2023

Twenty-two volunteers completed orientation this past year, with Unit 333 taking place at Inspiration Hills in northern Ohio in late July and early August, and Unit 334 meeting at Camp Koinonia in Cle Elum, Wash., in the fall.

Members of those groups who were serving in the US gathered for a mid-year retreat at Camp Ithiel near Orlando, Fla., in March, and all volunteers do regular check-ins with BVS staff members.

The orientations typically include a variety of training sessions, sharing and conversations, games, a service project, worship, and cooking meals together.



### ON THE SCHEDULE: UNITS 335 & 336

This year's **summer unit (Unit 335)** will hold orientation July 28-Aug. 5 at Camp Colorado, located near Sedalia, Colo., southwest of Denver. The **fall unit (Unit 336)** will gather Sept. 17-25 at Camp Brethren Heights in Rodney, Mich., north of Grand Rapids. Online pre-orientation meetings also take place before each group gathers.

Explore the BVS  
Facebook group  
and e-news!



## FaithX: A 'beloved' message of service

A new older adult service trip highlighted the FaithX short-term service opportunities in 2024, with 15 people taking part in a February event at Camp Ithiel in Florida.



Another dozen trips were offered over the summer including experiences for youth and young adults, an adult trip to Ecuador, and the We Are Able trip for those with developmental disabilities. Domestic trips spanned nine states, from North Carolina to Indiana to Washington. More than 190 people registered.

The 2024 FaithX theme is "Beloved," drawn from 1 John 4:7. That also served as the theme for the denomination's Service Sunday in February.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- BVS welcomed several new projects in the past year, including Lydia's House in Cincinnati, Christ House in Washington D.C., the San Diego Peace Campus, and the China Potato Project. Others are in the pipeline.
- BVS has recently done enhancements to its website, created a new purple promotional brochure, and developed an online project resource guide for volunteers. It also puts out a monthly e-newsletter with updates.
- The message of BVS hit the road frequently in recent months, with staff sharing at regional youth conferences, Young Adult Conference, college visits, and Annual Conference.

*Brethren Volunteer Service • 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 • [brethrenvolunteerservice.org](http://brethrenvolunteerservice.org) • 800-323-8039*



Dear District Delegates,

Since 1974, OEP has developed programs serving youth and young adults, congregations, and community groups, as we walk in partnership with Church of the Brethren congregations, camps, districts, and Annual Conference.

**In 2024, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary as a ministry in the Church of the Brethren.** As we reflect, we consider **legacy and hope**, which empower us to resist war, make peace, and pursue justice with faith and courage. Lamentations 3:21-23 says “But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” We go with hope into the next fifty years, eager for the time when peace endures and justice prevails.

Our purpose as an agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference is to help the Church of the Brethren become a relevant, vital, “living” peace and justice church equipped to create vital relationships and initiatives on contemporary issues of violence and injustice. Let us disarm ourselves of violence and re-equip ourselves with the tools of active nonviolence and conflict reconciliation. Let us prepare ourselves to become vibrant bearers of God’s love, vital, relevant, and ready to respond to the needs of our times.

**GUN VIOLENCE.** In 2023, On Earth Peace launched the **Church of the Brethren Gun Violence Prevention Action Team**, a group of more than ten leaders from across the country, working to galvanize the Church of the Brethren to be faithful as an effective force for reducing gun violence wherever it occurs. The Action Team planned a major public vigil and witness at Cincinnati City Hall as part of the 2023 Annual Conference, and spent the fall connecting with concerned Brethren yearning to reduce gun violence in their own communities and our country. In 2024, the committee began inviting individuals to volunteer as **Congregational Ambassadors for Gun Violence Prevention**. For more information, email [COB-GVP@OnEarthPeace.org](mailto:COB-GVP@OnEarthPeace.org) or visit <https://www.OnEarthPeace.org/gvp-cob>.

**YOUTH GROUP SUPPORT.** OEP supports youth groups and their efforts by offering **up to \$500 in grant funding to support a youth-initiated project for peace and justice in their community**. We accompany youth through webinars, coaching, and accompaniment as they connect with their neighborhoods. In 2023-2024, OEP offered grants to youth in Ohio and Nigeria.

