Mission and Ministry Board – Minutes

Saturday, March 14

Members present: Patrick Starkey (chair), Carl Fike (chair-elect), Lois Grove, Heather Gentry Hartwell, Dava Hensley, John Hoffman, Paul Liepelt, Diane Mason, John Mueller, Joel Peña, J. Roger Schrock, Paul Schrock, Colin Scott

Members present via Zoom: Lauren Seganos Cohen, Thomas Dowdy

Ex Officio: Paul Mundey (moderator), David Sollenberger (moderator-elect), James M. Beckwith (secretary), Jeff Carter (Bethany president), Bill Scheurer (OEP executive director), Cindy Sanders (Council of District Executives representative)

General Secretary: David Steele

Members absent: Christina Singh, Carol Yeazell

Ex officio members absent: Nevin Dulabaum (BBT president)

Recorders: Ed Woolf and Nancy Miner

Patrick Starkey, chair, welcomed the group and called the meeting to order.

He welcomed new member John Mueller. He noted the absence of board members Christina Singh and Carol Yeazell and ex officio member Nevin Dulabaum and noted that members Lauren Seganos Cohen and Thomas Dowdy were participating via Zoom.

He expressed appreciation to Pastor John Sgro and members of the Oakland Church of the Brethren for hosting our meeting at the last minute.

He invited board members and staff to introduce themselves and he welcomed guests from area congregations, inviting them to introduce themselves.

Patrick Starkey presented the consent agenda.

- Approve meeting agenda
- Approve MMB minutes
  - October 18-21, 2019 meeting
  - November 5, 2019, EDF allocation action
He noted the following changes to the meeting agenda:

- No Ministers’ Housing Fund recommendation action item
- No board group photo
- Cancellation of Ted and Ken optional outing

He called attention to a correction that had been made to the October 2019 minutes.

- Page 38, Annual Conference office report; Change $70,000 to $288,660

**The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and affirmed the consent agenda as changed.**

Diane Mason led a time of worship based on Psalm 100, with John Hoffman leading the group in singing.

Acknowledging the distraction of the coronavirus, the heaviness of the meeting agenda, and the uneasiness of the current apprehension in the church, Diane reminded the group that as we enter worship, attitude matters. “Be joyful! Be Glad!”

Deuteronomy 28:45-47 reminds us that it is not enough to obey God’s word. We must serve God joyfully and with gladness.

As the board meets for business, we must remember that it is because we are in service to the church, to Jesus Christ, to God, and to the Holy Spirit. Be joyful, be glad, sing, be thankful, praise God, because attitude matters.

David Steele brought the General Secretary’s report.

When he considered his call as General Secretary in 2016, he couldn’t have imagined all that has happened since, including the church coming together the way it did in the Compelling Vision process.

The time and energy invested over the past three years has resulted in a Compelling Vision inspired by the church coming together and led by the Holy Spirit. The Vision itself offers a window into the heart and the soul of the church, but the process is equally important. Conversations on scripture and issues of faith connected the church in ways not seen in several years. The church can build on that, and the combination of the Strategic Design process and the Compelling Vision offer the board a unique opportunity for leadership.

Among the Leadership Team’s many conversations are ones focused on the splintering group and the fracturing of the church’s life together. It is
clear that this movement will take place, but it is not yet clear who might go with them or what that means for us. Although it is a sad time, the board needs to look for hope and possibilities in moving forward.

David assured the board the Church of the Brethren staff will continue to monitor the pandemic situation and will assess and adjust as needed. He reflected on ways we are being the church at this time when so many need its support and care.

Patrick Starkey reported on the previous day’s closed session Executive Committee meeting. The committee:
- Participated in devotions led by Paul Mundey
- Approved a bank resolution for Annual Conference 2020
- Heard an update from the General Secretary on Elgin property sale
  - It has been quiet; no interest shown to date
- Received an update on a staff recommendation regarding the Ministers Housing Fund
- Prepared for the board discussion regarding use of Brethren Service Center quasi-endowment fund to support Core Ministries
  - Approved a recommendation of a short-term working group to help the board process this item
- Heard staff updates, including:
  - Interim directors of Global Mission, Norm and Carol Waggy
- Heard from General Secretary on human resources and risk management issues
- Conducted annual performance review of the General Secretary
  - Included input from Executive Committee members, random salaried staff, and board members
  - Very positive overall
  - Good discussion, but time ran out, so will reconvene briefly to continue the performance review

He reported on the previous day’s closed session meeting of the voting members of the Mission and Ministry Board. The board:
- Welcomed new member John Mueller
- Spent time relationship building
- Received updates from the General Secretary
- Previewed the weekend

Ed Woolf, assistant treasurer, presented the dashboard handout with numbers as of December 31, 2019. He noted:

Net Assets
- Reminders
  - **Assets without restrictions** include Core Ministries, Self-Funding Ministries, designated funds, and land, building, and equipment funds, among others
  - **Assets with restriction** include split-interest agreements,
special purpose funds, endowments, and perpetual trusts, among others
  o Calculating net assets is important because they represent the Church of the Brethren’s total value and express the difference between what we own and what we owe (key indicator of an organization’s financial health)

- At $40.7 million, our total net assets increased approximately $4.5 million from 2018
- Assets without donor restriction increased approximately $3.1 million from 2018
  o Primarily due to investment gains on Designated Funds (i.e. savings, BSC Quasi-Endowment, Bequest, Faith-in-Action) coupled with an increase in bequest giving
- Assets with donor restriction increased approximately $1.4 million from 2018
  o Primarily due to investment gains on endowment earnings and perpetual trusts
- Balance sheet remains fairly liquid with 53% of net assets without restriction
- 26 months of expendable reserves with 5 to 6 months being the benchmark
- Rebounded from 2018 losses and surpassed the previous high-water mark of $39 million (2017) – a very healthy and favorable position with net assets (both total amount and liquidity)
- More detail on net assets can be found in Exhibit 2, page 9

Investments
- At $34.5 million, investments increased approximately $6.25 million from 2018
- The S&P 500 returned almost 30% in 2019
  o Surging tech stocks, lower interest rates, and trade deals all contributed to the 2019 market returns
- The market has struggled early in 2020 with fears of the coronavirus spreading
  o Our investment strategy focuses on long-term goals, risk tolerances, timelines, and purposes of funds, which will help us navigate early market uncertainty (as we did after the 2008 financial crisis)
- Audit and Investment Committee received investment report from the Brethren Foundation at Friday’s meeting

Ed expressed appreciation to Nevin Dulabaum and the Brethren Foundation staff for their investment management services and for reporting to the Audit and Investment Committee.

