
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT OF 2016

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Another way of living



Church of the Brethren

Report of the Church of the Brethren

Another Way of Living

When the Church of the Brethren first embraced the phrase “Another way of living,” the group that uncovered these words for us described the church this way:

The Church of the Brethren, continuing its centuries-old tradition, stands in clear contrast to—not in competition with—other Protestant denominations.

The Church of the Brethren distinguishes itself not as an abstract way of believing, but as a way of living, conveyed from one person to another.

The Church of the Brethren patterns its daily living after the life of Jesus—a life of humble service and unconditional love.

As a compassionate alternative in a world of increasing violence, complexity, and alienation, the Brethren way of living incorporates peace, simplicity, and togetherness.

In sum, the Church of the Brethren offers another way of living, one that, like cold water to a thirsty soul, leads to replenishment—in all senses of the word.

The church offers physical water that does indeed quench thirst. That water is saving lives in Nigeria and Haiti—“like water coming right from heaven.”

The church is also offering living water—through the cultivating of fledgling growth in Venezuela, the Great Lakes region of Africa, and Spain; through congregations in the US engaging in Vital Ministry Journey; through individuals giving months and years of service to people in need; through the publication of resources to grow faith. Countless Brethren are giving of themselves, their time, their money to offer replenishment to a thirsty world.

GLOBAL MISSION AND SERVICE

Global Mission and Service (GMS) has two primary tasks. The first is to provide opportunities through which Brethren can respond to human need through service—locally, nationally and globally. The second is to grow the church of Jesus Christ, both in size and in depth of faith.

Staff work closely together across departments to support and complement one another in a holistic outreach effort, with a strong focus on empowering sister churches to become salt and light in their communities. Leadership is provided by Jay Wittmeyer, executive director, and Roy Winter, associate executive director, with office management from Kendra Harbeck.

Brethren Disaster Ministries

The greatest “disaster” of the last decades is the massive humanitarian crisis caused by global violence and terrorism. As former United Nations secretary general Ban Ki Moon has stated, “We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is not just a crisis of numbers; it is a crisis of solidarity.”

With more than 65 million people displaced by violence in the world, this crisis has been the focus of 75 percent of the international work of Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM). The largest program area was the Nigeria Crisis Response, which accounted for \$4.24 million in relief and recovery ministry during 2014–2016. BDM is led by Roy Winter, with support from office manager Sharon Franzén.

Nigeria Crisis

Much has improved after two and a half years of partnering with and supporting Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), even though the crisis and violence caused by the terrorist group Boko Haram continues in parts of northeast Nigeria.

EYN leadership has moved back to their original headquarters in Kwarhi, and damaged homes and church offices have been repaired. Even as they are challenged by ongoing violence and food shortages, about three-quarters of displaced families have returned home to start the process of rebuilding. Those who can’t return home are settling in new areas and starting new congregations.

With 70 percent of church buildings destroyed, the cumulative stress and trauma of this time is very difficult for EYN leadership and local communities. As each congregation struggles financially and considers how to rebuild, the national church is also struggling with its own financial crisis. The situation is overwhelming and the demands on leadership are immense.

By working in partnership with EYN and five Nigerian organizations, the Church of the Brethren is supporting a large-scale, comprehensive response to the crisis in Nigeria. Major program activities in 2016 included:

- Peace building and trauma healing workshops and advanced training
- Special trauma healing programs for children
- New homes and home repair for returnees
- Safe water at relocation camps
- Distribution of food, medical supplies, and household goods serving 12,500 people
- Large distributions of seed and fertilizer and smaller distributions of goats and chickens
- Training for agricultural innovation and a special soybean initiative through the Global Food Initiative
- Equipment, tools, and training in livelihood for nearly 1,000 families
- Repairs and renovations to Kulp Bible College and other schools
- Education of more than 2,500 children
- EYN repairs, conferences, and printed materials.
- Extensive advocacy in the US and Nigeria by the Office of Public Witness

The entire Church of the Brethren is working together on this response. Individuals and congregations have given generously to the Nigeria Crisis Fund. Many departments of the church are working together to strengthen response

activities. Volunteers are involved in workcamps to rebuild churches. A second special fund is providing funds specifically for church rebuilding.

A good example is the village of Masaka, built by Nigeria Crisis funds to house 70 displaced families (about 430 people). In an effort to help make this village a home, seeds and fertilizer were distributed, resulting in a larger harvest. When a solar-powered pump was installed, the village chairman, Adamu, proudly exclaimed, “There is enough water for everyone; no need to look for fuel to pump the water. It is like water is coming right from heaven.”

Carl and Roxane Hill coordinated the crisis response through August, and Roxane continues as part-time coordinator.

International responses

In these extraordinary times, the global refugee crisis and violence, including the Nigeria Crisis, required \$1,820,480 in ministry resources, nearly double the average BDM yearly budget. This includes work in many parts of Africa—Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and South Sudan. Through a partner in Lebanon, BDM is supporting Syrian children with food and education.

The largest natural disaster of the year was Hurricane Matthew, which affected Haiti, Cuba, and the southern US. The BDM response includes support of Church World Service programs and a partnership with the Haitian Church of the Brethren. In Haiti, the church provided emergency food and water, followed by animals and seeds. Home reconstruction will be the last phase of the response in Haiti. BDM also responded to earthquakes in Ecuador by partnering with Heifer International to support the recovery of rural mountain farmers.

Home Rebuilding

Local partners of the BDM rebuilding projects often share reflections like those of the Rev. Becky Wilson, coordinator of the Northwest Detroit Flood Recovery Project, who said, “BDM’s compassion and excellent workmanship [were] a blessing to the northwest Detroit community.”