**AGAPE MAGAZINE: What is War, and How Do We Resist it?** At On Earth Peace, we have a dream of a world with no oppression, no violence, and no war. The new Agape magazine series will introduce children to how they can resist war, make peace, and pursue justice. We look forward to exploring these ideas together as we work toward our dream. The paragraphs below are drawn from the first issue. From the first issue:

*War is so big and happens in so many places. Simply put, war hurts people like you and me and separates families like yours and mine. It takes away important resources like having enough food, clean water, or a safe shelter. It also robs people of valuable opportunities like going to school, seeing/making friends, and playing outside. It can be hard to know how to respond and what can be done to stop war.*

P.O. Box 188, New Windsor Maryland 21776-0188 • Phone: 410-635-8704 • <https://OnEarthPeace.org> • [OEP@OnEarthPeace.org](mailto:OEP@OnEarthPeace.org)

*As long as there has been war, there have been people who resist war, who fight against the idea that violence is needed to solve conflicts, and who work to stop the things that lead to war. Saying no to war and actively working to stop the things that lead to war is courageous. People who refuse to participate in war are called conscientious objectors (COs). Many COs say no to war because of their faith, which reminds them that all people are created by God and that we need to care for our neighbors. This is true across different religious traditions. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that "Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people." Read more here: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/e9308caa69.html#page/1>*

**STANDING WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR.** In 2022, On Earth Peace was delegated by the Annual Conference to join with the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District to lead a denominational study/action process, "Standing with People of Color." OEP staff continues providing leadership and support for that committee, along with staff from the Church of the Brethren, Inc. Through 2023, that committee launched the "7 Prompts" for Crucial Christian Conversation which is being used at many levels throughout the denomination. In summer 2024, the committee will introduce a new volunteer role, **Church of the Brethren Racial Justice Advocates.** More information available by writing [SWPOC@OnEarthPeace.org](mailto:SWPOC@OnEarthPeace.org) and also online at [www.OnEarthPeace.org/swpoc](http://www.OnEarthPeace.org/swpoc)

#### **2023 Highlights**

- 40 web events hosted with 683 attendees.
- 97 people or families made three-year financial pledges to support On Earth Peace.
- 100+ people participated in the Gun Violence Prevention vigil in Cincinnati during the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference.
- 227 Brethren have been trained in Kingian Nonviolence as part of our 1000 Brethren Kingian Nonviolence Training Project goal.

Your individual and family financial support, and your congregation's financial support, make this work possible. We only exist today because of the vision and foresight of supporters and participants in the last fifty years, and we need your support to make the next fifty years possible. If you are moved by what you read on these pages, please join our faithful donors.

Sincerely,



Matt Guynn, Marie Benner-Rhoades, and Darlene Johnson, co-executive directors



If you would like to receive mailings directly from On Earth Peace, please use this code to sign up or visit [www.OnEarthPeace.org/join](http://www.OnEarthPeace.org/join).





## Eder Financial District Conference Report 2024

Greetings!

Did you know Eder Financial can make a positive impact on your life, directly or indirectly, whether you qualify to use our services or not?

That's because we serve congregations and their staff so they can better perform their ministries for their members.

Eder provides a fantastic retirement plan and employee-based insurances for pastors, congregational, district, and camp employees. We can also manage special funds, like ministry funds, memorial funds, cemetery funds, and building funds for congregations and other church-related organizations.

We also provide several free workshops that help congregations learn how to grow their endowments, encourage people to include the congregation in their end-of-life financial decision-making, how to run the church as a business with good governance, and more. Ask the Eder representative attending your conference how we can bring a workshop to your congregation.

Can we serve you and your congregation if we aren't already? Give us a chance. You'll be glad you did. Ask us if your congregation, district, and camp are using our services. We welcome the conversation.

Eder Financial is now in its third year with its new name, having changed from Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust in May 2022. The transition has been well received in the denomination because of our core business model –

- We seek to serve congregations and organizations as partners, making choices and decisions surrounding participation in a retirement plan as easy as possible. It is important that we make it easy for all who can enroll to enroll, as many Americans are on track to have insufficient savings in retirement. We work to help ensure that our members are not faced with that problem, by helping them enroll early in their careers, saving to the plan consistently, and using an asset allocation model to help grow their funds. Not sure how to do that? We can help.
- We provide a concierge service model with our insurance products, answering questions and addressing all concerns proactively and satisfactorily. Our ancillary insurances of life, vision, dental, short- and long-term disability have held premium rate increases virtually flat over the past five years, which means eligible employees can protect themselves with various insurances while not suffering high premium rate increases year after year.
- Part-time employees can participate in both the Eder Retirement and Insurance plans. Ask us if you or someone you know qualifies.
- We manage funds of organizations in a manner that allows easy access, several tools for managing investments, and reports and resources that assist in the management of the funds. We would be glad to set up a demonstration for you and your organization of our fantastic customer web portal.
- And we provide education to give people information and to help them know what questions they should be asking so that they can be successful, whether helping to grow their congregations' financial base or to manage their own retirement plan or insurance offerings.