Cash
- At $1.2 million, cash balance increased approx. $60,000 from 2018
- Healthy cash balances at both operating banks (Elgin and New Windsor)
Cash is important because it becomes the payment for expenses that sustain our missions (e.g. program supplies, ministry resources, staff, and other operating expenses)

Cash balances can be transferred to savings for higher return if we have excess cash (e.g. $400,000 was transferred to long-term savings at the end of 12/31/19)

No anticipated concerns from auditors as Church of the Brethren maintains good liquidity

Donors (all giving categories)
- In 2019, we had just under 2,900 donors contributing to the Church of the Brethren ministries
  - Close to 2018 total, but lowest total over the last five years and well below five-year average of 3,400 donors

Appeals and Donor Strategy
- 11 appeals in 2019, compared with 12 in 2018
- 180 fewer gifts received from our appeals
- Average amount received per appeal ($22,000) was down approximately $2,000 from 2018
- Targeted e-appeals in November and December raised over $15,000

Giving to Core Ministries
- Giving from congregations totaled $1.76 million in 2019
  - Lowest total in last 5 years
  - $200,000 below five-year average of $1.96 million
- Giving from individuals totaled $545,000 in 2019
  - Total includes Annual Conference giving of $12,000
  - Almost $20,000 above five-year average of $526,000
- Total Core Ministries giving was $2.3 million
  - Lowest total in last five years
  - Approx. $200,000 below five-year average of almost $2.5 million
- Currently experiencing a decline of approximately 12% ($304,000) over the last five years
- Continuing to see shift away from giving to Core Ministries, especially from congregations and specifically during times of disaster response

Ed presented the Giving Summary (Exhibit 1) as of December 31, 2019:
- Giving Summary breaks down total giving by type (congregation or individual) and by use (with restriction, without restriction, special purpose, bequest, or endowment)
- Giving Summary is a helpful tool in comparing year-to-year actuals along with budget-to-actual comparisons

Congregational Giving (compared to 2018)
- Congregational giving to Core Ministries was down $128,376
from 2018 and $284,000 behind budget
  • 573 congregations gave 2,235 gifts to Core Ministries (70 fewer donors and over 160 fewer gifts)
  • Congregational giving to restricted funds kept pace with 2018, falling behind by just $25,000
  • District disaster response giving was $84,000 behind 2018, when we saw increased giving for the Hurricane Response
  • Total congregational giving down almost $238,000 (down 6.1% from 2018)

Offerings
  • Despite restarting the Pentecost offering in 2019, total offerings were lower than 2018 by approximately $10,000

Notes on 2019 Congregational Giving
Ed presented additional information related to congregational giving numbers, including insight from a conversation he had with Mission Advancement director Traci Rabenstein.

Potential reasons for the steep decline in giving:
  • Uncertainty
    o Some congregations may be withholding giving due to uncertainty, apprehension, and anxiety in the larger church; others may be deciding whether to leave the denomination
  • Struggles
    o Some congregations don’t have the means and are doing what they can simply to make ends meet in their own congregation and community
  • Education
    o Some congregations may not know how we operate, so staff are working on ways to get information to a larger audience beyond congregational leadership
    ▪ Mission Advancement staff are working on a narrative budget to include in this year’s self-allocation packets

Strategies for 2020:
  • Contact
    o Staff plan to increase phone calls to congregations who are already giving
  • Communicate
    o Staff will work with congregations with larger attendances to have intentional conversations with pastors and leadership
  • Connect
    o Staff will follow up on some work already done to schedule visits and continue nurturing relationships

Individual Giving (compared to 2018)
  • Individual giving to Core Ministries was up by over $52,000 and $8,000 ahead of budget
Almost 1,400 individuals gave 2,700 gifts to Core Ministries
  - Few donors and fewer number of gifts than in 2018
  - More money received from fewer people
- Individual giving to restricted funds was up $3,500
- Total individual giving over $2.7 million; up $364,596 (15.3%)
  - Largely due to increase in bequest income and restricted giving
  - Highest total since 2013
- Increased efforts by Mission Advancement staff to steward donors and focus on donor visits has helped to increase giving, especially to Core Ministries

**Online Giving and Recurring Donors**
- Web giving increased to $143,860 and 875 gifts (up $13,000 and 150 gifts from 2018)
- Monthly recurring donors increased from 12 in 2018 to 31 in 2019

**Combined Giving to Core Ministries**
- Total combined giving to Core Ministries down $76,261 from 2018 and $275,727 behind budget
  - Almost 2,000 donors gave 5,000 gifts to Core (both numbers down from 2018)

**Combined Giving to all Ministries (compared to 2018)**
- Total giving to all restricted funds down $106,000 (mostly from the $85,000 decrease in giving from district disaster auctions)
- Bequests received in 2019 totaled almost $1.5 million (includes restricted bequests)
  - We received approximately 21 bequests from 11 estate settlements
  - Of the $1.5 million total, just over $1 million was unrestricted (up $350,000 from 2018)
    - Important because unrestricted bequests fund our Bequest Quasi-Endowment fund; we take a 17% draw to support Core Ministries
  - 2019 bequest income well above 10-year average of $604,724
  - Over the last ten years, the Bequest Quasi-Endowment fund has sustained its account balance in that our average bequest ($604,724) plus average market fluctuation ($325,037) outpaces our average draw ($907,746) by over $22,000
  - Current balance in Bequest Quasi-Endowment fund is $4.4 million
- Total combined giving is almost $6.4 million (up approximately $127,000 or 2% from 2018)
- Highest combined giving total in the last 3 years

Ed presented the net income and expense report (Exhibit 2) as of December 31, 2019:
Core Ministries Income Variances

Ministry Enablement Contribution
- Income received was $21,644 higher than budget
- 2019 budget calculation was a little on the conservative side and did not include an average for other miscellaneous restricted gifts
- For the 2020 budget, we adjusted this calculation to include an average for miscellaneous restricted gifts ($312,000 in 2020 with the Brethren Press sales contribution)

Service Fees & Other Income
- Income received was $34,351 higher than budget
  - Includes the Foundation service fee rebate, bank fees and interest, misc. income and dividends, and our annuity and endowment liabilities
- For 2019, our service fee rebate increased (larger investment balance at the Foundation) and we didn’t have to fund the annuity deficit at the same level as the past few years

BSC Quasi-Endowment Transfer
- Income received was $19,968 below budget
- Poor investment returns at the end of 2018 skewed the BSC Quasi-Endowment calculation for the draw more than other transfers because we don’t yet have a full five years to average
- Strong investment returns in 2019 increased balance to $3.5 million
- For 2020, this transfer has been reduced to $269,000

Designated Funds Transfer
- We had $156,000 in designated funds available from the closed-out Church Note/Letter program to help offset the 2019 budget
- We had to transfer only $35,000 to help offset the budget
- The remaining $121,000 matches the amount of designated funds planned to offset the 2020 budget
  - We hope not to have use all these funds in 2020