Under the leadership of director Jenn Dorsch and with support from program assistant Robin De Young, volunteers and leaders provided recovery work in five states. In January, long-term leader Thom Deily and BVS volunteer Alice Kegley helped close out BDM’s response to Superstorm Sandy in Spotswood, N.J. They opened a site in Detroit in April that continued through the end of 2016, helping homeowners whose basements had flooded in 2014. Under the leadership of Steve Keim and Kim Gingerich, work to rebuild homes damaged by flooding and wildfires in Colorado was completed in August. Larry and Sandy Esworthy led projects in West Virginia and South Carolina.

Rebuild and repair work was completed by 1,174 volunteers to help 123 families. They served a total of 74,606 hours valued at \$1,757,717. Seventeen district disaster coordinators gathered in New Windsor, Md., in June for a seminar. Staff from BDM, the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DoC) collaborated to provide a disaster project leader training in Detroit.

BDM supported long-term recovery group formation and rebuild work in South Carolina for most of the year through the Disaster Recovery Support Initiative, a partnership with the UCC and DoC. The project, led by BDM volunteer Tim Sheaffer, involved 234 volunteers from 12 organizations that served 22 families. Grants from the Central Carolina Community Foundation, One SC Relief Fund, and the United Way of the Midlands provided

\$87,500 for construction materials. Sheaffer and UCC disaster leader Marcy Magness closed out the year supporting a community in West Virginia that was flooded in July 2016.

Children's Disaster Services

Because of a record number of 12 disaster responses in 2016, Children's Disaster Services (CDS) was exceptionally busy, with 97 volunteers caring for 1,782 children in US-based responses.

CDS provided its first international response by creating a new Healing Hearts program for children affected by the crisis in Nigeria. Associate director Kathleen Fry-Miller and trainer John Kinsel led two Training of Trainer workshops in Nigeria resulting in over 100 Nigerian participants. By the end of the year, thousands of Nigerian children traumatized by Boko Haram violence experienced this healing ministry.

Program assistant Kristen Hoffman

provided for the many needs of trainers and hosts for 12 US trainings this year with 340 participants, including a Critical Response Child Care leadership seminar funded through a grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Financial activity

Donations to BDM, CDS, the Nigeria Crisis Fund, and the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) totaled \$1,766,315 in 2016. A \$235,000 grant from Christian Aid Ministries supported the Nigeria Crisis Response, and eight grants totaling \$209,699 supported BDM rebuilding and CDS programming. This support provided for all BDM expenses, including staff, programs, and allocations for disaster response. The 2016 expenditures include \$424,700 for US responses, including the Rebuild Program and CDS, \$1,468,679 total for the Nigeria Crisis Response, and \$351,801 for all other international responses.

Material Resources

Material Resources responded to needs in 20 states and 14 countries. The distribution center staff facilitated 694 shipments totaling 946 tons of medicine, medical supplies, quilts, health kits, school kits, baby kits, cleanup kits, and other supplies valued at \$9.95 million.

Loretta Wolf directed the program, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operation. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Winni Wanionek, Trent Turner, and Brenda Giles prepared the shipments. Ed Palsgrove delivered and picked up shipments. Volunteer Marianna Burkholder assisted volunteers. Terry Goodger ended her tenure

as office manager in August.

Brethren Disaster Ministries shipped more than 10,000 pounds of canned chicken and supplies to Haiti and 22,499 pounds to Honduras. Church World Service kits and blankets were shipped to 15 states to assist homeless and low-income people and victims of fire, floods, and tornadoes, and to two states for refugees. In cooperation with Church World Service and International Orthodox Christian Charities, items were shipped to Armenia, Jordan, Syria, and Serbia. Lutheran World Relief shipped quilts and kits to Angola, Haiti, Honduras, India, Republic of Georgia, Mali, Nicaragua, and Tanzania.

Brethren Volunteer Service

This year Brethren Volunteer Service and Mennonite Voluntary Service began a partnership through which BVSers can serve at an MVS site. BVS and MVS are two of the earliest, if not the earliest, volunteer service programs of their kind. More than 7,000 volunteers have served through BVS around the world.

This partnership, developed by BVS director Dan McFadden and Neil Richer at MVS, provides a broader set of well-established service sites for BVS and assists MVS with under-staffed houses. Two current BVSers took assignments in an MVS setting.

Orientations, coordinated by Jocelyn Snyder with assistance from BVSers Jessie Houff and Elizabeth Batten, were held at Camp Ithiel, New Windsor, and Camp Eder. The orientation site at Camp Eder was new this year. One highlight was the unit staying two days longer to assist with the camp's annual fall fest.

Thirty-five volunteers entered in 2016, including three from the BVS/Brethren

Revival Fellowship (BRF) unit. The BRF unit was led by Peggy and Walter Heisey. A total of 84 served throughout the year in seven countries and 19 states.

Emily Tyler, staff, and volunteer Elizabeth Batten led recruitment efforts. BVS connects with the church through congregations, regional youth conferences, Annual Conference, colleges, and Bethany Seminary. The entire BVS team was invited to lead the Powerhouse youth conference held at Manchester University.

Kristin Flory and Todd Bauer provide regional coordination for BVS in Europe and Latin America respectively.

The Partners in Service Award, given each year to an organization, group, or individual that has shown an exceptional commitment to the work of sharing God's love through acts of service, was presented to the four L'Arche communities of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Over the years, 27 BVSers have served at L'Arche communities, serving people with intellectual disabilities.