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# Eder Financial

BOLD. BALANCED. TRUSTED.

We also help tenured pastors and congregational, district, and camp staff who have extraordinary financial needs, if they meet certain guidelines. In 2023, the Church Workers' Assistance Plan that Eder manages granted \$282,865 to 40 people who found themselves in financial distress with nowhere else to turn.

Most of the funds under our management conform to Eder Values Investing, which means you can utilize our services and know that your resources are being managed in accordance with the values in the Church of the Brethren tradition.

### **Serving others who have common bonds and convictions**

Committed to serving as a Church of the Brethren Annual Conference agency, Eder also serves people and organizations of faith that profess a like-mindedness with Eder Financial's values as an organization grounded in Christian faith. Program strength, product options, and lower costs come from a strong volume of business. Therefore, Eder will grow stronger in the long term by offering its ministries to others who seek competitive products backed by concierge service. If you know of a congregation, nonprofit, or other faith-based organization that would benefit from Eder's services, please let us know.

### **EDER FINANCIAL BOARD and staff**

The 12-person Eder Financial Board consists of people who have knowledge and experience in accounting, finance, investments, law, employee benefits, human resources, actuarial science, or represent pastors, district executives, and organizations that are Brethren or have common bonds and convictions with our organization. If you or someone you know would like to serve on the Eder Financial Board, let us know. We are always looking for people who are dedicated to service, want to do meaningful volunteer work, and are committed to being an active member of a board.

We also have 30 people on our staff working in retirement, employee insurance, organizational investing, finance, investments, client relations, marketing, public relations, IT, data, special projects, and business development. We are a family friendly, faith-based organization that strives to provide concierge level service to our members and clients while also providing a fulfilling work environment in a permanent work-from-home setting. If you or someone you know is interested in an Eder Financial job, let us know.

### **CONCLUSION**

Despite the expansion of its charter to bring in other members and clients of like mind from beyond the Church of the Brethren, Eder Financial remains committed to the denomination. Our organization was created by Annual Conference to serve pastors, employees, churches, and organizations. That commitment to service has not wavered. We are here to help our members and clients achieve their financial goals. If you and/or your congregation have not walked with us in the past, let us do so in the future. In other words, those who have not given Eder Financial a look for a few years, or ever, should do so. Together, Eder will help you reach your financial goals, which will help strengthen your ministry to the church.

**Jan Fahs**  
Board Chair

**Nevin Dulabaum**  
President

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**Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center  
Report to the 2024 Mid-Atlantic District Conference**

*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose.  
Romans 8:28 NRSVue*

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**Your Call to Ministry: Unrevealed Until its Season** is our theme for 2024 as we emphasize naming the gifts for ministry and sensing the call one might feel. Borrowing the phrase from Natalie Sleeth's hymn text "In the Bulb there is a Flower," we recognize that the call to ministry comes in various seasons of life. Sometimes in an early season, or sometimes in a later season of life, the call comes uniquely to each person called.

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center provides Brethren ministry education opportunities to students who, for a variety of reasons, would not otherwise be able to answer God's call. Our students come from a variety of life stages and occupations, seeking to utilize and further develop their gifts for ministry. Respecting our diversity, SVMC is grounded in Brethren tradition and committed to growing leaders rooted in Christ.

SVMC fulfills its mission and ministry via the strong partnership including the districts of Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Middle PA, Southern PA, and Western PA, in addition to Bethany Theological Seminary and Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. Our courses and events include certificate-level training in ACTS, TRIM, and a wide array of Continuing Education opportunities.

SVMC's staff leads the program to fulfill its mission: Donna Rhodes, Executive Director; Karen Hodges, Program Coordinator; and Ray Flagg, Treasurer.

Our Governing Board is comprised of representatives from our partners. Your district representatives are listed on page two of this report.

### **ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24**

In the academic year of 2023-24, SVMC served forty students through thirteen courses. Enrollment totaled ninety-four registrations. We will recognize students at their respective district conferences for successfully completing their ACTS training.

### **ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25**

By the time the district conference occurs, we will be into the 2024-25 schedule of courses and continuing education events. We have thirteen courses planned for ACTS and TRIM. A hybrid option is offered in one district for students with geographical distance or other reasons.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS**

Excellent continuing education events are planned including a wide variety of subjects. Our events center on current topics and ministry skills needed by pastors, but interested laity are encouraged to also attend. 2024-25 Continuing Education sessions planned thus far are: 1) How to be a Good Neighbor with Your Polar Opposite, 2) Autism and the Church, 3) Grief Literacy, 4) The Question of Leadership and Why it Matters, 5) Suicide Prevention, and 6) Introducing (and Reading!) the *Anabaptist Community Bible*: An Interactive Seminar.