Total Overhead Income
- Actual income fell short by $378,000, finishing close to $4.8 million
- Majority of shortfall was from decreased congregational giving and not using all of our budgeted transfers (transfers were $150,000 below budget)

Core Ministries Expense Variances

General Secretary
- General Secretary budget underspent by $32,384
  - Lower travel expenses and lower expense for the Mission and Ministry Board meetings ($23,000 savings combined)
Mission Advancement
- Mission Advancement underspent by $160,585
  - Primarily due to unspent campaign funds; campaign funds are not included in 2020 budget ($552,000 in 2020)

Discipleship Ministries
- Discipleship Ministries underspent by $87,303
  - Primarily due to unfilled intercultural ministries position for most of 2019

Global Mission and Service
- This budget was break-even for 2019
  - Jay didn’t want budget to be overspent, so a $7,000 transfer was made to cover expenses
  - Transfer came from an unused Global Mission and Service carryover account that was no longer needed

Finance
- Finance underspent by $46,462
  - Primarily due to unfilled Chief Financial Officer position for last five months of 2019

Total Director Level Expenses
- Total director level expenses finished $373,387 under budget
- Staff from all ministry areas made effort to streamline and reduce expenses where they could despite already tight budget constraints

2019 Financial Summary
Indicators of financial health
- *Liquidity* shows an organization’s ability to withstand risks and respond to new opportunities
  - The Church of the Brethren is in a very strong position when it comes to our investment balance, net asset balance, and our liquidity
- *Revenue reliability* measures an organization’s track record of bringing in recurring dollars on an unrestricted basis year after year
  - Grateful for the increase in total giving, but mindful of the continued decline in giving to Core Ministries
  - Annual decrease in unrestricted income puts pressure on staff to effectively carry out ministries, while at the same time reducing expenses year after year
- *Consistent surpluses*: reliable revenue that covers operating expenses and contributes to surpluses
  - Core Ministries finished with income over expense
    - Did not need to use all our budgeted transfer amounts
    - Staff carefully manage their budgets
  - We remain deeply concerned about the growing net asset
deficit balances for Brethren Press and Material Resources, and the lasting impact this may have on these ministries’ ability to sustain their current level of programs.

Ed closed by noting that beyond 2019, there are definitely areas of concern, especially at this uncertain time in the life of the church and as we discern how these uncertainties will impact budgets and ministries.

Diane Mason brought a report from the previous day’s Audit and Investment Committee meeting. Committee members are Diane Mason (chair), John Hoffman, and Roger Schrock. Interim treasurer Ed Woolf meets with and provides support to the committee.

The committee devoted much time to conversation with Steve Mason, Brethren Foundation staff, about stock market performance.

- Markets were at an all-time high on February 19
- The longest bull market ever ended on March 11
- On March 12, the S&P 500 remained above the 2008 crash
- Driving the current market downturn: coronavirus, OPEC oil price war, general fear and uncertainty
- Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) investment managers advise a disciplined, long-term approach to investing
- BBT managers perform better in a down market.

The committee will review its investment strategy in October, as is done every two years.

2019 ended up about $6 million; we are now down $4 million from the end of 2019. As already noted, the Church of the Brethren has a strong financial foundation.

The auditors have completed their initial work. Staff will work with them to finalize the audit report. The committee will meet with the auditors by phone to review the final results.

Other items of business included:

- New accounting standards
- We have no more church notes and are out of the loan business
- Committee requested more information from the finance office on our endowment funds
  - 13 are unrestricted
  - 31 designate the gain on funds toward specific ministries

Diane expressed appreciation for Ed Woolf’s and Pat Marsh’s expertise and ability to articulate financial information, and for their quick and thorough responses to inquiries.

Annual Conference secretary Jim Beckwith led a session on the role of the Mission and Ministry Board in the Church of the Brethren.
His presentation included:

- History leading up to and including the formation of the current Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board
- Church of the Brethren organizational structure
- Review of Manual of Organization and Polity as it relates to the Mission and Ministry Board

Carl Fike brought the report of the previous day’s Board Development Committee meeting. Committee members present for the meeting were Carl Fike (chair) and Paul Liepelt, with Christina Singh joining via Zoom. Committee member Carol Yeazell was absent. Jim Beckwith sat in on the meeting and Nancy Miner provided staff support.

The committee:

- Began planning for new member orientation, scheduled to take place in October
- Brainstormed board training and growth opportunities
  - Group
    - Rhonda Pittman Gingrich is tentatively scheduled to lead a session on the Compelling Vision in October
  - Individual
    - Carl scheduled to attend BoardSource Leadership Forum in May
    - Denominational events (e.g. Church Planting Conference, Young Adult Conference)
- Reviewed the board matrix
  - Matrix tracks skill sets and demographics to be considered as at-large positions are filled
- Identified a person to serve as governance monitor
- Considered whether there might be interest in the board attending worship at Willow Creek while meeting in Elgin

Bill Scheurer brought the report from On Earth Peace (OEP).

He reported on OEP’s three-year focus on Kingian Nonviolence conflict reconciliation, a practice for engaging conflict to work for justice and peace. He described it as a spiritual and a practical discipline with deeply Christian influence and Brethren roots.

Bill focused on the first of six principals of Kingian Nonviolence:
Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.

We live in a “VUCA” world, where we face:

- Volatility
- Uncertainty
- Complexity
- Ambiguity
OEP works to equip courageous leaders with:
- Vision
- Understanding
- Clarity
- Agility

Citing Tod Bolsinger’s “Canoeing the Mountains,” he asked what paddles the Church of the Brethren needs to lay down and what new equipment and behaviors we need to take up as we move into the Compelling Vision.

Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, director of Ministry, brought the report from the Office of Ministry.

She shared that as churches seek ways to respond to the pandemic, she is deeply grateful for our partnership with districts, ministers, and congregations.

She reminded the group of the four aspects of the Office of Ministry:
- Credentialing
- Calling
- Training
- Sustaining

She called attention to resources and opportunities supporting those aspects, available on the website (www.brethren.org/ministryoffice):
- Advanced Ethics Training
- Brethren Ministers’ Association 2020 Pre-Annual Conference Event
- Part-Time Pastor, Full-Time Church

The Part-Time Pastor, Full-Time Church program, funded by a Lilly Foundation grant, is ready to launch. Begun in January 2019, the first year of the program was spent gathering data. During that time, program manager Dana Cassell and the Thriving in Ministry Advisory Committee had conversations with:
- Intercultural Ministries office
- District executives
- Supporting Churches Network steering committee
- District conference attendees
- District ministry training program committees
- Annual Conference insight session attendees

The program is now accepting applications online in English or Spanish. Eight circuit riders were trained in February and are ready to make visits.
- Angela Carr
- John Fillmore
- Keith Funk
- Don Hubbell
Nancy provided a handout about the program and highlighted it, noting:

**Statistical report**
- 24% of ministers in the Church of the Brethren are women
- Some districts have lost 5-10% of their ministers, largely due to congregations leaving
  - Some changes are due to cleaning up database records

**Annual Conference 2020 events**
- Clergywomen’s Breakfast
- Insight sessions

Janet Ober Lambert, director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, gave an overview of the Academy’s work.
- Oversees non-graduate certificate-level ministry training for the Church of the Brethren
  - Training in Ministry (TRIM)
  - Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM)
  - Spanish language programming
    - Educación para un Ministerio Compartido (counterpart to EFSM)
    - SeBAH (a partnership with Mennonite Education Agency)
  - Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) in districts
- Oversees continuing education for the denomination

Exciting things happening at the Academy include:
- Aida Sanchez joined staff as new Coordinator for Spanish-Language Ministry Training
  - Among the first graduates of SeBAH
- Exploring how SeBAH might be shared outside the U.S. for Spanish-speaking populations

Patrick Starkey reminded the board that members of the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, which works closely with the Office of Ministry, met with the board via Zoom in October. At that time, they invited input from the board on 1.) proposed changes to the pastoral pay scale, and 2.) revisiting the way the Pastors Housing Fund is invested (with any change requiring board approval).

It was anticipated that a proposal regarding the Pastors Housing Fund would come to the board at this meeting. Because staff were busy with the purchase of new housing for the BVSers, this proposal will likely come to the board at the summer meeting.
Patrick Starkey gave background on the Brethren Service Center (BSC) quasi-endowment fund and the practice of drawing a percentage from the fund annually to support the Core Ministries budget. He provided a handout and highlighted details in it, including:

- A quasi-endowment is a board-designated fund; we seek to be cautious to honor the principal, but it is not a true endowment where the principal cannot be touched.
- We have a long practice of drawing on the Bequest quasi-endowment to support the operating budget.
- The BSC quasi-endowment is not replenished through contributions as the Bequest quasi-endowment is.
- The board has discussed differing philosophies on promoting long-term sustainability, including:
  - Saving it as a “rainy day” fund, or
  - Supporting present ministries to carry us into the future

Patrick stressed that staff have been devoted as they look at how much to draw from the BSC quasi-endowment to support each year’s budget. Board members have encouraged further discussion in order to provide greater clarity to staff of the board’s expectations.

Patrick brought the following recommendation from the Executive Committee:

**Recommendation**

*The Executive Committee recommends that a short-term working group be appointed, made up of Roger Schrock (convener), PaulLiepelt, and Diane Mason, plus a staff member to be appointed by the general secretary. The working group would be tasked with bringing a recommendation regarding the BSC quasi-endowment for the board to consider at its July meeting.*

*The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the recommendation as presented.*

Patrick invited board members to discuss the following question at their tables:

What is most important as we consider our practice of drawing a percentage from the BSC quasi-endowment to support Core Ministries?

Each table was invited to report back on their discussion. Feedback included:

- We can’t control market fluctuation trends. If we would stay at a 5% draw long term, the fund could actually increase, creating a pool that could fund future ideas.
- By using this fund to offset the operating budget, are we putting
off asking the hard questions, thus leaving that to future boards? Is it the board’s responsibility to give direction to staff, or staff’s responsibility to bring ideas to the board? It is OK to draw it down as long as we are engaged in conversation about financial realities and the purpose of the BSC monies?

- If our ministries are meaningful and reaching the wider body, it feels okay to pull from the fund to enable those ministries. But if we are struggling with our ministries to reach a wide demographic of the church, do we want to be spending down the quasi-endowment? The Compelling Vision and Strategic Design may propel us forward.

- Analyze the context as far as needs and use the draw to stabilize uncertain or fluctuating budgets.
- Ask the question “Whose money is it anyway? Ours or God’s?” Let God direct/inspire us to use it.
- Take into consideration the well-being of our global sisters and brothers and of our staff in how we think about what has been entrusted to us.
- If not preserving the principal, it would be wise to go with a minimum draw (e.g. 5%).
- Is it better to use the money now for programs to advance us into the future, rather than preserving things of the past?
- Whatever is decided, hope that it is in line with the legacy of the Brethren Service Center.
- Are we playing God with the money? Ask ourselves why we are doing what we are doing and be careful not to usurp authority.
- A desire to use the money – but not just to avoid difficult budget conversations. Using this money for the operational budget should not be seen as a long-term solution.

Roger Schrock, convener of the short-term working group, asked for more input, specifically:

- Have we thought about using this to replace donations lost as a result of the Covenant Brethren Church (CBC)?
- Are there other kinds of benchmarks to consider besides market or percentage?

Patrick named the Compelling Vision, the Strategic Plan, and the CBC as all playing into this conversation. Roger also noted that a long-term decision may need to wait until it becomes clear what the pandemic will do to our economy.

Further discussion included:

- Current practice is not technically a draw. The discipline of taking a percentage draw creates an income stream rather than filling a gap.
- We don’t know how the current situation will affect the church or how the church will need to respond. If we have been saving it for the future, the future may be now.
• Our programs require leadership. We could take a portion to endow scholarships for future leadership at each of our educational facilities, which would be a long-term investment.

David Steele shared his approach to budget-building. At this time, his philosophy is to maintain the current level of programs and ministries as best we can, not making hasty decisions or adjustments until we have a strategic plan to guide us. Looking at income streams, we make adjustments to accommodate the expense budget we have created.

Roger Schrock thanked the board chair for the additional input.

Josh Brockway and Stan Dueck, co-coordinators, brought the Discipleship Ministries report.

Discipleship Ministries equips the people of God, new and renewed, to embody and articulate their faith. Through resources, relationships, and events, they help the church:
• Make disciples
• Form leaders
• Transform communities

Urban Ministry course
Held at City of Refuge in Atlanta, in partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary and the Brethren Academy

Ministry Summer Service
Nine interns will gather in Elgin this summer to explore their vocations
• Diverse group
  o Only three white students and only four of them male

National Young Adult Conference
• Lauren Seganos Cohen will be one of the preachers
• Colin Scott plans to attend
• Reminder to encourage young adults from your districts to attend

Intercultural Ministries
• New director LaDonna Sanders Nkosi fully engaged
  o Brings not only training and expertise, but also theological foundation and depth
• Change from half-time to full-time position
• Worked closely with Office of Peacebuilding and Policy for Black History Month
• Developing relationships through Coffee Talks – a discussion of the book “Every Day Ubuntu”
• Survey results for the Xenith project revealed confusion as to what it means to be an intercultural congregation
NOAC 2021

- Committee has begun planning, led by Christy Waltersdorff
- Theme: Overflowing with Hope

New and Renew Conference

- May 13-15 at the General Offices in Elgin
- Opportunity for participants to meet, see, and interact with staff
- Speakers are Christiana Rice and José Humphreys
- TRIM students can participate

Other resources

- Webinar with David Fitch
  - Mission, Money, and Church Planting
  - Part of a series; the first on Seeding or Launching Congregations

In conversation with On Earth Peace, Bethany, and Outdoor Ministries, it was decided that the Youth Peace Travel Team could not continue to be sustained in the same way it has. Staff are looking for ways to increase peace education and formation, specifically through the Ministry Summer Service training.