Brethren Workcamps

With the theme "Blazing with Holiness," the 2016 Brethren Workcamp season focused on what holiness looks like for youth today, and the steps involved in developing one's blaze of holiness. The theme scripture, 1 Peter 1:13-16, calls people to work together as obedient children of God, being shaped by God and leading lives filled with holiness.

A total of 321 youth and advisors, along with nearly 35 volunteer leaders, came together at 18 locations across the country, and in Northern Ireland and Puerto Rico.

Not only did workcampers grow in their faith while studying this theme, they also worked alongside community members and built life-long relationships.

The workcamp season was organized by coordinator Emily Tyler and volunteer assistant coordinators Deanna Beckner and Amanda McLearn-Montz. In August, volunteer Shelley Weachter joined Beckner, who is serving a second year in the workcamp office.

Office of Public Witness

In response to the crisis in Nigeria, the Office of Public Witness (OPW) has collaborated with other denominational staff, EYN members, and congregations in order to best support our Nigerian brothers and sisters.

This has taken many forms, including meeting with the new US ambassador to Nigeria, first in Washington, D.C., and then again for extensive discussions in Abuja. A working group on Nigeria that is convened by OPW met with various parts of the US government, wrote joint letters, and held two educational briefings addressing the second anniversary of the Chibok abductions and the emerging famine.

Several Going to the Garden participants met in Wisconsin to further collaboration. The projects they represented were diverse: urban settings, a Navajo reservation, the rekindling of an older

generation's nearly lost knowledge of growing gardens, and communities far detached from agriculture. As part of the Going to the Garden effort, which is co-sponsored by OPW and the Global Food Initiative, Nathan Hosler visited the Lybrook Community Ministries in New Mexico.

OPW has remained engaged on the issue of statelessness, which has affected Brethren in the Dominican Republic, and continues to seek ways to engage on South Sudan. OPW represents the Brethren on issues such as the Middle East and religious freedom.

In education and advocacy efforts, director Nathan Hosler was assisted by intern Sara White and BVSers Katie Furrow, Jesse Winter, and Emmy Goering. During a sabbatical, Hosler worked on a writing project on peacemaking.

Global Food Initiative

This year the Global Food Crisis Fund underwent a name change to become the Global Food Initiative (GFI). For many years, the GFI has focused on providing support for farmers to produce food by supplying funds for training and farming inputs. The GFI, managed by Jeff Boshart, provided \$ 203,130 in grants. Total income to the fund was \$207,379.

Four years into a five-year partnership with l'Eglise des Freres d'Haiti (Church of the Brethren in Haiti), results are promising: farmers are seeing increased incomes, women's savings groups are growing, and

families report sending more children to school. In the Great Lakes region of Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi), GFI partners promote sustainable farming practices among the Twa people.

In the United States, a Going to the Garden retreat brought together community gardeners from six states and the District of Columbia. In Nigeria, agriculture and business leaders from Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria have come together to initiate a new soybean production and utilization project in partnership with Brethren Disaster Ministries and the GFI.

International Ministries

Global Mission staff deepened relationships with other Church of the Brethren bodies and strengthened their institutions through support for theological education, administrative practices, and outreach ministries. Staff were also attentive to new opportunities to establish the Church of the Brethren in promising areas.

International mission is funded by the Church of the Brethren's Core Ministries budget and from monies designated for specific mission projects. Total expenditures were \$1,188,471 for 2016 and focused on areas of church development (\$349,512), health and wellbeing (\$246,463), workcamps (\$127,695), education (\$81,078), peacebuilding (\$70,367), and economic empowerment (\$52,139).

Investment returns of three endowments also provided support for international mission work. The current balances of these endowments are as follows: Brethren Health Ministries has \$397,210; African Leadership, \$180,200; and Established Missions, \$195,612.

Haiti

While the ministries of l'Eglise des Frères d'Haiti (the Church of the Brethren in Haiti) had several key successes to celebrate in the year, the church was devastated by the untimely death of Freny Elie, its general secretary, in June 2016. Pastor of the Cap-Haitian congregation, Elie was an ordained minister and seminary graduate, and was widely recognized as the most insightful theologian in the Haitian church. He is survived by his wife and four children.

Elie was one of the first members of the national committee appointed in 2009 and provided significant leadership in the founding of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti. He was notably instrumental in facilitating trauma healing workshops in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

Understanding trauma transformed his preaching, Elie said, giving him a deeper sympathy toward the plight of Haitians. Poverty is inherently violent, he would say. Ilexene Alphonse, GMS staff worker, was asked to fill the position of interim general secretary.

On the positive side, the Haiti Theological Training program graduated 22 church members who finished the three-year training. Guided by Kayla Alphonse, the program centered on biblical knowledge and

practical ministry skills. Of the 22 graduates, three were women, including Georgia Altenor, who became the first ordained woman in the Haitian church. She was called to pastor the Delmas congregation in central Port-au-Prince, the oldest congregation.

The social service ministry of l'Eglise des Frères expanded outreach to the rural poor in 2016. The mobile clinic again held 48 visits, promoted maternal health care, and strengthened community-based dispensaries through training and the distribution of medicines. The program also initiated a school nurse program that will be expanded in 2017.

A new staff member was added to improve the income of women through small-scale value-added projects. Safe water continued to be a primary focus of this ministry. Staff were trained in specialized water technologies and successfully installed the project's first reverse-osmosis water filtration project in the city of Gonaives. After Hurricane Matthew struck in October, the ministry shifted its attention to rebuilding communities and replacing lost animals and crops.

Spain

La Iglesia de Los Hermanos España (the Church of the Brethren Spain) is growing and spreading its influence. A youth conference in July brought together youth from various corners of the European Union, including Amsterdam, Berlin, and London. At its fourth annual conference, the church formally received into its fold a new congregation from London, a Spanish-speaking congregation with members predominantly of Dominican descent.