Watch for advertisements or visit [www.etown.edu/SVMC](http://www.etown.edu/SVMC) to register.

(SVMC District Conference Report Continued)

**Mid-Atlantic District and SVMC Partnership:**

Mid-Atlantic District had two ACTS students and two audits receive training through SVMC in the academic year 2023-24.

SVMC relies upon a close collaboration with our five partner districts, Bethany Theological Seminary, and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. We are especially thankful for the service of people from our five participating districts, and those who represent our collaborative relationship with Bethany Theological Seminary. They provide key leadership to guide and support our ministry. With appreciation, we thank the following persons from Mid-Atlantic District who serve faithfully on the SVMC Governing Board: Joe Detrick as Interim District Executive Team member, Doug Veal as the new District Executive, Rolland Kiracofe, and Nancy McCrickard. Mid-Atlantic students have joined other districts' courses via Zoom.

We are deeply grateful for our supporters' gifts, whether through financial gifts, prayer support, or the sharing of time and talents.

With appreciation, we thank the following contributors from Mid-Atlantic District who offered a monetary gift to SVMC July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024:

**Individuals:**

Albert and Charlotte Bear  
Lester and Esther Boleyn  
Miller and Connie Burk Davis

Rhonda Dunmire  
Rolland Kiracofe  
Tim May

Glenn and Nancy McCrickard  
Elvie Beamer Scott  
William Zepp

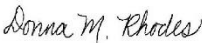
**Congregations:**

Easton  
First Church of Baltimore  
Glade Valley

Hagerstown  
Long Green Valley  
Manor

Nokesville  
Westminster

SVMC continues to be a rich resource for the leadership of our congregations. We encourage you to think of people in your congregation who demonstrate gifts for ministry or who would like to learn more as a layperson. Pray for them and encourage those people to be in contact with SVMC to explore the opportunities available to them. Your connection to them may be the affirmation of their call that they need to hear. SVMC is thankful for our solid foundation and partnership with districts, congregations, and students.



Donna M. Rhodes  
Executive Director



Mark Liller  
Governing Board Chair



**SVMC - Revenues / Expenses through December 2023**

(100.0% of Budget Year)