Paul Mundey brought the Annual Conference Moderator’s report.

In his overarching role as spiritual leader, he has attended conferences and meetings, participated in many Zoom calls, stays active on social media, and shares pastoral letters via the Annual Conference website.

He highlighted his travels to date through a series of photos and shared about the Moderator’s Forum to be held at Elizabethtown College on April 18, focusing on Historical Themes Impacting Today’s Church.

The theme for Annual Conference is “God’s Adventurous Future.” Highlights will be:

- Concert by Fernando Ortega
- Annual Conference orchestra led by Nonie Detrick
  - Debuting an original composition by Greg Bachman
- Morning Bible study on Revelation, led by Michael Gorman
  - Gorman will also lead the pre-conference Ministers Association event
- Several events featuring Tod Bolsinger
- Emphasis on servant evangelism led by Bob Kettering and Samuel Sarpiya
- Public art creation

The Compelling Vision will be brought to Annual Conference for consideration by conference delegates. The process of discernment will be one of creative, prayerful engagement through continued conversation, rather than a process of motions and amendments.
Acknowledging the difficult terrain of the church at this time, he stressed that church leaders are called to manage anxiety and to remain calm and courageous, no matter what.

Chris Douglas, Annual Conference director, brought the Annual Conference Office report. She reported:
- Registration opened March 2
- Already over 600 hotel rooms booked for peak nights
- Registration is on track with last year

With the current pandemic, people have inquired whether there will be a conference this year. Plans continue as if the conference will take place and assuming the very best. Things are changing quickly, making it hard to know what to expect 3½ months from now.

Chris reminded the board:
- We have a very liberal cancellation policy, with full refunds
- Hotel rooms can be cancelled up to 24 hours before arrival

Chris recently reviewed the contract and confirmed:
- If we chose to cancel the conference, the Church of the Brethren would owe the convention center and hotels $670,000, needing to draw on reserves to cover the loss.
- The contract includes a force majeure clause, meaning if circumstances make it impossible to have the conference (e.g. the convention center closes), a cancellation can be made with no penalty.

Carl Fike brought the report of the Strategic Design Team. The team, called by the board in July 2019, was tasked with discerning a recommended process for designing a new strategic plan. Team members were Paul Schrock, Colin Scott, Lois Grove, Jay Wittmeyer, and Carl Fike.

Meeting on several occasions via Zoom, the team:
- leaned toward engaging an outside consultant
- considered the audience that would use the new strategic plan
- considered those that would fashion the new strategic plan
- decided to slow down and wait for the Compelling Vision process to conclude, but heard the board’s counsel in October to keep the momentum

With Jay Wittmeyer’s departure earlier this year, Josh Brockway has joined the team.

Carl noted Paul Schrock’s experience and strength in the area of strategic planning. After sending eight Requests for Proposals, the team received and considered three qualified proposals and determined which would best serve the board.
After a vetting and recruiting process that considered age, gender, geography, experience, and energy, the team brought a recommendation for a Strategic Design Formation team, which would include representatives from the Council of District Executives and the Compelling Vision team.

Carl presented the following recommendations from the Strategic Design Team for board consideration:

**Recommendation**

A. The Strategic Design Team recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board engage the services of Jim Randall of Auxano (the consultant who worked with the Compelling Vision Task Group) to provide coaching and guidance to the Strategic Plan Formation Team (see recommendation B. below) with a target completion date of June 26, 2020, for the new Strategic Plan. Auxano’s proposed consulting fee is $18,000 plus travel, meals, and lodging.

B. The Strategic Design Team recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board assign responsibility for actual formation of the new strategic plan to an “expanded” version of the Strategic Design Team to now be known as the Strategic Plan Formation Team to be comprised of the following individuals:

- Carl Fike (team convener and MMB Chair-elect)
- Russ Matteson (member of the Council of District Executives)
- Josh Brockway (denominational staff representative)
- Paul Schrock (chair of the MMB Strategic Planning Committee)
- Colin Scott (member of the Mission and Ministry Board)
- Lauren Seganos Cohen (member of the Mission and Ministry Board)
- Rhonda Pittman-Gingrich (SME*, Compelling Vision Task Group)
- TBD (SME, Compelling Vision Task Group)

*Subject matter expert

Action on the recommendation took place during the next day’s session.

David Steele introduced interim directors of Global Mission Norm and Carol Waggy, and interim office manager Roxane Hill.

Roy Winter, associate executive director, named the primary goals of the interim team as understanding the programs and relationships, and to do no harm. Continuing communications and relationships is key, as is living into what it means to be a global church. A secondary goal is to do country-level documentation and planning with each of the country partners.
Challenges needing attention and prayer include:

- Nigeria
  - Violence continues to increase
  - The church has recovered a lot since 2014
  - Majalisa (annual conference) is scheduled for March 30-April 3 in Kwarhi

- Dominican Republic
  - Struggling with internal conflict between the ethnic Haitians and the ethnic Dominicans
  - Equal number of Haitian and Dominican churches; each is working separately

Places to celebrate include:

- Haiti
  - Following civil unrest, the church is back at work

- South Sudan
  - Civil war has ended
  - Peace center is working on agriculture and recovery
  - Churches are emerging out of the work there

There are great humanitarian needs in all these places, and also in:

- African Great Lakes region
- Venezuela

Nathan Hosler, director of the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, joined the meeting via Zoom and reported on his work in Washington, D.C., related to the Nigeria Crisis Response.

- His work on behalf of Nigeria began after he attended vigil at Nigerian embassy following the abduction of the Chibok girls in 2014
- Nigeria Working Group grew out of contacts made at the vigil
  - Meets monthly, with congressional briefings twice a year
  - Able to elevate the voice and experience of EYN, which in turn benefits the whole of Nigeria
  - Regularly called on to give input into report planning or to speak on issues, greatly amplifying concern for Nigeria and focus on U.S. Nigeria policy

Patrick Starkey invited the board to brainstorm potential uses of proceeds from the future sale of the east-end property at the General Offices in Elgin.

He reminded board members that similar brainstorming took place prior to the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor. Sales proceeds from that sale were designated for preservation of the historic Germantown property, for the Brethren Faith in Action grant fund, and for the Brethren Service Center quasi-endowment fund.