The community garden program is proving to be a successful outreach component of the church, especially for the Canary Island congregation, which is now exporting vegetable crops to the mainland. High registration fees are proving to be a significant drag on the finances of the small denomination.

Pastor Santos Terrero of Una Luz en las Naciones church in Gijón continued as president of the denomination, with advisory support from an ad hoc committee consisting of Fausto Carrasco, Carol Yeazell, Joel Peña, and Jaime Diaz.

Dominican Republic

La Iglesia de Los Hermanos Dominican continued on a path of growth and development under the leadership of president Richard Mendieta. In February, the Mission Advisory Committee joined GMS staff to visit the denomination and to better understand its ministry activities, the relationship between the ethnic Dominicans and Haitian immigrants, and its strategies for financial self-sufficiency. The delegation also visited a Haitian border slum that has sprung up.

A highlight of the year was the purchase of land for the Los Guaricanos congregation under the pastorate of Ariel Rosario Abreu. The US Brethren purchased the land for \$26,000 and the local congregation is responsible for erecting the building.

In November, Jason and Nicole Hoover of the Buffalo Valley congregation in Southern Pennsylvania District joined GMS as long-term mission workers to the Dominican Republic. They had participated in several workcamps and felt the call to become fraternal workers to strengthen relationships with the US Brethren.

Brazil

Marcos and Suely Inhauser provided oversight to the eight Brethren fellowships and one main congregation in Brazil. The emerging sister church was pleased to receive Alexandre Gonçalves back from studies at Bethany Theological Seminary. He will provide significant theological insight and leadership in the future.

South Sudan

Though civil war greatly affected the ministry, the Brethren maintained a peace witness in South Sudan through the leadership of Athanasus Ungang in Torit, Eastern Equatorial, in partnership with the African Inland Church. Interethnic violence disrupted the food supply, and the Brethren were asked to distribute foods in Lafon County.

The Brethren also initiated a peace program among the Pari youth, who regularly engage in violent attacks on one another, and there are plans to expand the program in broader areas in 2017. The English-speaking congregation in Torit grew to over 250 active members under pastor Ungang's leadership.

Developing relationships

Mission efforts to establish a Brethren witness progressed in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo). A Brethren delegation of Gary Benesh, Marla Abe, and Christian Elliott visited the three countries and led

workshops on Brethren values and beliefs. The delegation used the newly constructed church building in Ngovi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

These emerging Brethren communities each have outreach ministry to the most marginalized in their countries, the Batwa (commonly referred to as Pygmies), who were forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers until a loss of habitat. In August, the Brethren sponsored a consultation in Burundi for the Batwa from each country to come together and share about their struggles and success in adjusting to their new agrarian lifestyles.

The Church of the Brethren was invited to participate with the Dominican Brethren to establish a Brethren presence in Venezuela. The Brethren sent three significant delegations to Venezuela in 2016. Leaders were Ariel Rosario Abreu from the Dominican church; Alexandre Gonçalves from the Brazilian church; and Joel Pena, Fausto Carrasco, and Daniel D'Oleo from the US church. The first theological seminar held in March had 48 representatives from 14 churches; in August, 43 churches sent representatives; and in November, 64 churches participated with over 200 members.

Other activities

Robert and Linda Shank served again with the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology in North Korea. In Vietnam, Grace Mishler taught at the National Vietnam University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City and partnered with the American Eye Center to

coordinate surgery for children while training students to do case management for the blind.

Dave and Linda Byers, who have been working in the Bahamas, terminated their service in August. In Honduras, Alan and Kay Bennett served in Belén Gualcho through Proyecto Aldea Global.

Significant involvements

The Office of Public Witness has direct involvement with Churches for Middle East Peace, Center on Conscience and War, Creation Justice Ministries of the National Council of Churches in Christ, Shoulder to Shoulder, National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, Jubilee Campaign, Ecumenical Poverty Initiative, National Religious Campaign Against Torture, and Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

Brethren also partner with IMA World Health. BVS partners with German peace organization EIRENE and Mennonite Voluntary Service. Jay Wittmeyer serves on the boards of Heifer International (which maintains a permanent seat for the Church of the Brethren) and Foods Resource Bank. Jeff Boshart serves with National Farm Workers Ministry. Jenn Dorsch represents BDM on National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

Global Mission and Service staff met with White House officials to raise concerns about the US drone warfare program. The meeting in Washington, D.C., included denominational leaders from other faith traditions that have statements challenging US drone warfare.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINISTRIES

The theology behind the vitality resources of Congregational Life Ministries (CLM) is that communities cultivate a leadership structure based on the spiritual gifts of each

person, as well as their skills and passion. That idea was put into practice within the CLM staff after the resignation of executive director Jonathan Shively. The team moved

forward with a new “shared leadership” model that builds on the strengths of each person. The executive responsibilities of budget, staff meetings, strategic planning, and supervision are divided between Joshua Brockway and Stan Dueck. Program support is provided by Randi Rowan.

The still-new relationship with the Anabaptist Disabilities Network (AdNet) was guided by Debbie Eisenbise, director of intergenerational ministries. She has also called together a Disabilities Advocacy Team, along with two disabilities advocates—Rebekah Flores and Mark Pickens. Flores served as the disabilities ombudsman for Annual Conference. These efforts aim to support, resource, and inform the work with people of differing abilities around the denomination, in congregations, and in families.

