

Walk by faith



CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT OF 2022

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Church of the Brethren

Report of the Church of the Brethren

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

—2 Corinthians 5:7

It was, thankfully, the year of getting together: Youth traveled to Colorado for a mountaintop experience. Omaha hosted an Annual Conference that, while smaller in numbers, was big in spirit. Church of the Brethren leaders from 10 countries got to meet in person for the first time since 2019.

After years apart, it sure felt good to gather in the same place. Like Paul and Barnabas, the Brethren “called the church together and related all that God had done” (Acts 14:27).

Yes, the familiar is changing all around us. But “we walk by faith,” and God goes with us.

GLOBAL MISSION

The Global Mission office of the Church of the Brethren shares the gospel around the world. It does this by working with local churches and partnerships that value the Church of the Brethren’s strong tradition of humbly and faithfully following Jesus.

Church of the Brethren missions are distinguished by two characteristics: an effort by the US church to walk as an equal alongside local churches, and an understanding shared by the local churches that Jesus’ ministry is a gospel that sees people—meeting physical needs as well as offering living water.

Global Mission connects Brethren around the world, supporting travel of global Brethren to the US and of US Brethren to churches in other countries. The office also shares financial blessings of the US church, doing so in a way that avoids the pitfalls of creating dependency or leading to corruption of local leaders. Across cultures and languages, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion demonstrates a great spiritual unity in Christ that defies the divisions of the world.

Regrettably, in 2022 co-executive director Ruoxia Li resigned due to health issues. Eric Miller continues as executive director. The role of office manager remained vacant through the rest of the year.

The office relies on the work of numerous faithful volunteers. Country advisory teams help to communicate with and advocate for the work of the national churches. Subscribers to the Global Mission prayer list lift up the churches around the world in prayer.

Donations undergird the work of the global church, providing travel, administrative costs, building of churches, training of church leaders, evangelistic meetings, healthcare and agricultural work, peace and

reconciliation, and important church gatherings. Major projects include the South Sudan mission and the Haiti Medical Project. All of this work deepens the roots of the churches so they can share the gospel long into the future.

The 2022 budget of \$453,220 was funded partially by \$64,327 given by individuals and \$54,857 by churches or organizations. The balance was funded by donations to the Core Ministries Fund. In addition, \$228,278 was donated for Haiti Medical Project and \$82,782 for other special projects. Some of these restricted gifts were spent in 2022, with the rest to be used for future projects.

Grants totaling \$365,320 were given to global partners: over \$200,000 to the Haiti Church of the Brethren (mostly for the Haiti Medical Project); over \$100,000 for the South Sudan mission project, including staff and travel costs; and over \$30,000 for the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela.

Though travel costs skyrocketed in 2022, guests were brought to Annual Conference from the Dominican Republic, Rwanda, and Spain. In addition, guests from the Dominican Republic and Spain attended National Youth Conference.

Eric Miller traveled to the Dominican Republic and Venezuela for annual conferences and also to the Dominican Republic for a meeting of the Global Church of the Brethren Communion. The office sponsored a FaithX trip to Rwanda, Moderator David Sollenberger’s travel to Rwanda and Uganda, church-planting trips in Ecuador and Honduras, and theological training in East Africa.

Global Church of the Brethren Communion

The Global Church of the Brethren Communion is a partnership of equals. In 2022, the second in-person meeting was held in the Dominican Republic, with representatives from Brazil, the DR, Haiti, Honduras, India, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Spain, and the US. Leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Venezuela were unable to attend for visa reasons.

The main purpose of the meeting was to move toward accepting formal bylaws for the group. The members of the group strongly affirmed the value of Brethren faith and practice in their contexts, and there is great interest in continued collaboration to do the work of Jesus around the world.

Churches around the world persevere in the face of great trials. Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) continues to grow through the peace witness of the church and as displaced people establish new churches. Churches in East Africa are small but growing rapidly as local leaders share the gospel.

The growing church in Venezuela is starting churches in Colombia. The church in Spain enjoys support from the government because it has officially registered as a church, unlike many other evangelical churches. The church has begun to reach beyond immigrants in Spain and gained native Spanish members and leaders. The church in Haiti is strong despite severe violence and breakdown of society.

Global Food Initiative

In every community and in every church, it seems, there are people committed to fighting hunger. Sometimes these individuals are gardeners or farmers who like to get their hands dirty planting and harvesting produce or raising animals. Others are gifted organizers who know how to bring people

together, to educate, advocate and motivate groups of concerned friends and colleagues to work for a common cause. The Global Food Initiative, managed by Jeff Boshart, draws upon the gifts of many volunteers and church leaders both near and far to make an impact on neighbors in need.

In 2022, food prices spiked across the world due to war and political unrest in numerous locations, climate-related disasters, and continued supply chain disruptions related to the pandemic. Locally produced food became even more important as the number of people facing food insecurity rose significantly, following unsettling trends that began in 2019 after decades of progress reducing global hunger.

Total income to the Global Food Initiative Fund in 2022 was \$312,082, thanks to remarkable year-end giving. The sum of all funds given as grants to both international and domestic partners in 2022 was \$115,476.

International grants supported agricultural development work in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Haiti, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Venezuela. Projects included animal raising, tree planting, soil conservation, appropriate-scaled mechanization, and trainings on vegetable and staple crop production. International allocations totaled \$94,066.