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>YTD-2023</b>	<b>Budget-2023</b>	<b>YTD-2022</b>	<b>Difference YTD 2023 vs 2022</b>	<b>Percent of Budget</b>
4010 Atlantic Northeast District	1,250.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00	100.0%
4020 Southern Pa District	0.00	10,800.00	15,000.00	13,720.00	(2,920.00)	72.0%
4021 Mid-Pa District	0.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	6,500.00	0.00	100.0%
4022 Mid Atlantic	1,250.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	100.0%
4023 Western PA District	0.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00	100.0%
4030 Individuals	8,225.00	27,025.00	20,000.00	29,941.00	(2,916.00)	135.1%
4040 Congregations	3,276.31	29,022.12	21,000.00	28,227.09	796.03	138.2%
4050 Organizations/Trusts/Foundations	21,000.00	21,036.93	26,200.00	27,760.15	(6,723.22)	80.3%
4110 Seminary Students	0.00	600.00	1,500.00	0.00	600.00	40.0%
4120 Academy Students	2,140.00	18,300.00	18,000.00	18,970.00	(670.00)	101.7%
4125 TRIM Student Tuition	0.00	5,648.00	4,900.00	3,918.00	2,627.00	117.8%
4130 Continuing Ed Tuition/Fees	120.00	6,075.00	12,000.00	5,318.00	757.00	50.6%
4130.1 NMS Income	995.24	1,325.24	0.00	651.00	674.24	
4130.2 NMS Transfer	(995.24)	(704.33)	0.00	(270.93)	(433.40)	
4290 Interest	1.53	20.81	100.00	22.57	(1.76)	0.0%
4300 Transfer from Reserve	0.00	24,948.61	45,000.00	6,770.00	18,178.61	55.4%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>37,262.84</b>	<b>179,594.38</b>	<b>199,100.00</b>	<b>169,626.88</b>	<b>9,967.50</b>	<b>90.2%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
5010 BTS Faculty	0.00	0.00	100.00	39.07	(39.07)	0.0%
5022 Academy Faculty/Expenses	700.00	8,575.00	8,750.00	9,150.00	(575.00)	98.0%
5024 TRIM Honorarium	1,600.00	3,400.00	3,200.00	1,900.00	1,500.00	106.3%
5025 Continuing Ed Faculty/Expense	850.00	3,437.85	8,600.00	4,565.58	(1,127.73)	40.0%
5025.1 NMS Expense	0.00	620.91	0.00	380.07	240.84	
5035 Executive Director	5,646.32	67,755.84	67,756.00	63,920.88	3,834.96	100.0%
5050 Program Administrator	3,588.34	43,060.08	43,060.00	39,797.04	3,263.04	100.0%
5060 Receptionist/File Clerk	0.00	0.00	750.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
5110 Employer's FICA/Medicare	274.52	3,678.04	3,853.00	3,044.41	533.63	92.9%
5115 Unemployment Tax	0.00	0.00	500.00	258.10	(258.10)	0.0%
5120 Prog. Coordinator BBT Ins	33.07	396.84	360.00	366.72	30.12	104.4%
5121 Executive Director BBT Ins	54.73	656.76	640.00	636.96	19.80	102.8%
5122 Prog Coordinator Supplement	0.00	0.00	6,550.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
5123 Executive Director Supplement	282.50	3,510.00	3,510.00	3,470.08	39.92	100.0%
5130 Executive Director Retirement	712.67	8,552.04	8,552.00	8,294.73	257.31	100.0%
5131 Program Coordinator Retirement	394.71	4,736.52	4,737.00	3,183.63	1,552.89	100.0%
5132 OSEHRA Reimbursement	429.53	5,850.00	5,450.00	5,450.00	400.00	107.3%
5140 W Comp/Liability Ins	3,678.00	3,678.00	4,700.00	4,018.00	(340.00)	78.3%
5190 Professional Growth: Exec Dir	0.00	370.00	750.00	220.00	150.00	49.3%
5191 Professional Growth: Prog Coord	68.00	100.00	100.00	72.29	27.71	100.0%
5515 ACTIS Travel Expenses	74.67	1,762.15	1,500.00	1,243.75	518.40	117.5%
5525 TRIM Travel Expenses	0.00	0.00	100.00	19.00	(19.00)	0.0%
5530 SVMC Staff Travel	257.57	1,571.19	2,000.00	1,500.04	71.15	78.6%
5540 SVMC Staff- Annual Conf.	0.00	630.27	1,700.00	464.14	166.13	37.1%
6010 Accounting/Auditing	360.00	4,732.00	4,900.00	4,380.00	352.00	96.6%
6030 Equipment/Machines	0.00	166.97	1,500.00	735.91	(548.94)	12.5%
6050 Hospitality	0.00	620.11	600.00	596.88	23.23	136.7%
6055 Development/Promotion	243.01	960.84	2,500.00	1,065.61	(1,244.77)	38.4%
6060 Legal	0.00	25.25	500.00	96.85	(71.60)	5.1%
6070 Photocopies	0.00	0.00	150.00	2.16	(2.16)	0.0%
6080 Postage	0.00	617.47	500.00	650.74	(33.27)	123.5%
6090 Rent	450.00	4,910.00	5,000.00	5,330.00	(420.00)	98.2%
6100 Supplies	207.45	1,059.96	800.00	887.39	372.57	132.5%
6110 Telephone/Fax	165.00	2,040.27	2,500.00	1,315.00	725.27	81.6%
6120 Technology Tools	130.84	1,729.45	2,200.00	2,362.72	(633.27)	78.6%
6290 Miscellaneous	0.00	35.34	150.00	172.78	(137.44)	23.6%
6295 Bank/Credit Card Fees	(5.50)	235.23	225.00	205.13	30.10	104.5%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>20,205.43</b>	<b>179,594.38</b>	<b>198,763.00</b>	<b>169,617.64</b>	<b>9,976.74</b>	<b>90.4%</b>
<b>Income over Expenses</b>	<b>17,057.41</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>337.00</b>	<b>9.24</b>		



## July 2024 Report to the Mid-Atlantic Conference

Dear Friends in the Mid-Atlantic District,

As Bridgewater College continues to further our shared values and empower our students to lead lives of purpose and consequence, we remain committed to pursuing new strategies to make the value of a BC education more widely known and accessible to all.

To that end, in August 2023, we launched an initiative to make our tuition pricing more transparent. Bridgewater's actual cost has always been comparable to the costs at most public universities, but we've hidden that affordability behind a very high sticker price. Of course, we offset that high tuition with large institutional discounts in a student's financial aid package. Tuition pricing at nearly all private institutions uses this "high tuition, high discount" model, but it's confusing and makes too many prospective students believe they can't afford college at all. Now we're making it easier to understand how affordable Bridgewater is from the start, by resetting our tuition price to \$15,000 beginning this fall for all students.