The board spent time in table talk, writing ideas generated at each table on Elgin east-end property.
note cards. Members shared the following ideas for use of the proceeds:
- Peace witness and education
- Supporting outdoor ministries infrastructure
- Focus on printing and communications (honoring legacy of Brethren Press printing)
- Scholarships and endowment for launching new Brethren churches around the globe
- Seed source for new innovative programs for new Strategic Plan
- Expanding current Brethren Faith in Action fund to global partners
- “Jesus in the neighborhood” fund
- Develop an incubator for social change start-ups
- Upgrade infrastructure in existing offices (e.g. HVAC system, energy efficient windows)
- Keep the land and develop it

Thomas Dowdy brought the report of the Living Together as Christ Calls team, which consists of Carol Yeazell, John Hoffman, Thomas Dowdy, and Stan Dueck.

The team’s assignment from 2016 Annual Conference:
1. Address the roots of our tension, and
2. Develop strategies that will aid us in treating one another in a truly Christ-like manner

The team, feeling that the Compelling Vision touches on some of what they were to address, sought to find practical ways in which the board can encourage the denomination to have conversation about how we can live together as Christ calls.

Areas where the church needs to work include:
- How we as a church can be more humble
- Admitting that we need help as a denomination and need to be open to each other
- Disciplining ourselves
- Being willing to invite others into the process
- Practicing patience
- Discernment and curiosity
- Realizing that language is different, even within our church (e.g. Christian talk and “Brethren talk”)
- Creativity; thinking outside the box
- Caring about our congregations, districts, board

Thomas concluded by stating that Living Together as Christ Calls is a work in process, a huge task, and we still have a way to go.

Patrick thanked the team for its work, noting that this is the third group to address the task.
Jeff Carter brought the Bethany Seminary report. He invited the board to visit the seminary later that evening for a tour and refreshments, adding that staff looked forward to welcoming them to campus.

He reported on Bethany’s educational partnership with Ekklesiayar Yan'ụwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and shared photos from his recent travel to Nigeria.

- Preached for morning worship
- Open house at the technology center
- Partnership presents both blessings and challenges; difficult to have fellowship through Zoom
- Sharon Flaten living in Nigeria to help with admission work
- New partnerships with Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Church of Christ in Nigeria, and Jos ECWA Theological Seminary

Jeff also reported on his service with the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee and Council of Churches for International Affairs, where he represents the Church of the Brethren and shared photos from his recent trip to Australia to attend the Central Committee meeting.

Carl Fike reported that eight of the 11 congregations that had planned to host board members for Sunday morning worship had cancelled services because of the coronavirus. He gave guidelines for travel to those congregations still holding worship.

The meeting adjourned for the day, and following dinner board members and staff traveled to Bethany Theological Seminary to tour the facility, visit with staff, and enjoy ice cream.
Mission and Ministry Board – Minutes

Sunday, March 15

Members present: Patrick Starkey (chair), Carl Fike (chair-elect), Lois Grove, Heather Gentry Hartwell, Dava Hensley, John Hoffman, Paul Liepelt, Diane Mason, John Mueller, Joel Peña, J. Roger Schrock, Paul Schrock, Colin Scott

Members present via Zoom: Lauren Seganos Cohen, Thomas Dowdy

Ex Officio: Paul Mundey (moderator), David Sollenberger (moderator-elect), James M. Beckwith (secretary), Jeff Carter (Bethany president), Bill Scheurer (OEP executive director), Cindy Sanders (Council of District Executives representative)

General Secretary: David Steele

Members absent: Christina Singh, Carol Yeazell

Ex officio members absent: Nevin Dulabaum

Recorders: Ed Woolf and Nancy Miner

Patrick Starkey thanked Jeff Carter and Bethany Theological Seminary for hosting the board and staff at the seminary campus the previous evening.

Jeff Carter thanked those who visited campus, adding that their presence and the enthusiasm shared did a lot for the Bethany staff that were present.

Board members shared highlights from their experiences worshipping with area congregations. Although the original plan was for board members to divide up among 11 congregations, the COVID-19 pandemic limited participation to the following congregations:

Potsdam
- Roger Schrock gave the sermon
- Meaningful and moving worship service
- Warmly welcomed
- Surprised by the number in attendance
- Woman in attendance celebrating her 90th birthday
- Impressive financial support plan

Worship with area congregations

Sunday morning visit debrief
• Community youth programming with 30-40 children and youth, most of whom are not affiliated with the church

**Covington**
• Paul Mundey adapted his sermon to reflect the circumstances
• Warmly received
• About one-half of their membership turned out
• Stayed for Sunday school
  o Members talked about balancing living with their counter-culture heritage while relating to a dominant culture
• Impressed by the demographics of the people there, including those who may have been more apprehensive about the virus due to their age
• Heard about active ministries; ways the congregation is living out “Jesus in the neighborhood”
  o Child care
  o Food pantry

**Cedar Grove**
• Paul Liepelt gave sermon on the Compelling Vision
• Arrived early while praise band was practicing
  o Met by pastor, his wife, and Bethany faculty member Steve Schweitzer
  o Given a quick tour of the building
• Paul Liepelt played with the praise band as he did 16 years ago while a Bethany student
• About 85 in attendance
  o Mixed ages – both young and more mature
• Collecting boxes of cereal to distribute on Palm Sunday
  o Pastor noted that the need is now and challenged members to collect more by Palm Sunday
  o Awareness of the present need and responding sooner and later
• Christmas star still up as a visual reminder to follow and reflect the True Light

**Prince of Peace (via Zoom)**
• Dava Hensley gave her sermon from the Holiday Inn
• Traci Rabenstein helped Dava with technology and brought the prayer and the offertory statement
• People kept joining the service throughout
• Pastors Tim and Katie did a great job of putting the service together

Others reported that they were able to worship online with their home or other congregations, including:
Elizabethtown (Pa.)
- 220 computers logged on
- People from across the country who weren’t having services at home

Annville (Pa.)

The Rock (Fla.)
Joined a spouse in worship via Facetime

Lauren Seganos Cohen reported that she was unable to lead an online service “live,” but provided a recorded message and worship resources for her congregation.

Thomas Dowdy was blessed to have a private worship service with his granddaughter who had spent the night.

Patrick reminded the board that the reason for meeting in Greenville was because of the positive experience the board had five years before while meeting in Lancaster, Pa., and worshipping with area congregations. The board decided at that time to hold an offsite meeting again in five years.

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, chair of the Compelling Vision Process Team, led the board through a discussion of the Compelling Vision.

Rhonda gave background information on the process that brought us to this point. The Compelling Vision process was not intended or designed to test, directly or indirectly, the desire of the body to maintain, change, or establish any particular position or statement of the Annual Conference. Rather, the intent was to change the focus and tone of our internal discourse, attending to God’s spirit moving among us, intentionally seeking to identify that which unites us and to discern that which God is calling us to be and do as the body of Christ in these times.