At the annual Christian Citizenship Seminar, hosted by the Youth and Young Adult Office, 39 youth and 14 adults explored the issues of racial justice and mass incarceration. The group met first in New York City and then traveled to Washington, D.C., where they met with congressional staffers to discuss current legislation.

National Young Adult Conference, held at Manchester University, explored the diversity of the church in harmony, guided by Colossians 3:12-17. Guest speakers included Drew Hart and Waltrina Middleton.

The office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is directed by Becky Ullom Naugle. BVSer Paige Butzlaff began as program assistant in October.

The biennial Church Planting Conference, held at Bethany Theological Seminary in May, brought together 90 church leaders and planters. Among the speakers were Efreem Smith, president and CEO of World Impact, and pastor Mandy Smith. Gimbiya Kettering planned a track of workshops aimed at developing the

intercultural capacities of church planters, and Stan Dueck taught Bethany’s related course on evangelism.

Dueck has taken on responsibility for evangelism, representing the church in Evangelism Connections, an ecumenical group focused on sharing the gospel.

Kettering worked with the Outdoor Ministries Association throughout the year, and was the keynote speaker for their annual retreat in November. She has been helping camp leaders consider the variety of cultures that gather in the midst of the camping season. Resource people for the retreat included Debbie Eisenbise and moderator-elect Samuel Sarpiya. Kettering led a number of intercultural conversations throughout the year, and she met with leaders in Atlantic Northeast District, Shenandoah District, and Bethany Theological Seminary.

In May Brockway hosted and planned the annual Spiritual Directors retreat, exploring the intersection of liturgical and contemplative prayer. He also served as resource leader for the intergenerational camp at Wilbur Stover in Idaho District. CLM staff are sharing responsibility for deacon training.

Congregational Life staff have served about 20 congregations, either through the Vital Ministry Journey, administering the Congregational Vitality Survey, or by coaching church planters. In addition, staff have worked to support the work of all Church of the Brethren districts. In particular, Dueck has facilitated the visioning and executive search processes for four districts.

At Annual Conference, guest speaker Wesley Morris addressed a standing-room-only group for the Congregational Life Dinner, inviting his audience to consider the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s “two Americas.” Staff led or hosted 13 insight sessions during the week. Dueck offered two

pre-Conference workshops for deacons and other lay leaders.

CLM staff continue to develop their skills and expertise through various continuing education events and conferences. In addition, staff have supported the work of other ministry areas. They have written letters for Donor Relations, articles for *Messenger* magazine, and drafts of denominational statements and letters throughout the year.

Through a range of work in a variety of contexts, Congregational Life staff offer a vision of vital congregations forming courageous disciples. The work is made possible through the generous work of volunteers—church members from around the denomination who serve as youth advisors, conference planners, and members of working groups. The breadth and reach of Congregational Life Ministries would not be possible without such committed volunteers.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The staff of Organizational Resources undergird all the programs and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Brian Bultman, chief financial officer, leads the team. Ed Woolf, manager of gift operations and assistant treasurer, handles special gift instruments, coordinates insurance matters, and supports the other areas in the unit.

Support Services

Marvin Greener and Gerald Karn oversee the care and maintenance of the Church of the Brethren properties. Greener directs the Buildings and Grounds department at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., assisted part-time by Steve Bickler. Karn directs the department at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Other team members included Felix Hill, maintenance assistant, and Ron Anders, who provided part-time support. Donald Meyers and Wayne Hylton contributed significant hours as volunteers. Plumbing and air conditioning repairs were performed at both locations.

The finance department provides regular budget support, financial reports,

and cash management, and staffs the treasurer's office at Annual Conference. Members of the team are Pat Marsh, staff accountant; Nancy Watts, donation and accounts receivable specialist; and Barb York, financial operations and payroll specialist until her retirement in 2016.

The information technology department accomplished a migration to Microsoft Office 365 for e-mail and desktop software. Members of the team are Mark Hartwig, director; Francie Coale, manager at the Brethren Service Center; and Fabiola Fernandez, system specialist in Elgin. Perry Hudkins provides part-time support, and Brady Winter gave seasonal assistance.

Brethren Historical Library and Archives

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA) responded to 295 written requests and 122 phone requests, hosted 66 onsite researchers, and gave tours for about

50 people. BHLA processed about 300 feet of archival material, including 240 feet of Bethany Theological Seminary papers. The archives received visits from scholars from

Nigeria, Spain, and China, and assisted three doctoral students and a noted sociologist from Belgium.

The Bethany collection is now nearly completely processed, thanks to financial support from the seminary. Other important collections processed include the papers of Ralph and Mary Blocher Smeltzer and the papers of Chalmer and Mary Faw. Papers

received but awaiting processing include those of Art Gish, Mary Jo Flory-Steury, and an important genealogical collection of James Boor, of New Enterprise, Pa.

BHLA is the official repository for records documenting the ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Bill Kostlevy is director, and Fred Miller has served as intern since June 2016.

Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources shifted to Organizational Resources after the death of Mary Jo Flory Steury in March 2016, and treasurer Brian Bultman took over supervision. Deborah Brehm was office manager.

Human Resources assisted with the reorganization of two departments, Donor Relations and Congregational Life Ministries. The office also moved the organization from a longtime payroll provider to Paycom, which will save \$60,000 in 2017.

Employees hired in 2016 were David Steele, general secretary; Traci Rabenstein, congregational support representative; Joe Detrick, interim director of the Office of Ministry; Jim Miner, Yearbook specialist; and Karen Warner, customer service representative in Brethren Press. In addition, several individuals shifted from contract to

salaried positions: Mark Flory Steury, donor relations representative; Jan Fischer Bachman, website producer; and James Deaton, managing editor of Brethren Press. Dale Minnich served as interim general secretary

Jean Clements and Barb York retired from Church of the Brethren employment. Other employees departing in 2016 were Stanley Noffsinger, Jonathan Shively, Don Knieriem, and Terry Goodger.