Domestic grants were given to churches and partner organizations in Alaska, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and New Mexico. These grants are connected primarily to church-based community gardens. Two of the grants (Alaska and New Mexico) focused on Native American gardening projects. Total allocations of domestic grants equaled \$13,910.

The Global Food Initiative supports advocacy work on food sovereignty through yearly contributions to Bread for the World, Growing Hope Globally, and the National Farm Worker Ministry, with contributions tallying \$7,500.

SERVICE MINISTRIES

"It is a true blessing and the highest privilege to lay your needs down and pick up the needs of a stranger."
—Evan Ulrich, former BVS volunteer serving with Brethren Disaster Ministries.

Challenged by the war in Ukraine, increased violence and unrest in much of the world, and the impact of global inflation, the Service Ministries staff and volunteers have sought to be the church in the world and meet the needs of God's people around the globe. Added to these challenges is the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how this has

affected volunteers and the church at large.

Executive director Roy Winter guided the Brethren Volunteer Service team through a time of interim leadership and several staff transitions, and commissioned an external review of BVS to begin reimagining a future with more vibrant and active volunteer service programs. Through all this, staff are encouraged by Galatians 6:9a, 10a: "Let us not lose heart in doing good. . . . [W]hile we have opportunity, let us do good to all people."

Brethren Disaster Ministries

Brethren Disaster Ministries leads the Church of the Brethren response to disasters and crises around the globe by working with volunteers, congregations, districts, the global church, and partners. War and violence from Ukraine to Africa to a US school shooting challenged BDM to respond creatively and prayerfully to deep hardships and loss. Whether responding to a natural disaster, violence, or other crisis, BDM journeyed with survivors and families toward recovery and hope, often transforming lives.

One partner, Pamlico County Disaster Recovery Coalition in North Carolina, shared this testimony about the transformations of lives by this ministry: “[Not] only have you helped to repair hurricane damaged homes, but you have also helped to restore and mend broken hearts. The light you have shown, and the relationships you have built with survivors and their families, will long have an impact on them and their generations.”

BDM was led by Roy Winter, with support from office manager Sharon Franzén. Darlene Hylton provided part-time database support.

Rebuilding Program

The Rebuilding Program served communities recovering from domestic disasters through one full project site and additional short-term and local responses. These projects and responses were identified and coordinated by BDM director Jenn Dorsch-Messler and program assistant Kim Gingerich.

January to March marked the final months of four years rebuilding in the Carolinas following hurricanes Matthew (2016) and Florence (2018). The project then moved to the small community of Waverly, Tenn., for the remainder of the year, in response to devastating August 2021 flooding. In October, a short-term response supported new home construction in Dawson Springs, Ky., where tornadoes destroyed about 650 homes in December 2021. Long-term project leader Sammy Deacon supported both the development of these sites and onsite leadership.

Volunteer leadership on the projects was provided by 47 disaster project leaders from across the country who welcomed and supported 572 volunteers. This included long-term support from office manager Lynn Evans, construction project leader Steve Keim, and Brethren Volunteer Service volunteer Martie Hummer. The weekly teams provided 33,352 hours of service, resulting in a savings of over \$998,892 to 69 families and their communities.

A local, hybrid response to October 2021 tidal flooding in Maryland’s Somerset and Dorchester counties was led by members of Mid-Atlantic District, with support from BDM staff, vehicles, and equipment. In 2022, two homes were repaired by 35 volunteers through a grant award from Lowe’s Home Improvement and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. This funding included \$30,000 in Lowe’s gift cards to purchase construction materials for the homes and \$4,200 to support volunteer housing and meals. This work will be completed in 2023.

Children’s Disaster Services

Children’s Disaster Services continued to adapt to meet the needs of children affected by disaster in a world still challenged by the pandemic. “The need to provide a safe space for our volunteers to show love and compassion for children impacted by disasters increases every year,” said associate program director Lisa Crouch.

CDS deployed volunteer teams throughout 2022 to crises ranging from wildfires, floods, and hurricanes to human-caused disasters. A total of 86 volunteers served 1,065 children on nine responses. After Hurricane Ian caused catastrophic damage along southwest Florida, CDS teams served for six weeks, with over 400 child contacts.

Critical Response Care teams (volunteers with additional specialized training and support) traveled to Uvalde, Texas, to support families of the 19 children killed by a shooter. These volunteers had 385 contacts with children as they helped them process trauma and build resiliency.

Three level-one volunteer trainings were held in 2022, resulting in 40 newly trained volunteers, bringing the total volunteer base to 576 by year-end. Eight current volunteers participated in a level-two project manager training.

New program assistant Michael Scalzi began in November.

International Response

Early in 2022, the world watched as Russia invaded Ukraine, causing a war that displaced more than 12 million Ukrainians, with reports of nearly 7,000 deaths. BDM responded with grants totaling \$215,000 in collaboration with five key partners, the most significant being Church World Service and International Orthodox Christian Charities. Violence in

the DR Congo, the ongoing Nigeria Crisis Response, and civil unrest in Haiti were among the high number of human-caused crises this year.

Dual programs in Haiti are continuing the 2021 earthquake response with \$166,969 in funds, while also addressing the acute overlapping crisis caused by the total collapse of the Haitian government. With severe hunger on the rise, a special program is helping to provide food to vulnerable families in the communities around the Haitian Brethren churches through a \$39,000 grant. This programming is accomplished in partnership with L'Eglise des Freres d'Haiti (the Haiti Church of the Brethren).