Despite marked growth in our applications and admitted students during the past year, like all colleges and universities nationwide, we have had to overcome the challenges related to a troubled and error-filled rollout of a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (also known as the FAFSA). This federal form is required for need-based financial aid, from federal and state dollars to our institutional scholarships that are "need-based" (as most of our endowed scholarships are). The students with the greatest need were the most adversely affected, and new student enrollment suffered as a result. Despite these setbacks, I am confident in the ultimate success of our efforts to showcase the value and accessibility of a Bridgewater education.

In May we announced the public phase of *Connections: The Campaign for Bridgewater College*, a \$35 million fundraising campaign centered on three main areas of priority: (1) the Eagle Fund (current-use scholarships), (2) teaching and learning initiatives, and (3) capital projects (like Bowman Hall). The Eagle Fund furthers affordability and accessibility at Bridgewater by providing immediate, current-scholarship dollars for students. Teaching and learning priorities include many enhancements to the academic experience at Bridgewater, including the establishment of the College's second named school, the Rev. Wilfred E. and Dr. Joyce A. Nolen School of Business and Professional Studies.

Thus far in the Connections campaign, which is more than 85% of the way to its goal (over \$30M raised so far!), donors have also contributed funds for the creation of the outdoor learning space that is Rebecca Quad, the renovation of Bowman Hall—the College's primary classroom building, upgrades to Jopson Athletic Complex and a planned renovation of the College's old Alumni Gym into a new Center for Career Development.

In 2023-24, 60 congregations and church groups contributed \$27,958 to the College. Church of the Brethren students enrolled in 2023-24 received \$71,000 in Church of the Brethren scholarships and more than \$1.5 million in College-funded financial aid. Your support enables us to move forward, as we strengthen our academic programs, revitalize campus and celebrate our connections and accomplishments along the way.

With best regards,  
David W. Bushman, Ph.D.

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Tel. 540-828-5605 | Fax. 540-828-5718 | [president@bridgewater.edu](mailto:president@bridgewater.edu)

## OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR STUDENTS AND THE CHURCH



I am delighted to report that Bethany Theological Seminary continues to thrive! Our enrollment is growing, student debt is decreasing, professors are creating courses and programs to meet student needs, and a loyal group of alumni and friends is providing unprecedented financial support to the Seminary. Even as we expand our offerings and welcome students from diverse backgrounds and with varied interests, I want to emphasize that preparing students for pastoral ministry remains a core commitment at Bethany. The following article explores the complexity of preparing pastors for the contemporary church. I hope you will take a few minutes to read and reflect on how Bethany is helping students to answer the call to ministry and service.

Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Jeff Carter, President

**Use this QR code  
to read our 2024  
Annual Conference  
Written Report.**



## Where Do Pastors Come From?

BY JONATHAN GRAHAM

**A**re you preparing pastors? It's a question that Bethany representatives are asked wherever they go. Many congregations in the Church of the Brethren struggle to find pastoral leadership, and it is obvious that the patterns of developing clergy have changed over the last several decades. The Seminary has changed as well.

In the last 10 years, enrollment has doubled at Bethany, but the growth is due mostly to the introduction of new master's degree programs – the Master of Arts in Theopoetics and Writing and the Master of Arts in Spiritual and Social Transformation – which attract an increasingly ecumenical group of students. Despite these new ventures, the Master of Divinity remains a core offering with strong enrollment. But the paths students take to theological education and pastoral ministry seem more varied and complex than was true in the past.

Dr. Dan Poole, assistant professor of ministry formation, notes that many current MDiv students and recent alumni began serving as pastors prior to entering seminary. Often they are called to ministry within a church they attend, and then figure out how to attain theological education.



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"It is relatively rare to see students enter Bethany directly after college. Many individuals come to ministry as a second career, often as a way of giving back to a congregation that has nurtured them," notes Poole. While this approach often produces excellent results for both the pastor and congregation, it is a very different approach than the one that was common in 1950s-90s, which saw individuals earning the MDiv in their mid-to-late 20s and serving as pastors for 40 years or more.

"Congregations are needing to consider different models when it comes to hiring pastors," says Poole.

Recent graduates provide examples of how both congregations and would-be pastors benefit from an open-minded approach to pastoral leadership that goes beyond the models that worked in the past, but are not as effective today.

Phil Collins, MDiv 2023, is pastor of Living Peace Church, in Plymouth, Michigan. He took on this pastoral role a full year before he earned his degree. The church had been without a pastor for several years, and while volunteer leaders had managed to maintain weekly services, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, they were tired and needed new leadership.