Total regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs: 78.

Ethnic/racial composition: Asian-1; Black-2; Hispanic-1; Caucasian-73; two or more races-1.

Total contract, shared, and temporary employees, as well as program volunteers: 31.

Zigler Hospitality Center

The Zigler Hospitality Center held two special luncheons: “Meet the 2016 Annual Conference Moderator, Andy Murray” and “New Windsor and the Seagoing Cowboys: Bringing Hope to a War-torn World,” a presentation by Peggy Reiff Miller. Miller’s talk was preceded by a roundtable featuring 11 seagoing cowboys.

Zigler participated in two town events, the Home and Garden Tour and a first-ever festival called On the Main. The center hosted two Brethren Volunteer Service orientations and the We Are Able workcamp.

About 4,460 meals were served to more than 3,900 people. The walk-in lunch

service brought in 446 individuals from the community. Overnight accommodations were made for 1,850 bed nights. Rentals of conference rooms, the dining room, and the multi-purpose room totaled 41 events. Tours and informational talks were given to over 325 people.

Manager Mary Ann Grossnickle worked with program assistant Connie Bohn. Kitchen staff were head cook Janet

Comings, assistant cooks Charlotte Willis and Fay Reese, and kitchen assistants Elena Cutsail, John Frisby, Helen Eyler, Katherine Blizzard, and Robyn Jackson. More than 4,670 hours were given by resident volunteers Ed and June Switzer, Phyllis Ingold, Jane Gray, Phillip King, Betty Runion, and Carolyn Bellfy. Volunteer kitchen assistants included Maria Capusan, Mathea Iglich, and Judy Waters.

Financial Results

The Church of the Brethren carried out ministries totaling more than \$12.1 million in 2016. That total includes the church's Core Ministries, gross expenses for self-funding ministries, and responses to disasters and other areas of need.

Giving to Core Ministries was down slightly from 2015, with congregations giving \$2,064,300 and individuals giving \$464,495. The Core Ministries Fund ended the year with a net deficit of \$273,768, decreasing the net asset balance to \$1,231,801.

Giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund decreased significantly from 2015, a year that was unusually high because of contributions to the Nigeria Crisis Fund. The \$1,767,084 donated in 2016 was 35 percent lower than the \$2,737,663 donated in 2015. The Global Food Initiative Fund received \$207,379 in 2016, down slightly from the \$223,702 donated the year before.

The denomination's self-funding ministries receive income primarily through sales, fees, and registrations. *Messenger* ended 2016 with a net deficit of

approximately \$23,670. Beginning January 2017, *Messenger* moved into Core Ministries after 20 years as a self-funding ministry—a shift made because it is now being edited by the communication team rather than a separate editor. Its asset balance of \$70,379 was transferred to Brethren Press at the end of the year. Because of that, Brethren Press ended with a net surplus of \$11,594.

The Conference Office finished 2016 with a net surplus of \$18,192, increasing its net asset balance to \$497,813. Material Resources ended the year with a net deficit of \$103,564, decreasing its net asset balance to \$28,721.

Total investments, including endowments and reserves, decreased to \$25.8 million in 2016. Endowment gifts—all designated for the Brethren Health Ministries endowment—totaled \$38,318.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2016 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren, Inc., audit report published in June 2017.]

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Leadership Team

The primary tasks of the denomination's Leadership Team are to ensure that Annual Conference decisions are carried out, interpret Annual Conference decisions and denominational polity, review recommended changes in Annual Conference guidelines and policies, serve as executive committee for Annual Conference, and provide oversight for Annual Conference in consultation with the Conference director, Program and Arrangements Committee, and the treasurer.

Members of the Leadership Team are the general secretary and the Annual Conference officers, with the Conference director providing staff assistance.

This year brought changes in general secretary leadership with Stanley Noffsinger's departure, the service of interim Dale Minnich, and David Steele being called to the position. Much attention was given to updating the Manual of Organization and Polity.

The Leadership Team shared the Resolution on Christian Minority Communities with the worldwide body of

the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and other ecumenical bodies. It authorized distribution of a \$63,784 dividend from Brethren Mutual Aid, given to the denomination because insurance premiums were higher than claims. A portion of the dividend was again shared with each of the districts, with a bit higher amount going to Puerto Rico as it started its first year as a separate district. A significant portion was given to the insurance plan's Brethren Mutual Aid Share Fund, with the remainder designated for the Nigeria Crisis Fund.

As requested by Annual Conference, the Leadership Team worked with the executive committee of the Council of District Executives—and ultimately the full council—to prepare a response to a query on Same Sex Weddings. The assignment was “to bring clarity and guidance concerning the authority of Annual Conference and districts regarding the accountability of ministers, congregations, and districts, bringing recommendations to the 2017 Annual Conference.”

Brethren Press

The highlight of the year for Brethren Press was publication of a children's picture book, *The Seagoing Cowboy*, written by Peggy Reiff Miller and illustrated by Claire Ewart. A curriculum guide that met Common Core State Standards was developed to attract libraries and schools. A video book trailer, special offers to congregations, multiple author signings, and the presence of a calf, nicknamed Joy, at the Annual Conference bookstore pushed sales to over 4,000 copies in 2016.

Shine: Living Together in God's Light saw an increase in sales to denominations outside the original Brethren and Mennonite markets. New sales were particularly strong within the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Project director Rose Stutzman retired mid-year, and the Brethren Press and MennoMedia publishers chose Joan Daggett to succeed her.