Smaller grants supported global Churches of the Brethren in Uganda (\$27,500) and Venezuela (\$10,000) with flood recovery programs, as well as the South Sudan Mission (\$11,000). Other grants included support for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese in Lebanon, continued hurricane and flood recovery in Honduras, and support for programming of the Rwanda Church of the Brethren.

Nigeria Crisis Response

Since 2014 the Church of the Brethren has partnered with and supported Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) through the Nigeria Crisis Response. This effort is a response to the violence by the terrorist group Boko Haram, which now includes the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Collaborating with EYN and the European

organization Mission 21, BDM is helping lead an extensive program that includes sponsorship of four camps for internally displaced persons, food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, training of one-on-one counselors, and home repairs for the most vulnerable.

Through grants of \$190,076 in 2022, this ministry has provided significant recovery and ongoing relief where EYN churches, families, and communities are rebuilding. Unfortunately, lawlessness has spread beyond northeast Nigeria, making recovery difficult and causing the displacement of some families for a second or third time. Working together and with faith in God, EYN continues to persevere and lead recovery and relief efforts while also planting new churches.

Financial details

Donations to BDM, CDS, the Nigeria Crisis Fund, and the Emergency Disaster Fund totaled \$2,209,715 in 2022. This giving provided for all BDM expenses, including staff, programs, and allocations for disaster response. Expenditures included a total of \$274,393 for US responses (including Rebuilding and CDS) and \$836,545 for international responses, with \$471,545 of these responses accomplished in partnership with global Church of the Brethren groups.

Brethren Volunteer Service

Brethren Volunteer Service shares God's love through acts of service by supporting full-time volunteers worldwide. In 2022 BVS sent 23 new volunteers to projects that serve human need, advocate justice, work for peace, and care for creation.

BVS welcomed new director Chelsea Goss Skillen following the resignation of director Emily Tyler, who had worked with BVS in various roles over 10 years. A smooth transition was made possible by the return of former director Dan McFadden, who served as interim for nine months. During this time, orientations were led by long-term volunteer coordinator Pauline Liu and office volunteers Michael Brewer-Berres and Emily Bowdle.

To ensure the viability of BVS during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff modified orientations to an online format and adopted a process of placing volunteers ahead of time. Additional modifications in 2022 resulted in a new standard hybrid orientation that

includes an online phase leading to the preplacement of volunteers to a service project, followed by a shortened, nine-day in-person orientation. Other changes included increasing the monthly volunteer stipend from \$100 to \$250.

Sara Cook, part-time coordinator in Europe, provided support for volunteers in Europe and helped celebrate the 50th year of BVS's presence in Northern Ireland.

Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX)

FaithX's theme of "Boundless Faith" imagined a bigger and bolder faith outreach, as 65 youth and adults participated in week-long opportunities to serve. While alternative opportunities to serve had been created during the pandemic, these 2022 trips marked the first traditional FaithX opportunities offered since 2019. As is customary during years with a National Youth Conference, no senior high trips were offered.

As coordinator of short-term service, Zechariah Houser coordinated three junior high trips (Harrisburg, Pa.; Winston-Salem, N.C.; Milford, Ind.) and one adult trip to Rwanda. Following his resignation, Marissa

Witkovsky-Eldred became interim coordinator. This position organizes FaithX trips and does recruiting for Brethren Volunteer Service.

Material Resources

The Material Resources program staff facilitated 124 shipments totaling 629 tons of hospital supplies, quilts, kits (health, school, baby, and cleanup), and other supplies. These materials were valued at \$5.3 million and reached 17 states and 23 countries. Donations in 2022 showed an increase of 311,000 pounds over 2020, but were still more than 400,000 pounds less than in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteer Gerry Dubel baled 29 tons of cardboard for recycling.

Loretta Wolf directed the program, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operations. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Melissa Fritz, and Brenda Giles packed items for shipping. Ed Palsgrove drove 20,281 miles delivering shipments and picking up donations. Medical supplies were sorted and prepared for shipment by Winni Wanionek and Jeffrey Brown. These staff worked without the assistance of

volunteers for a third year due to the impact of the pandemic on workplace safety and the volume of donations.

On behalf of Church World Service, Material Resources sent kits and/or blankets in response to Hurricanes Ian and Fiona and flooding in Kentucky and Florida. CWS and International Orthodox Christian Charities cooperated to ship supplies to Armenia and Moldova. Lutheran World Relief shipments sailed to Angola, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon, Poland (for Ukraine), Serbia, South Sudan, and Tanzania.

Donations of hospital supplies shipped to the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Malawi, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe on behalf of Brothers Brother Foundation. Two containers of equipment and supplies shipped to Liberia to outfit an airplane hangar through Mission Aid Fellowship.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

Discipleship Ministries equips the people of God to embody and articulate their faith. The team serves the denomination through three primary avenues of ministry: events, resources, and relationships.

Events generally were able to return to in-person gatherings, following two years of disruption by the pandemic. Staff were also able to travel to provide onsite and contextual leadership in various communities. Digital connections supported both planning and resource sharing throughout Discipleship Ministries.

Events

Joshua Brockway, director of spiritual formation, hosted a weekly gathering during Lent to practice prayerful reading of the lectionary readings. The small group gathered by Zoom to discuss the texts curated and translated by Dr. Wilda Gafney in *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church*. Brockway also recorded a series of video presentations on a definition of discipleship and facilitated a virtual conversation with staff and the Mission and Ministry Board.

