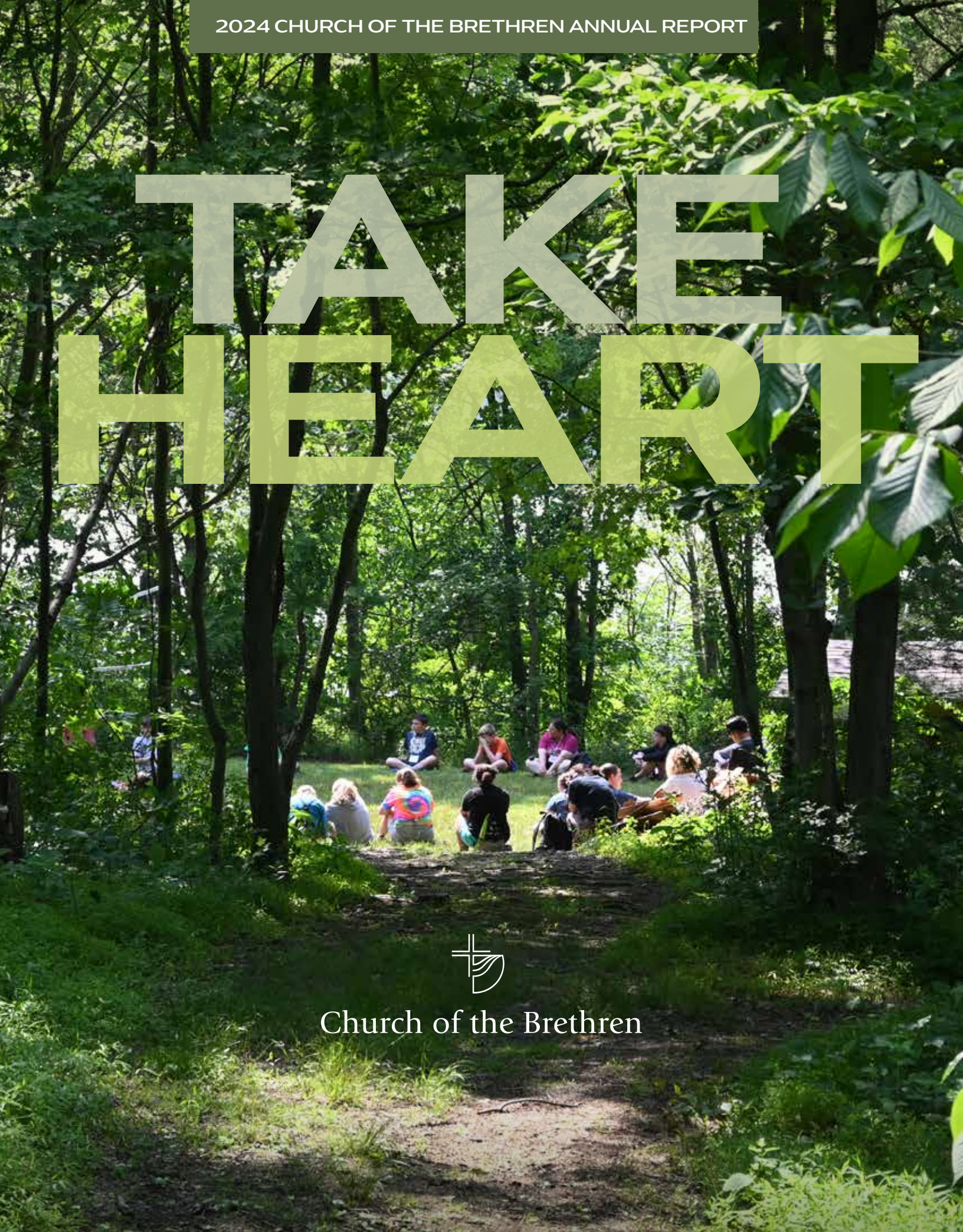
2024 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT

TAKE HEART



Church of the Brethren

Take heart **—Jesus**

Glenn Riegel

David Steele at Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren's 300th anniversary.

Dear Church:

This past year was filled with celebration: 75 years of Brethren Volunteer Service. 100 years in Nigeria. 300 years in America. Spirited gatherings in Ohio and North Carolina and Illinois and many other places. Even in the more routine work of the church, there was much to make our hearts glad.

There were also moments that were not so celebrative, when people felt discouraged or diminished. Whether our spirits are joyful or anxious, though, we can *take heart*. When Jesus was about to heal someone, he said, "Take heart." When the disciples were frightened during a storm, he said, "Take heart." When he came alongside two of his heartbroken followers on the road to Emmaus, they found that their hearts were burning within them.

May these snapshots of the ministries of the church enliven our hearts and point us to the Christ whom we follow. With the eyes of our hearts enlightened, may we perceive what is the hope to which he has called us (Ephesians 1:18).