New Covenant Bible Studies titles were *Ten Reasons to Love Leviticus*, by Bob Neff and Frank Ramirez, and *More Miracles of*

Jesus, by Jim Benedict. Seasonal devotionals *Let Us Also Go*, by Chris Bowman (Lent), and *Witnesses to Jesus*, by Christy Waltersdorff (Advent), were published in both print and digital editions. *A Guide for Biblical Studies* remains a strong part of the Brethren Press line-up. The Living Word Bulletin Series featured a host of Brethren writers and photographers.

Yearbook specialist Jean Clements retired and was succeeded by Jim Miner. Brethren Press also published the Annual Conference Wrap-up DVD and Sermons DVD. The *Seed Packet*, a newsletter about faith formation, was discontinued as staff responsibilities were rearranged.

The annual Brethren Press/*Messenger*

Dinner featured Robert C. Johansen, professor emeritus of political science and peace studies at Notre Dame University, speaking on the topic of “War, Terror, and Christ’s Peace.” His writings are among those excerpted in the forthcoming Brethren Press book *Speak Peace: A Daily Reader*.

Brethren Press is led by publisher Wendy McFadden, who was named vice president of the Protestant Church-owned Publishers Association. James Deaton is managing editor and Jeff Lennard is director of marketing and sales. Karen Stocking is finance and production assistant, and customer service is provided by Steve Bickler, Margaret Drafall, and Karen Warner.

Communications

Messenger magazine shifted to an editorial team, rather than a single editor, with responsibility shared by the communication team. Those members are publisher Wendy McFadden; Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, who added the role of associate editor of *Messenger* to her work as news director; and Jan Fischer Bachman, who serves as web editor of the magazine in addition to her primary work overseeing the Church of the Brethren website. Previous editor Randy Miller completed his work with the January/February issue. With the new staffing structure, the magazine was shifted back into Core Ministries, after 20 years as a self-funding ministry.

An online edition of the magazine was rolled out in March by Fischer Bachman and media support specialist Russ Otto. The new edition carries some of the content of the print edition, as well as some online-only content. The web team also supported the broader organization by providing website updates, posting worship resources, producing e-mail campaigns, setting up

event registrations, and creating surveys and forms.

The Church of the Brethren website, www.brethren.org, racked up more than 1.2 million page views in 2016. Use of the updated Annual Conference website, in its second year, increased by more than 50 percent, views of Conference statements were up 88 percent, and views of General Board statements were up 777 percent. “Reach” for the Church of the Brethren Facebook page is at its highest level ever.

Newsline continues as an e-mailed weekly news digest of online articles, and has also been integrated into the new *Messenger Online*. Major events covered during the year include the new general secretary, Church Planting Conference, Nigeria Crisis Response, Mission and Ministry Board, and Annual Conference. A team of volunteer writers and editors made possible the extensive coverage of Annual Conference in print and online, and those online stories topped reader interest in visits to the website.

Brumbaugh-Cayford hosted a Ministry Summer Service intern, Tyler Roebuck, who

wrote articles for *Newsline* and *Messenger* during his summer stint.

Conference Office

The 230th Annual Conference gathered Brethren together June 29–July 3 in Greensboro, N.C. The Koury Convention Center and the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel provided a unique venue, with lodging under the same roof as meeting space for many of the 2,435 in attendance.

Moderator Andy Murray chose the theme “Carry the Light,” which provided imagery that was richly used in each of the daily times of worship. Business included queries regarding Same Sex Weddings, On Earth Peace, Care for Creation, and Living Together as Christ Calls. The conference also included 65 insight sessions, 37 meal events, and age-level activities for children and youth.

Virlina District was the host district and provided many volunteers, led by site coordinators Dewey and Melissa Williard. Conference director Chris Douglas, conference assistant Jon Kobel, and registration coordinator Debbie Noffsinger provided staff assistance, and hundreds of volunteers made the conference flow smoothly.

A concert followed the opening worship service on Wednesday evening, with music by Shawn Kirchner, Mutual Kumquat, and Terry Murray. Throughout the week

participants were invited to visit the exhibit area and have their “conference passport” stamped by various exhibitors. A completed passport could be exchanged for complimentary treats during the ice cream social.

Friday was planned as a Jubilee Afternoon with no business session. Conferencegoers chose from a variety of options, including tours at the Civil Rights Museum, service projects, equipping workshops, intergenerational activities, an ice cream social and musical performances in the exhibit area, and Ted and Company’s play *Twelve Baskets and a Goat*, which raised money for Heifer International.

As a Witness to the Host City, Brethren brought donations for BackPack Beginnings in Greensboro. In total 11,532 items were given, including backpacks, blankets, washcloths, soap, toothpaste, notebooks, shampoo, combs, and nearly \$2,800 in cash. Gently used business clothing and over \$800 was also donated to Encore boutique consignment store, a business providing clothing to low-income persons completing a job training and life-skills program and preparing for job interviews. More than 160 pints of blood were donated by conferencegoers to assist with needs in the local community.

Donor Relations

The mission of the Office of Donor Relations is to strengthen denominational ministries by raising support from individuals and congregations while building relationships and educating about denominational programs. Activities of the

department include written and electronic communications, personal and congregational visitation, offering emphases, attention to planned giving, stewardship formation support, and collaboration with other denominations and

faith-based groups through the Ecumenical Stewardship Center and the One Great Hour of Sharing committee. Donor Relations staff members also connect inquiring members, church leaders, and pastors with denominational information, services, and staff members.