Stan Dueck, director of organizational leadership, coordinated several webinars, including one on dementia in collaboration with the Anabaptist Disabilities Network. He also facilitated the use of recorded webinars for continuing education units with the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. With this structure, Discipleship Ministries is able to partner with We Rise International to provide mental health webinars for CEU credit.

In the early spring, Discipleship Ministries and the New Church Development Committee helped sponsor the Inhabit Conference organized by the Parish Collective. A number of district leaders and church planters from around the denomination attended, participating also in a pre-conference workshop with author and consultant Paul Sparks.

Young adults met in May at the Montreat Camp and Conference Center with the theme "I Am Because We Are," based on Romans 12:5. The conference gathered 57 participants from 13 districts. Becky Ullom Naugle, director of youth and young adult ministries, coordinated the work of the Young Adult

Steering Committee, which chose the theme and speakers and provided logistical leadership during the conference.

The quadrennial National Youth Conference, held in July in Fort Collins, Colo., was led by Erika Clary and the National Youth Cabinet. With the theme “Foundational,” based on Colossians 2:5-7, NYC brought together more than 900 participants from 22 districts, along with attendees from Spain and the Dominican Republic.

An NYC highlight was the twice-a-day worship services, which featured dynamic speakers, music, drama, prayer, and more. Youth were assigned to small groups that gave them a place to reflect throughout the week. The schedule was also filled with workshops, service projects, hiking in the Rockies, and recreation. Youth groups assembled more a thousand school kits for Church World Service and 444 cloth diapers for Haiti.

Intercultural ministries director LaDonna Sanders Nkosi joined the FaithX trip to Rwanda in the early summer. Through her extensive international experience and intercultural skills, she was able to support participants in sharing with the growing Church of the Brethren in the region. She also hosted an intercultural leaders gathering prior to Annual Conference, with the theme of “Homecoming.” The event featured Pastor Etienne Nsanzimana of the Rwanda Church of the Brethren as speaker.

Resources

Discipleship Ministries supports the denomination through a number of partnerships, as well as financial support through grants and scholarships.

Program assistant Randi Rowan oversaw the process of giving out annual nursing scholarships, which come from the Health Education and Research Endowment. She also worked with the Fellowship of Brethren Homes to administer continuing education grants for member homes. Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to homes on a rotating basis.

Discipleship Ministries worked with the Office of Ministry and its Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church program to develop a collection of resources for congregations to engage their communities. Guided by

the strategic vision of the denomination and the Strategic Plan of the Mission and Ministry Board, these resources, titled “Jesus in the Neighborhood: Tools for Community Engagement,” were posted on the denominational website. They provide access to membership in the Christian Community Development Association, which includes networking groups, conference discounts, recorded sessions, and print materials.

Sanders Nkosi and Brockway also have been part of the Annual Conference committee on Standing with People of Color. The committee is focusing on matters of racial injustice and connects Mission and Ministry Board work on racial healing with justice work of On Earth Peace, along with district and congregational efforts.

Dueck led six consultations on strategic planning for districts and congregations. He also led a deacon training workshop with leaders from six congregations in attendance. Brockway consulted with two congregations on re-envisioning their deacon ministries.

Relationships

Discipleship Ministries supported local leaders through phone calls and virtual gatherings. Dueck has ongoing coaching relationships with 12 leaders and totals over 100 hours of coaching time with them. Ullom Naugle and Brockway worked with a facilitator and several leaders from the Supportive Communities Network to develop pastoral space at National Youth Conference. This work was important in resetting trusting relationships with marginalized communities around the church.

Essential to the work of Discipleship Ministries are the relationships forged through volunteer committees. Their work expands the scope and breadth of events and resources. Those serving on the National Older Adult Conference Planning Committee, Intercultural Ministries Advisory Committee, New Church Development Committee, Young Adult Steering Committee, National Youth and Junior High Cabinets, provide thousands of hours of their own time to make these ministries sustainable. Staff are grateful for their wisdom, passion, and support.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The mission of Organizational Resources is to support all denominational staff and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Organizational Resources includes

Brethren Historical Library and Archives, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Information Technology. Shawn Flory Replogle serves as the executive director.

Brethren Historical Library and Archives

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives is the official repository for Church of the Brethren records documenting the ministry of the church, including committee and staff agendas and minutes, congregational records, Church of the Brethren-related print materials, and Church of the Brethren historical literature and items. Jen Houser serves as director and Ashley Scarr as intern. This year, BHLA was able to reopen to the public, allowing researchers to study at the Archives and utilize the collection, and host several tour groups. Staff are available to districts,

congregations, and individual members for research and historical study.

In 2022 staff provided the following services: answered over 350 research questions; acquisitioned over 35 cubic feet of archival materials to process and add to the collection; and added over 50 books to the collection. Among the notable acquisitions were files from the Brethren Action Movement and the Brethren Peace Fellowship, as well as church files and photos from Church of the Brethren congregations that have closed.

Buildings and Grounds

There are two main facilities for Church of the Brethren staff and ministries: the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Buildings and Grounds staff maintain the physical spaces for staff to work, committees to meet, and for the ongoing ministries of the Church of the Brethren to take place. Salvador Campero directs the Buildings and Grounds team at the General Offices, assisted by Lee Marsh. Francie Coale directs the team at the Brethren Service Center, assisted by Felix Hill.

In Elgin, areas of the parking lot were treated for potholes and lines repainted, parking lot lighting was updated, large mechanical equipment maintenance was performed, trees were trimmed and removed, and

energy efficiencies were added to the panel controlling the chiller. A year after Eder Financial reduced its footprint in the building, large-scale moving of staff offices was completed, providing the opportunity to make office space available to other tenants in the future.