Historically, denominational visioning and goal setting takes place at the board level, but this process was structured differently:
- By engaging as many people as possible in the process
- Both individual input and communal discernment happened in the context of conversation
- Annual Conference has been and will be given a central role in the discernment process

Conversations have taken place with the following groups since the vision statement’s February release:
- Council of District Executives
- Interagency Forum
- Church of the Brethren staff
- Bethany faculty and staff

Compelling Vision
Handout
The statement’s affirmation process at this year’s Annual Conference will be one of prayerful conversation, rather than motions and amendments.

**Vision Statement**

*Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.*

**Branding statement:** Jesus in the Neighborhood

Rhonda invited the board into conversation about the vision, asking them to respond to the following questions.

- How does the Compelling Vision reflect the soul of the Church of the Brethren?
- How does this vision stir your heart? How does this vision stretch your mind in absurd, bold, daring, or audacious ways?
- What are our growing edges in relation to this vision? What are the competencies we need to strengthen to better equip the church (at all levels) to live into this vision?
- What active and empowering language could we use to speak of our ministry in light of this vision?

The board engaged the vision in the context of the current pandemic and social distancing by considering the following questions:

- In the midst of this crisis, what are the needs emerging in your neighborhoods? How can your congregation work to assess the most pressing of these needs? Given the gifts and resources within your congregation, how can your congregation work to address the most pressing need (or needs) in responsible, yet innovative, adaptable, and fearless ways, bearing witness to the living Christ?
- How can you work to keep a “vision state of mind” individually and as a group?

The session closed with prayer and the hymn “Brethren, come and claim a vision,” lyrics written by Rosanna McFadden and set to the tune “Holy Manna.” Rhonda was available the rest of the day for further conversation.

Patrick Starkey re-introduced the recommendations brought the previous day by the Strategic Design Team for action by the board.

**Recommendation**

_A. The Strategic Design Team recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board engage the services of Jim Randall of Auxano (the consultant who worked with the Compelling Vision Task Group) to provide coaching and guidance to the Strategic Plan Formation Team (see recommendation B. below) with a target completion date of June 26, 2020, for the new Strategic Plan._
Auxano’s proposed consulting fee is $18,000 plus travel, meals, and lodging.

B. The Strategic Design Team recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board assign responsibility for actual formation of the new strategic plan to an “expanded” version of the Strategic Design Team to now be known as the Strategic Plan Formation Team to be comprised of the following individuals:

- Carl Fike (team convener and MMB Chair-elect)
- Russ Matteson (member of the Council of District Executives)
- Josh Brockway (denominational staff representative)
- Paul Schrock (chair of the MMB Strategic Planning Committee)
- Colin Scott (member of the Mission and Ministry Board)
- Lauren Seganos Cohen (member of the Mission and Ministry Board)
- Rhonda Pittman-Gingrich (SME*, Compelling Vision Task Group)
- To be determined (SME, Compelling Vision Task Group)

*Subject matter expert

Carl Fike sought clarification on whether the board needed to discuss where the $18,000 in item A. would come from. David Steele clarified that has not yet been determined, but if board approval is needed, he will work with Patrick and Carl to bring a recommendation to the board via email.

Carl explained that in item B., one additional person has been asked to serve but has not yet been confirmed. He asked the board to consider approval of the recommendation without that name.

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the recommendation engage the services of Jim Randall (Auxano) and to call a Strategic Plan Formation Team, as presented.

Affirmation

Paul Schrock brought the report of the Strategic Planning Committee. He noted that although they met without a formal agenda, the group had a productive discussion about the purpose of the committee.

Strategic Planning Committee report

The committee’s purpose is not to develop the new strategic plan, but to receive the plan once it is approved by the board, and to shepherd it for the next five years, checking in with staff to be sure their work aligns with the plan, and gauging progress against the plan using the key performance indicators built into it.

Next Big Idea follow-up discussion

Patrick Starkey introduced a continuation of the Next Big Idea conversation that took place at the October board meeting.
Noting the items that stood out as he, David, and Carl reviewed feedback from that conversation, he invited the board to discuss hopes and expectations for each of the following, beyond what is already being done:

**Race relations**
- Work with other churches/denominations and combine our strengths to provide a broader ministry
- How does the board call and equip people who are effective in race relations?
- We may need to encourage or provide ways for people to learn another language.
- Is there an anti-racism Bible study with a Brethren slant?
  - A lot of LaDonna’s work since she came on has been not just conversations about racism, but connecting persons who are doing anti-racism work.
  - Brethren Press has Uncovering Racism as part of the Covenant Bible Studies
- What lessons has On Earth Peace learned that they could share?
  - Bill Scheurer shared that OEP uses Crossroads anti-racism training; requires staff and board to take the training
  - Jeff Carter shared that Bethany staff and faculty, in partnership with the trustees, have been evaluating hiring processes and reviewing curriculum
- Board Development Committee could arrange anti-racism training for a future board meeting
  - Gimbiya’s leadership for a previous session was helpful; should be a recurring exercise
- Discipleship Ministries and Office of Peacebuilding and Policy are working to bring congregations into the conversation about immigration issues
- Would rather focus on ethnic understanding than anti-racism

**Equipping people for personal faith sharing in various contexts**
- Teach BVSers how to share their stories and the message of God with the people they serve
- This is about evangelism and about Jesus in the neighborhood
- Dave Sollenberger is working on videos for Annual Conference that would fit here
- Produce books or videos titled “Together with Jesus in the Neighborhood”
  - A collection of stories for various age levels
  - Could be about BVS or BDM

**Expanding conflict mediation to the entire denomination**
- Use media/YouTube videos
- Ask General Secretary to write what we have learned/where we have failed/what we might have done differently through the process of separation (Covenant Brethren Church)
• An honest recognition that some congregations will not work with OEP. Conversations are already taking place about where we might pick up some pieces to open it to that segment of the church.
• Not feasible to add lots of time and resources now. More feasible to think of ourselves as a central clearinghouse
  o Goes with the Compelling Vision – call out and equip, rather than adding additional staff
• What if we equipped a mediator in every congregation to mediate conflict in their communities?
• Deacon training events have worked at these processes
• Western Plains has area team ministers that assist congregations with mediation
• Invite EYN to share with us what they have learned about dealing with violence and conflict

A more concerted effort to bring women into leadership roles
• Seems like it is time for a major statement or a re-affirmation of the 1958 action
• We need to increase calling in general – and start lifting up ministry as a vocation at a young age
• When people apply for church ministry jobs, do not include name or gender when application is forwarded for consideration
• We need to watch our language – it is not always female inclusive

Colin Scott brought the report of the Sustainability Committee.

Committee members at the meeting were Dava Hensley, Joel Peña, Colin Scott (chair), and Lauren Seganos Cohen (via Zoom). They were joined by staff members Traci Rabenstein and Josh Brockway.