During 2016 director John Hipps expanded departmental staffing with a focus on strengthening relationships with congregations. Traci Rabenstein was hired

as a full-time congregational support representative, while Mark Flory Steury moved from contract status to a half-time employee, also focused on congregational partnerships. Staff members Matthew DeBall, coordinator of donor communications, and Cherise Glunz, program assistant, continued their work crafting departmental communications such as congregational offering materials and the online newsletter eBrethren.

Office of Ministry

The heart of the work of the Office of Ministry is calling, forming, credentialing, placing, and sustaining ministerial leadership “to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11).

Joe Detrick, interim director, worked in collaboration with program assistant Margie Paris and Dana Cassell, staff for ministry formation. Detrick worked closely with the Ministry Advisory Council, the Ministers’ Association officers, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, and the Council of District Executives.

Four districts are engaged in a search process: Middle Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, Atlantic Northeast, and Northern Ohio districts.

“Walking Toward Peace” was the topic of the Ministers’ Association Pre-Conference Continuing Education Event, held in Greensboro, N.C. John Dear, internationally known voice for peace and nonviolence, led the sessions. The Brethren Academy offered an onsite course, giving students the opportunity to earn credit for attending class and participating in the event.

In 2016, 44 individuals (27 men and 17 women) were ordained, 3 individuals (2 men and 1 woman) were commissioned, 6 individuals (5 men and 1 woman) were commissioned with ordination in another denomination recognized for term of service, 33 individuals (24 men and 9 women) were licensed to the ministry, and three individuals were received through transfer of ordination from other denominations.

Ministry Assistance Fund

The Ministry Assistance Fund began 2016 with a balance of \$4,149, received donations totaling \$10,279, disbursed \$17,307 in 12 grants, and ended the year with a balance of \$5,899. The balance of the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance gift was \$48,595. Additionally, \$2,000 was disbursed from the Oral Horn Fund for retired pastors.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary. The academy organized one residential class at Bethany Seminary, one onsite class at McPherson College, and four online courses. Bethany

faculty providing leadership for the Brethren Academy were Steve Schweitzer, Denise Kettering-Lane, Debbie Roberts, and Russell Haitch. Dan Ulrich designed and taught a course on Matthew, the first Church of the Brethren course in Spanish for the SeBAH-CoB program.

The Brethren Academy continued its partnership with the Mennonite Education Agency to provide a Spanish-language ministry training program for the Church of the Brethren. Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-CoB) is a denomination-wide certificate level program that parallels the Academy Certified Training System programs available to English-speaking students. Atlantic Northeast District had 10 students and Pacific Southwest District had 6 participating in the SeBAH-CoB-Alfa cohort. One student from Puerto Rico continued her program. A new SeBAH-CoB-Beta cohort launched in February with two students from Atlantic Northeast District and three from Pacific Southwest District. Two congregations are exploring the Spanish-language EFSM track.

Three new tracks were added to the Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM) training program: ministry team, specialized ministry, and Spanish-language. Staff videos outlining all of the programs available through the Brethren Academy have been posted on the Academy website. The first Spanish-language Healthy Boundaries 101 webcast was led by Ramón Torres. The Academy provided an annual clergy tax seminar and, for the fifth year, a Women in Leadership insight session series at Annual Conference. Four pastors completed a class on Supervision in Ministry and six leaders from five camps participated in a camp leaders cohort of the Sustaining Ministerial Excellence Advanced Seminar.

Julie Mader Hostetter retired in January 2017 as executive director of the Brethren Academy, and was succeeded by Janet Ober Lambert. Carrie Eikler is coordinator of TRIM and EFSM ministry training programs, Nancy Sollenberger Heishman is coordinator of Spanish-language ministry training programs, and Fran Massie is administrative assistant.

Mission and Ministry Board

In addition to carrying out the direction set by Annual Conference, the Mission and Ministry Board serves in the unique role as the board of directors of the Church of the Brethren.

Leadership transition was a primary focus of the board throughout 2016. The board called Dale Minnich to serve as interim general secretary upon the conclusion of Stanley Noffsinger's service on Feb. 12. In May, David Steele was called to serve as general secretary, a role he assumed on Sept. 1.

The board spent significant time considering organizational finances. A plan for reductions in 2016 spending and a

fiscally responsible framework for the 2017 program and budget was approved at the board's June meeting, as was a plan to ready the organization for a financial campaign by the end of 2018. The board approved the assessment of a ministry enablement contribution from all restricted gifts to cover the cost of processing them.

A purchase agreement for the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center property in New Windsor was approved by the board in November. With the prospect of a sale of the property, the board held conversations around the use of proceeds from its eventual sale, stressing the importance of using a portion of the funds to

continue the legacy of the Brethren Service Center.

Significant time over two meetings was dedicated to the Living Together as Christ Calls query assigned to the board by the 2016 Annual Conference.

In 2016–2017, the elected membership of the Mission and Ministry Board consists of 6 women and 11 men. One member is Jamaican American, two are African American, and 14 are white. Also serving on the board are eight ex officio members,

including members of the Leadership Team and executive officers of Bethany Theological Seminary, Brethren Benefit Trust, On Earth Peace, and the Council of District Executives.

The Mission and Ministry Board and the employees of the Church of the Brethren are deeply grateful for the many gifts of time, talent, and treasure by individuals and congregations, and for the church's commitment to the work of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

The phrase “Another way of living” was written to describe the Church of the Brethren, but it's also an aspiration toward an identity not fully achieved. It's a commitment to not be conformed to the world. In a time when divisions seem hardened and harsh, a people who model another way of living can be a witness to God's powerful love. Through the ministries of the Church of the Brethren, “let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18).

Donald R. Fitzkee, chair

David Steele, general secretary