In New Windsor, maintenance focused on routine items, such as copier systems, warehouse air conditioning units, and the boiler inspection. Other less routine building matters were multiple power failures (outside the facility), wayward mice in the winter, and truck trailer vandalism. Electrical systems in the part of the warehouse leased by SERRV were updated.

Finance

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

The Finance team staff is headed by Ed Woolf,

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

Lynn Phelan, accounts payable specialist, provides financial and administrative support in processing and reporting all types of payments and funds transfers.

Barb Watt, financial operations specialist and payroll manager in New Windsor, provides accounts receivable, accounts payable, and financial reporting services. And Nancy Watts, donation and accounts

receivable specialist, manages invoicing, along with all donations and gifts received for the Church of the Brethren and its ministries.

Information Technology

The Information Technology team provides computer, telephone, internet, and audiovisual support to keep all denominational staff connected and communicating effectively. Their work includes network management, computer hardware and software, database maintenance, keycard system at the General Offices, registration support for events, and technological

support for onsite meetings. The IT team is also on call for technological emergencies that arise.

Francie Coale, based in New Windsor, is director of information technology at both facilities. Joshua Rowan is information technology specialist, based in Elgin. In January, Lauren Bukszar was hired as database specialist, based in New Windsor.

Financial results for 2022

Total giving to Core Ministries was down \$45,469 from 2021. Congregational giving totaled \$1,548,148, a decrease of \$46,275, while individual giving totaled \$710,890, a modest increase of \$806. Despite the decrease in total giving, income to Core Ministries finished the year \$91,816 above budget. In addition, an expected transfer of \$293,000 from designated funds did not have to be used.

Program limitations and travel restrictions caused by the pandemic were lifted in 2022, and the Church of the Brethren saw a \$499,926 increase in program expenses year over year. Total director-level expenses finished the year \$67,645 under budget. As a result, Core Ministries ended the year with a net surplus of \$159,461. This surplus increased the Core Ministries net asset balance to a total of \$2,196,275.

Brethren Press, formerly a Self-Funding Ministry, was merged into Core Ministries in 2022 and finished the year with a \$36,480 expense over budget. Material Resources ended with a small deficit of \$2,979, as donations, processing income, and service fees rebounded after the pandemic. This increased the Material Resources net asset deficit balance to \$188,551. The Conference Office finished with a deficit of \$68,289 because of lower-than-budgeted registration income coupled with higher than anticipated expenses. This decreased the ending net asset balance to \$367,854.

Both the Emergency Disaster Fund and the Global Food Initiative Fund saw an increase in donations. Donations to Brethren Disaster Ministries totaled \$2,209,465, an increase of \$490,104. Giving to the Global Food Initiative Fund totaled \$322,082, an increase of \$107,124 from last year.

Investments totaled approximately \$33.3 million as of the end of the year. This is down \$8.4 million from the 2021 year-end balance of \$41.7 million. With this significant decrease, it's important to remember that the Church of the Brethren's investment strategy focuses on long-term goals, risk tolerances, timelines, and purposes of funds. Staying disciplined to this strategy helps the Church of the Brethren navigate market volatility and uncertainties from year to year. The investment loss caused total net assets to decrease \$8.8 million, resulting in a year-end balance of \$39.7 million.

The Church of the Brethren is sincerely grateful for the faithful giving and the active participation that have supported denominational ministries this past year.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2022 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren, Inc., audit report published in June 2023.]

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren, David Steele, serves as staff for the Mission and Ministry Board, overseeing the employees and ministries of the Church of the Brethren and

representing the church in its various ecumenical commitments. Nancy Miner is manager of the Office of the General Secretary.

Mission and Ministry Board

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

In March the Board issued a statement on Ukraine, calling the Board, the denomination, and the nation to a time of concerted prayer and action for peacebuilding in Ukraine and the region. The statement also called for renewed commitment to Annual Conference opposition to conventional and nuclear war and to care for those directly affected by the war.

A new mid-ground vision was adopted for the Board's Strategic Plan, to serve as a benchmark for the Plan's continued progress. Through the adoption of a new foreground vision, the Board is exploring the possibility of all members and director-level staff to be trained in Kingian nonviolence. The Board also approved hiring a consultant to conduct a survey for the Plan's foreground vision initiative to seek God's racial justice and recognized the completion of a staff-led initiative toward understanding discipleship.

Kathy Mack was called to be chair-elect beginning at the conclusion of Annual Conference 2023. Other actions included approval of an executive director staff position to oversee Discipleship Ministries and the Office of Ministry; plans to establish a standing committee to oversee the management of and forecast the needs for Church of the Brethren properties; approval of a mid-year, 3 percent cost-of-living increase for employees; approval of a 2023 Core

Ministries balanced budget of \$5,336,000; and appointments to the Germantown (Pa.) Trust and to the Church of the Brethren General Board Trust (CBGB Trust) in India.

The Board adopted a resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).

In Board member development, the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center led a session on active listening, and Samuel Sarpiya spoke on peacemaking in a polarized church. Board members also engaged in an informative conversation around authority on matters of faith and practice.

The Board approved revisions to the Brethren Faith in Action guidelines for 2023, including the permanent eligibility of camps and implementation of a sliding scale for matching funds from congregational grant recipients. In 2022, grants awarded to congregations and camps from this Board-designated fund totaled \$98,020.