Collins was seeking a small church with an interest in social justice concerns, and he has found Living Peace an excellent fit. Both he and

the congregation had to trust that they could make the arrangement work, even before Collins had completed his degree.

"I came to this job without much experience running a church week-to-week. They gave me the opportunity to figure that out, and I was able to give them a break from the burden of organizing everything. Now that we have spent time together, it is great to see them pursue some new outreach efforts that they have been wanting to do for some time."



PHIL COLLINS

Collins helped the congregation start a community garden, helped along from a fortuitous connection with a neighbor who had started a lot of plants in containers, and was looking for somewhere to plant them. The church, which is located in a suburb of Detroit, has also gotten involved

in helping refugees. These initiatives grew out of existing interests in the congregation, but Collins was delighted to provide leadership and help the congregation meet some ministry goals.

Other aspects of his ministry at Living Peace have provided new challenges that Collins has been excited to embrace. He says that while he was an undergraduate at Judson University (Elgin, Illinois), he assumed he would become a youth minister, but about half of his current congregation is older adults.

"There is a whole different set of pastoral care issues," says Collins. "I have appreciated the opportunity to develop new skills."

Collins answered the call from Living Peace in June 2022, while finishing his Bethany coursework. Over the last decade, it has become common for Bethany MDiv students to already be serving as pastors when they receive their degrees.

While this is quite different from the pattern of a few decades ago, some aspects of what is happening now track with the history of the Church of the Brethren.

"Our denomination has always called from within, but what we are seeing now is different than in the 1950s and 60s when professional training for pastors became the norm," notes Poole.

Individuals who become pastors later in life, as a way of giving back

to a specific congregation, often stay in pastorates longer than has been typical in the past. Those who enter ministry as a second career have families and ties to the communities where they live. Even those who serve more than one congregation in their careers land at churches close to where they are already living. For a congregation hoping to recruit a pastor to move to their community, this pattern presents challenges.

"Congregations are discovering that they need to approach things a little differently than they would have in the past," says Poole, noting that Bethany's approach to pastoral training has evolved to meet present needs.

The Seminary provides strong training in theology and the Bible, informed by an Anabaptist and Radical Pietist witness, but when it comes to ministry formation, Bethany is very attentive to current trends in the church, and the skills graduates will need to be successful.

"We talk about what good leadership looks like, and that includes fostering self awareness and solid spiritual practice in students. Pastors need to be able to take on organizational leadership, but they also need to be able to come alongside members of their congregations who are providing leadership and be prepared to support those efforts. This requires a lot of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills."

Poole acknowledges that declining membership means that pastors

face a different landscape than in previous times. And he is happy to seek Bethany alumni responding positively to change.

**"We talk about what good leadership looks like, and that includes fostering self awareness and solid spiritual practice in students."**

"There was a time when there was a lot of interest in church planting or building new ministries from scratch. Recently we have seen a renewed interest in established churches and the revitalization of congregations. I think there is an acknowledgment that we better restore the churches that are already here.

Collins notes that serving as a pastor also requires one to set reasonable goals with the congregation, and to set some limits on what any single individual can accomplish.

Like many current pastors, Collins' contract is less than full-time. His schedule allows him to cook meals for, and spend additional time with his wife, Kayla Collins, who earned a Master of Arts with a concentration in theological studies from Bethany

in 2022, and is now an administrator at Henry Ford Community College. But working two-thirds time means that he needs to be thoughtful about sharing responsibilities with others.

"When I arrived here, this church had been without a pastor for several years, and they needed a break. I was able to make sure that some people who had been providing a lot of volunteer leadership had time to rest," he says. "Now we need to work together to figure out what the future looks like."

The congregation includes members with long family ties to the Church, but members live in several different towns across the region. The church doesn't currently draw members from the town where it is located, which creates a great opportunity for outreach.

"We think there are a lot of people in our neighborhood who would love this church," Collins says.

Many congregations find that the most productive place to search for future pastors is in their own pews. Audri Sway, MATW 2022, was a recent graduate of Manchester University when she began attending Eel River Community Church of the Brethren to support her husband, Jake Sway, who was choir director there.

Sway grew up in the denomination, and had received "a few nudges" toward pastoral ministry, but had earned an undergraduate degree in





AUDRI SVAY

secondary education and planned to seek a teaching job after her husband completed his education.

"I hadn't imagined serving as a pastor, but I knew I enjoyed preaching, so I volunteered to pulpify fill."