At the October meeting, the committee encouraged efforts of staff to equip board members with resources that would enable us to better live into our responsibility as a board to serve as ambassadors for the mission and ministries of the church.

To that end, each board member was given a copy of the packet Mission Advancement advocates give to those they visit. Included in the packet were educational materials, pamphlets, brochures, giving opportunities, and contact information. The materials are intended to aid board members as they share information about the mission and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Board members are not asked to become fundraisers, but to identify people with passion for certain ministries and connect them with Mission Advancement staff.

The committee is eager to affirm directional updates shared by staff, including:
• Marketing of recurring online gifts
• Expanded efforts to reach out beyond the Faith Forward donor circle and develop relationships
• Development of a narrative budget
• Continued development of database
• Consideration of a future campaign
  o Board will have preparation work to do

Touchpoints that were identified:
• How COVID-19 affects us
  o Advocates encouraged to be safe in current environment
  o Event participation; need to be flexible

Colin reminded the board to support/give to the ministries of the Church of the Brethren and commended staff for their exemplary work.

Because Brethren Benefit Trust president Nevin Dulabaum was unable to attend the meeting, there was no BBT report.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:35.

Adjournment
Mission and Ministry Board – Minutes

Monday, March 16

Members present: Patrick Starkey (chair), Carl Fike (chair-elect), Lois Grove, Heather Gentry Hartwell, Dava Hensley, John Hoffman, Paul Liepelt, Diane Mason, John Mueller, Joel Peña, J. Roger Schrock, Paul Schrock, Colin Scott

Members present via Zoom: Lauren Seganos Cohen, Thomas Dowdy

Ex Officio: Paul Mundey (moderator), David Sollenberger (moderator-elect), James M. Beckwith (secretary), Bill Scheurer (OEP executive director), Cindy Sanders (Council of District Executives representative)

General Secretary: David Steele

Members absent: Christina Singh, Carol Yeazell

Ex officio members absent: Jeff Carter, Nevin Dulabaum

Recorders: Ed Woolf and Nancy Miner

Patrick Starkey shared words of appreciation for the hospitality provided by the Oakland congregation and the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District and for the meals provided by the Brethren Retirement Community.

Patrick presented a recommendation from the Brethren Historical Committee that Denise Kettering-Lane be appointed to a four-year term on the committee beginning July 1, 2020.

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and affirmed the appointment of Denise Kettering-Lane to the Brethren Historical Committee.

Diane Mason brought the report of the Brethren Faith in Action grant review committee. Diane represents the board on the committee, which also includes David Shumate (Council of District Executives) and Stan Dueck (Church of the Brethren staff).

Since November, grants were awarded to:

Introductions

Brethren Historical Committee appointment

Exhibit 3

Affirmation

Brethren Faith in Action team report
Bayamon, Puerto Rico ($4,990)
Brook Park ($5,000)
Harrisburg First ($4,300)
Mechanicsburg ($5,000)
Spring Creek ($5,000)
Manchester ($5,000)
Buffalo Valley ($1,000)
Pleasant Valley ($1,250)
Alpha and Omega ($5,000)

Additional applications have been approved contingent on letters of support from their district executives.

Not every application has been approved. The committee pays attention to the fund’s guidelines, specifically that the congregations use the funds for local, hands-on work that continues the spirit of the work of the Brethren Service Center.

Reports are now coming back from congregations that received grants last year, providing detail of how the grants have affected their ministries.

About $101,000 remains for awards in 2020, which will fund 18-20 additional visions. The committee is encouraged that word about the Brethren Faith in Action fund is getting out.

Some of the ministries that have received grants will be included in the video stories to be shared at Annual Conference, showing connections with the vision statement.

Joel Peña and Colin Scott each expressed appreciation for grants received by their respective congregations.

Patrick Starkey introduced an appeal for an Emergency Disaster Fund allocation to the Nigeria Crisis Fund, which came with the initial approval of General Secretary David Steele and interim Treasurer Ed Woolf.

The staff at Brethren Disaster Ministries requested an additional allocation of $300,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund for Brethren Disaster Ministries to cover remaining 2020 Nigeria Crisis Response program expenses and carry the response through March of 2021.


Since 2014 the Nigeria Crisis Response has provided more than $5 million in ministry resources to five response partners; has helped stabilize Ekklesiayar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria); and provided extensive humanitarian aid and recovery for some
of the most vulnerable people in the world. The ongoing violence and lack of security continues to heavily impact EYN. Recent attacks have been within 50 miles of the EYN Headquarters in Kwarhi. The killing of a district secretary in January and the attack on Garkida highlight how vulnerable EYN members and churches are.

The 2020 response plans, developed in coordination with EYN and Mission 21 staff, continue key ministries at a reduced level of funding, due to a planned scaling down of the program and reduced donations. Primary focus areas include home repair; peace building and trauma recovery; agriculture; livelihood; education; food, medical and home supplies; EYN security, recovery, and capacity building; support for US volunteers and staff; and emergency relief.

Prior EDF grants for this appeal (total of $5,100,000):
- $325,000 on 7/3/2019 at Mission and Ministry Board meeting
- $400,000 on 8/23/2018
- $400,000 on 10/19/2017 at Mission and Ministry Board meeting
- $500,000 on 2/27/2017
- $1,000,000 on 3/12/2016 at Mission and Ministry Board meeting
- $680,000 on 7/29/2015
- $1,500,000 on 3/3/2015
- $500,000 on 10/19/2014 at Mission and Ministry Board meeting
- $100,000 on 9/20/2014
- $20,000 on 9/5/2014

Affirmation
The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the allocation of $300,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund to cover remaining 2020 Nigeria Crisis Response program expenses and carry the response through March of 2021.

Appreciation
Patrick Starkey expressed appreciation to all presenters at the meeting, for staff who were present in unusual circumstances, and to those who provided support for the meeting.

Affirmation
Board members and staff were given time to complete meeting evaluation forms.

Appreciation
Lois Grove and Colin Scott brought the Governance Monitors’ report.

Appreciation
Lois thanked the board members for their flexibility, compassion, and understanding in the unusual circumstances presented at this meeting, noting that they modeled what the Church of the Brethren should be.

MMB meeting evaluation
Colin made the following observations about the meeting:
- Newer board members shared openly
- Technology ran smoothly
  - Anxious to know how it worked for Lauren and Thomas
- Managed the difficult meeting very well
The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.  

Joel Peña led closing worship based on Luke 21:19. His message stressed the importance of the emotional health of spiritual leaders. Paul Liepelt served as worship leader, and congregational singing was led by Nancy Heishman on piano, Joel Peña and David Steele on guitar, and Paul Liepelt on ukulele.

Closing Worship

Recorded by Nancy Miner and Ed Woolf
Approved and respectfully submitted by:

__________________________________   _____________________
James M. Beckwith  Date
Secretary