The Board approved \$622,375 in Emergency Disaster Fund grants for emerging needs and ongoing projects, including \$220,000 for the 2021 Haiti Earthquake Response. The Executive Committee approved an additional \$109,000 in grants for international humanitarian response and \$37,500 to support the National Youth Conference school kit project. Board-approved capital expenditures included a truck for Brethren Disaster Ministries and installation of an electrical panel for the chiller at the General Offices.

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

Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy represents the denomination in coalitions, organizations, and working groups addressing areas of concern for the Church of the Brethren.

Galen Fitzkee served with OPP through Brethren Volunteer Service through the summer, focusing on Haiti, immigration policy, and a broad range of peace and security issues. Chidinma Chidoka joined the office later in the year as a Fellow and maintains a strong presence addressing Nigeria. This has included congressional briefings on the February 2023 Nigerian elections, as well as an art exhibition creatively engaging policy makers, advocates, and artists around human rights, peacebuilding, and civic engagement.

Church of the Brethren United Nations representative Doris Abdullah monitored UN work on a number of issues, including the war in Ukraine and

its work on historic and ongoing systems of racism.

OPP director Nathan Hosler engaged in these and other initiatives. He co-wrote several pieces on US arms sales as well as new lethal strike policy. This latter writing came alongside an expanded role in co-convening the Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare. This working group produced several webinars educating and equipping the faith community to address and oppose the harm caused by armed and militarized drones.

Approaching its 45th year of ministry, the Death Row Support Project (DSRP) made 380 new pen pal assignments. In collaboration with Washington City Church of the Brethren's community art ministry, DRSP created an exhibition featuring artwork created by people on, or formerly on, death row.

Annual Conference Office

Jesus tells us, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20), and the Psalmist reminds us, "how good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity (Psalm 133:1). How good it was to gather as the body of Christ during the 2022 Annual Conference, July 10-14, in Omaha, Neb.

After not being together in person in three years, it was a blessing to greet one another with hugs; break bread together; worship God together; engage in meaningful conversation about business; and to learn and grow together. Moderator David Sollenberger led the 235th recorded Annual Conference with the theme "Embracing One Another As Christ Embraces Us."

Registrants included 425 delegates, 753 nondelegates, and 142 virtual nondelegates, for a total of 1,320 participants. The business agenda was a full one.

In addition to business, the Conference offered creative worship, concerts by Bittersweet Gospel Band and Mike Stern and Friends, and a thought-provoking production of *We Own This Now* by Ted and Co. Many participated in equipping sessions designed to strengthen their ministry, and some took part in enriching trips to the Tri-Faith Center and Durham Museum.

Participants donated 105 pints of blood to the local blood bank. They also gave more than \$12,700 and material goods that filled three pallets to overflowing in support of the Witness to the Host City Project,

Girls Inc. of Omaha.

After a successful virtual conference in 2021, there were expanded opportunities for people to participate virtually in 2022, by viewing business sessions, late evening concerts, and selected equipping sessions. Worship services were livestreamed at no charge.

Months ahead of time, the Program and Arrangements Committee developed a multilevel COVID plan in consultation with public health professionals. Ultimately, transmission rates were high enough in June that masks were required and other safety measures were implemented. In spite of those measures, an estimated 3 to 5 percent of conference participants got COVID.

Planners were grateful for the expertise of Drs. Kathryn Jacobsen and Emily Shonk Edwards, who helped develop the response plan, and to Ronda Neher, first aid coordinator, who fit people with masks, performed COVID tests, and cared for those who quarantined in their hotel rooms after testing positive.

Almost all the tasks at Annual Conference are carried out by volunteers. Onsite coordinators Lois and Bill Grove coordinated area volunteers from Western Plains, Northern Plains, and Missouri-Arkansas districts.

While there was much to celebrate as the church came together again, 2022 was a challenging year financially. Attendance is lower whenever Conference is held west of the Mississippi River. The additional impact of COVID and the ongoing conflict and

division in the church resulted in lower attendance than anticipated.

This had a significant impact on income, which was \$37,756 less than budgeted, even though budgeting had been conservative. With expenses higher, particularly related to audiovisual contracts and the purchase of masks, there was a deficit of \$68,288. This was absorbed by the Annual Conference contingency fund, but that is not a long-term solution.

Annual Conference director Rhonda Pittman Gingrich and Conference assistant Debbie Noffsinger also supported the work of various committees, during a year that was particularly heavy for committee work.

These were the Annual Conference Officers, Program and Arrangements Committee, Annual Conference Worship Committee, Standing Committee and its subcommittees, Nominating Committee, Leadership Team, the Breaking Down Barriers Study Committee and the committee developing a study-action process in response to the Standing with People of Color query.

Future conferences are scheduled for July 3-7, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Mich.; and July 2-6, 2025 in Greensboro, N.C. Although proposals for 2026 have been received, a decision was postponed until after the 2023 Annual Conference in order to better understand expectations in light of recent challenges.

Brethren Press

A new resource for families, www.ShineFamilies.org, was launched by the Shine curriculum project, a joint publishing effort of Brethren Press and MennoMedia. The initiative grew out of the learning that Shine planners, led by project director Joan Daggett, gained from the experiences of congregations during the pandemic.

Other new resources from Shine included an annual Bible storybook called *Great Big Love* and an intergenerational resource, *Seeking God Together*. Also from Shine was a vacation Bible school curriculum, *Passport to Peace*.