After guest preaching at the church, she was invited to apply for a part-time pastor position, and was hired in April 2019. She initially served alongside two semi-retired ministers who were also in part-time roles. The congregation supported her matriculation to Bethany, where she focused on theopoetics and writing courses, but also took courses in pastoral care and worship that have proven hugely beneficial.

"Bethany deepened my appreciation of the theology behind each part of a

worship service, and encouraged me to connect all my different passions — including the Bible, literature, and personal narratives," she says. "When I first became a pastor, I was anxious about the pastoral care part of the job, but my faculty and classmates at Bethany helped me to realize that oftentimes, being present and listening is what people need most."

In addition to her work as a pastor, Sway teaches writing courses at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana, offering a course for first-year students that focuses on purpose and identity.

"I think my Master of Arts in Theopoetics and Writing influences the texts that I assign students, the writing assignments I give them, and the way I structure discussions," says Sway. "I consider my teaching a form of ministry, too."

Like many other Bethany graduates, Sway appreciates the opportunity to minister and serve in a variety of ways. She hopes to continue teaching, and as an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, she intends to continue to use her gifts as a preacher, and connect with faith communities in whatever professional roles she steps into.

Bethany remains committed to training pastors, even as it acknowledges that many students are interested in serving outside traditional church settings.

The Seminary's innovative and creative approach is responsive to the changing needs of the students it serves, and it continues to demonstrate that excellent theological education provides good preparation for those hope to minister, serve, and lead in a variety of contexts.

**"Bethany deepened my appreciation of the theology behind each part of a worship service and encouraged me to connect all my different passions."**

"Our alumni have so much to offer the organizations and communities they serve," says President Jeff Carter. "There are so many difficult issues in the world, but over and over, our alumni show the capacity to bring people together and to help make a positive difference for congregations, for other organizations, for neighborhoods, and for the world."

*This article was originally published in the Fall/Winter 2024 issue of Wonder & Word.*



## Annual Report 2023-24

### Serving the Anabaptist Community:

- **Accessibility Services** for MennoCon 2023
- **Breaking Down Barriers Study Committee** for Church of the Brethren Annual Conference 2023
- **Workshops and Trainings** on church membership for adults with intellectual disabilities at MennoCon and the AMBS Pastor's & Leaders Conference
- **Webinars** with Church of the Brethren Discipleship Ministries
  - Resiliency & Hope after Childhood Trauma
  - Becoming the Baptized Body: a conversation about intellectual disabilities and baptism
  - Believing and Belonging: implementing the new baptism curriculum

### Resourcing Congregations:

- **Consulting, preaching, teaching** for 26 congregations by Staff & Field Associates
- **Believing and Belonging:** an Anabaptist adult baptism & membership curriculum, written at a third-grade reading level
- **Online Accessibility Audit:** congregations receive a seal of accessibility and on-going support from ADN in increasing accessibility. In 2023, we awarded accessibility seals to 14 Congregations.
- **Barrier Free Grants:** up to \$500 for a project that increases the accessibility of your congregation. In 2023, we administered grants to 6 congregations.



### Sharing Your Stories:

- **Connections Newsletter**
  - Mental Health and Youth, Winter 2023
  - Outdoor Accessibility and Spirituality, Summer 2023
  - Youth & Young Adults, Fall 2023
- **Opening Doors Blog** stories of belonging, tips for inclusion



### Be Involved:

- **Become a Partner Congregation.** Designate a **congregational disability advocate** to work with church leaders to foster belonging. Give a **congregational donation** of \$500 or \$1000 annually.
- **Become a Building the Future Partner:** As an individual, donate \$1000 per year.

### Our Staff and Board:

**Jeanne Davies**, Executive Director  
**Zoë Brown**, Office Administrator  
**Emily Hunsberger**, Communications Director

**Peter Graber**, Board President  
**Mitch Stutzman**, Board Vice President  
**Jon-Erik Misz**, Board Secretary  
**Chris Stauffer**, Board Treasurer

**Brandon Grady**  
**Rebekah Flores**  
**Julie Foster** (term ended)  
**Lyle Miller** (term began)  
**Laura Stone** (term began)

### Financial Summary:

#### **Income: \$82,420**

Individual Contributions: \$62,440  
 Congregational Contributions: \$14,800  
 Other Income: \$5,180

#### **Expenses: \$99,650**

Barrier Free Grants: \$850  
 Resources: \$5890  
 Staffing: \$54,875  
 Other Expenses \$38,040

**Operating Fund:**  
**\$25,541.34**  
**Reserve Fund:**  
**\$62,310.99**

The written and pictorial Annual Report is posted on the  
Church of the Brethren website at  
<https://www.brethren.org/about/annualreport/>