Brethren Press is a partner in a longstanding camping curriculum, *Inside Out: Resources for Outdoor Ministries*. The 2022 theme was *What's in a Name?*

New titles in the Covenant Bible Study Series were *The Day of the Lord*, by David Valeta, and *Life of Peter*, by Joel Kline. Walt Wiltschek wrote the Lenten devotional, *We Wait for Light*, and Kathy Fuller Guisewite wrote the Advent devotional, *Simple Gifts*. The 2022 Yearbook, created by Jim Miner, was published as a digital file available on USB card and as a download.

The company with which Brethren Press collaborated for many years to produce the Living Word Bulletin Series ceased its bulletin work in late 2022. The publishing house quickly picked up the tasks of design, printing, and distribution so the series could continue uninterrupted.

The ecumenical collaboration that produces the International Sunday School Lessons, which serve as the Bible outlines for *A Guide for Biblical Studies*, celebrated its 150th year in 2022. James Deaton, who was managing editor until resigning in May, created a special edition of *Guide* that brought together 13 previously published lessons into a new collection on the topic of “Life in Christ.”

The speaker for the Brethren Press/Messenger Dinner at Annual Conference was Christina Bucher, co-author of the forthcoming book *Luke and Acts: Turning the World Upside Down*. Bookstores at both Annual Conference and National Youth Conference were managed by Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales.

In 2022 Brethren Press made a significant transition into what's called Core Ministries. Previously it was regarded as a self-funded ministry. While, the publishing house is still expected to break even, the change means it will no longer pay Core Ministries a percentage of sales to cover overhead services—an expense that was increasingly difficult as the Church of the Brethren becomes smaller.

Wendy McFadden is publisher of Brethren Press and Communications. Karen Stocking handles finance and production for both teams. Karen Warner is customer service representative, and Dan McFadden assists with shipping on a part-time basis.

Communications

In *Messenger* magazine, article topics in 2022 ranged (according to the index) from Afghanistan to young adults. The content was written by 113 writers and mentioned about 70 congregations. While print is the primary format, selected articles appear in Messenger Online. Also online are occasional Messenger Radio pieces and music playlists based on the themes in each issue.

Messenger is published 10 times a year by a team of editors who each spend a portion of time on the magazine—communication staff Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Jan Fischer Bachman, and Wendy McFadden, along with at-large editor Walt Wiltschek. Diane Stroyeck is subscriptions specialist.

Messenger received five awards from the Associated Church Press for material published in 2021. The magazine won second place in the Best in Class category for denominational or other special interest magazine. The other awards were an honorable mention for “Brethren mascots,” by Wiltschek and designer Paul Stocksdales; award of merit for William Miller’s “Down by the river: Developing a Brethren ecological identity”; award of merit for Brumbaugh-Cayford’s coverage of the virtual Annual Conference; and award of excellence for McFadden’s “From the publisher” column.

News services kept the church informed, engaged, and knowledgeable about the breadth and depth of Church of the Brethren ministries and activities, and also shared the Brethren voice with the wider world. Regular channels are Newline, a free email news

service, Newline Digest pages in *Messenger* magazine, the denominational website, and social media.

In 2022, with a return to in-person conferences, staff and a cadre of volunteer photographers and writers provided onsite coverage at Annual Conference and National Youth Conference. News services director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford traveled to Karlsruhe, Germany, in August as one of the Church of the Brethren representatives at the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly.

The team that oversees the website provided a number of improvements and innovations, in addition to routine maintenance and support for various offices. One popular innovation is a new translation widget that offers the site in Spanish, Haitian Kreyol, German, Hausa, and Arabic.

Jan Fischer Bachman oversees web work, working closely with Russ Otto. They posted “Jesus in the Neighborhood” stories at www.brethren.org/church, maintained a Google map of congregations, created a new pastoral compensation page, set up a new site “Tools for Community Engagement,” improved pages and tools for Annual Conference, and posted hundreds of photos from conferences.

The team assisted with social media, designed bulk email messages, created surveys and evaluations, evaluated support for online registrations, and provided tech support for the virtual option for Annual Conference.

Human Resources

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

Employees hired in 2022 were Lauren Bukszar, database support specialist; Dan McFadden, interim director of Brethren Volunteer Service; Jeffrey McKee, donation pickup assistant (casual); Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred, interim coordinator of short-term service for BVS; Chelsea Skillen, director of BVS; and Michael Scalzi, program assistant for Children’s Disaster Services.

Departures were Emily Tyler, director of BVS; James Deaton, managing editor of Brethren Press;

Zechariah Houser, coordinator of short-term service for BVS; Ruoxia Li, co-executive director of Global Mission; Michael Brewer-Berres, interim program assistant for BVS; and LaDonna Sanders Nkosi, director of Intercultural Ministries.

Total regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs: 59. As requested by Annual Conference, the report of ethnic/racial composition of these employees is the following: Asian—2; Black or African American—3; Hispanic or Latino—2; white—52.

Assisting these employees in carrying out their work are numerous contract, shared, casual, and temporary employees, as well as program volunteers.

Office of Ministry

The Office of Ministry deeply values the partnerships that enable promotion of the calling, training, credentialing, and sustaining of ministers. These partnerships include districts and congregations, the Council of District Executives, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, Ministers' Association, Ministry Advisory Council, and Bethany Theological Seminary.

A highlight of the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee's work was completion of the Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement and the Shared Ministries Priorities resource, which enables pastor and congregation to partner in discerning and implementing ministry priorities. The committee worked closely with Eder Financial and the Council of District Executives to finalize the resource and then offered introductory workshops both denominationally and within districts. The committee subsequently began a review of the 2002 Annual Conference document "Guidelines for Sabbath Rest."

The Council of District Executives experienced a significant number of staff transitions for which the office provided direction. Interim service was completed in Michigan and Southeastern districts. Interim leadership was secured for South/Central Indiana, Michigan, Mid-Atlantic, and Western Pennsylvania. New executive ministers were called by Southeastern, South/Central Indiana, and Virginia. Atlantic Southeast District was served by a six-member interim team.

The Part-time Pastor; Full-time Church grant-funded program continued to serve as a resource for Brethren pastors, the majority of whom are multivocational. Part-time pastors or those serving in less than fully compensated positions qualify to receive significant financial and program resource support. The initiative, coordinated by program

manager Jen Jensen, was represented at 18 of the 24 district conferences. The program's seven circuit riders provide accompaniment to pastors in their local contexts.

An increased social media presence communicated more broadly the availability of resources. The program engaged pastors through webinars and book studies and offered financial grants for continuing education opportunities such as sabbath rest, study and learning tours, ministers' spiritual and self-care retreats, and district-wide pastors' events. Professional clergy coaching and spiritual direction are also available through the program.

Through its director, Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, the Office of Ministry offered insight sessions and consultation promoting a shared ministry team model for responding to congregations' pastoral placement needs. Relying on the practice of the priesthood of all believers and emphasizing calling individuals to the set-apart ministry, this model invites congregations to discern gifts for ministry already present within the congregation.

At the Ministers' Association pre-Annual Conference meeting, Dr. Tod Bolsinger addressed the theme "Tempered Resilience: How Leaders are Formed in the Crucible of Change."

The number of ministers added to the ministerial body in 2022 were 36 ordained (19 male, 17 female), 3 commissioned (2 male, 1 female), and 25 licensed (15 male, 10 female).

Office manager Mishael Nouveau facilitated the disbursement of several funds: scholarships for continuing education (\$11,715), leadership development and training grants (\$4,710.00), the Ministry Assistance Fund (\$13,776), and the annual scholarship grant to Bethany Seminary (\$5,000). The Robert C. Wenger Charitable Trust again donated \$5,000 toward the Ministry Assistance Fund.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary, coordinates non-graduate, certificate-level ministry training through programs in both English and Spanish, and also oversees continuing education for clergy within the Church of the Brethren.

Staff members are Aida Sánchez, quarter-time coordinator of Spanish-Language Ministry Training Programs, Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey, half-time coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs, Fran Massie, three-quarter-time

administrative assistant, and Janet Ober Lambert, director. Carrie Eikler resigned as coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs in July.

In 2022, Training in Ministry engaged 29 students. The congregationally based training program, Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM in English and EPMC in Spanish, involved seven congregations, with a combined 10 students. One EPMC student completed the program. Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano de la Iglesia de los Hermanos (SeBAH-CoB) supported 14 students, one of whom completed the

program. Academy Certified Training Systems offers regionally based, onsite courses involving 11 districts.

Through the Brethren Academy, 51 people pursued courses or seminars to earn continuing education credits. CEUs were awarded for 22 archived events, following a new policy allowing clergy to receive credit for viewing and reporting on prerecorded events. The academy also reviews and certifies programs of other agencies for continuing education credit, and

these certificates totaled 268 in 2022.

Two major foci this year were revising the TRIM and Strength for the Journey programs. For TRIM, the number of required subjects was increased and the overall number of required courses was decreased. Strength for the Journey, a cohort-based, continuing education program, has been reformatted for accessing through video conferencing and redesigned to be completed within a year.

Mission Advancement

The Office of Mission Advancement cultivates relationships and passion to advance the mission and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Staff educate individual donors and congregations on the needs of the church, explain how financial gifts are stewarded and spent, and encourage participation through events, webinars, and trainings. The team provides ways for individuals and congregations to give financially to support those ministries as “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18).

Matthew DeBall, coordinator of Mission Advancement communications, recruited writers for donor letters and solicitations, developed congregational offering resources, published the eBrethren newsletter, updated online giving pages, and represented the denomination on the One Great Hour of Sharing committee.

For Nancy McCrickard and Shannon McNeil Smith, Mission Advancement advocates, travel and

visitation with donors remained challenging because of the virus, though they were able to make a few visits toward the end of the year. Focused on “stewarding relationships,” they communicated regularly with donors by mail and phone and sent gratitude packets.

Traci Rabenstein, director, managed the work of the team. She visited congregations both virtually and in person, and talked with pastors and lay leaders to provide insight into the ministries of the Church of the Brethren. She and her team implemented a new gift acknowledgment process, updated a narrative budget, and evaluated the online giving platform.

Mission Advancement hosted the annual Faith Forward Donor Circle dinner at Annual Conference. This event is a way to celebrate and thank donors who have planned to leave a sustaining contribution in their will or estate plans or contributed planned distributions from various trusts or IRA accounts.

CONCLUSION

This report would be much longer if it named the thousands of individuals who volunteer to carry out denominational ministries, participate in them, and give financially. The members of the Mission and Ministry Board and its staff are profoundly grateful for the generosity of all who bring this work to life. This participation increases discipleship and serves the world. Together, we are the body of Christ. Together we walk by faith.

Carl Fike, Chair

David Steele, General Secretary