Together in Christ,

David Steele
General Secretary

On the cover: *A circle of young people gathers during National Junior High Conference, held at Juniata College in Pennsylvania and its nearby Raystown Field Station.* **Photo by Chris Brumbaugh-Cayford.**

HEART

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Mission and Ministry Board members: Front row, from left: *Deirdre Moyer, Rosanna Eller McFadden.* Standing: *Joel Gibbel, Kathy Mack (chair-elect), Joanna Wave Willoughby, John Hoffman, Meghan Horne Mauldin, Roger Schrock, Karen Shively Neff, Josiah Ludwick, Lauren Seganos Cohen, Tina Hunt, Colin Scott (chair), Barbara Daté, David Steele (general secretary), Michaela Alphonse, Robert Jackson.*

Glenn Riegel

- At two **home rebuilding** sites in Kentucky, disaster volunteers gave more than 39,000 hours of service that aided 52 families. District project leaders and district disaster coordinators met at Camp Blue Diamond in Pennsylvania for fellowship, training, and program development.

- **Children's Disaster Services** cared for children in two Pacific island sites—Guam and Maui. CDS also sent a specially trained Critical Response Childcare team to Lewiston, Maine, after a mass shooting there. Responding to these and other events, a total of 44 volunteers served 1,185 child contacts.

- **International assistance** went to a number of communities of the Global Church of the Brethren Communion, as well as to support people affected by the war in Ukraine, a massive earthquake on the border of Turkey and Syria, and several other disaster sites. In Haiti, a dual program continued the 2021 earthquake response while also addressing the humanitarian crisis caused by collapse of the government.

- The US church continued to support EYN through the **Nigeria Crisis Fund**; in 2023, $220,000 was given. Total grants from the Emergency Disaster Fund were $659,700, with response to the world's wars, conflicts, civil unrest, and terrorist violence a particular challenge.

- **Material Resources** shipped 774 tons of disaster supplies that reached 23 states and 21 countries.

Jeff McKee

Melodie Bernhard

REJOI

Your hearts will ***rejoice***, and no one will take your joy from you —**John 16:22**

L'Eglise des Freres au Congo

Brethren Disaster Ministries

Top: *Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers in eastern Kentucky move a railroad tie.* Far left: *In Guam, a child is cared for by Children's Disaster Services.* Middle: *A family in Honduras receives assistance.* Right: *Aid is given to displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

FLOW

Several months after large centennial celebrations in Nigeria, **EYN leaders** traveled through the US, sharing food and fellowship with many individuals and congregations (and attending one minor-league baseball game). They took part in the Brethren World Assembly and celebrated 300 years of the church in America at Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

The **Global Church of the Brethren Communion** approved bylaws and in December formally met online for the first constitutive assembly to launch the group. Honduras Church of the Brethren was welcomed as a founding member, bringing the number of member churches to 12: Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, India, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, Uganda, the US, and Venezuela.

The first two Churches of the Brethren were planted in **South Sudan**. A partnership agreement was signed between the Church of the Brethren and Africa Inland Church.

The **Global Food Initiative** supported international work in animal raising, tree planting, soil conservation, drip-irrigation workshops, and training on vegetable and staple crop production. Grants in the US supported church-based community gardens.

Global Mission

Large photo: *Children in Rwanda.* Top left: *A girl at a worship service in Burundi.* Center: *Leaders from EYN visit the Wisconsin farm of Jeff Boshart.* Top right: *The Church of the Brethren and Africa Inland Church sign a partnership agreement in South Sudan.* Far left: *The Garden of Eden at Eden (N.C.) Church of the Brethren.*

Global Mission

Out of the believer's heart shall ***flow*** rivers of living water —**John 7:38**

Global Mission

Global Mission

■ Hundreds gathered for **National Older Adult Conference** at Lake Junaluska in North Carolina for worship, study, fellowship, and service under the theme "God Is Doing a New Thing." In addition to those who signed up to attend virtually, nine Church of the Brethren-related retirement communities streamed the main sessions for residents.

■ **Younger Brethren** had opportunities to take part in National Junior High Conference, Christian Citizenship Seminar, and Young Adult Conference.

■ A new series of Brethren Press Bible studies offers interpretation for **Anabaptists and radical Pietists**. The first title is *Luke and Acts: Turning the World Upside Down,* by Christina Bucher and Bob Neff.

■ The **Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church** program gave individuals and groups more than $43,000 to fund sabbaticals, retreats, and continuing education events for ministers. The Ministry office updated materials for ministerial ethics training for ministers across the denomination.

■ Staff from the newly combined **Discipleship and Leadership Formation** unit led events and webinars on a range of topics, including urban ministry, evangelism training, and deacons. Through collaboration with other organizations, they provided congregations with resources on disabilities, mental health, addictions, and bringing shalom to neighborhoods.

■ **Brethren Faith in Action** grants totaling more than $67,000 were given to congregations and camps.

Chris Brumbaugh-Cayford

Benjamin Hoffmann

Benjamin Hoffmann

Refresh my heart in Christ —**Philemon 1:20**

Top and bottom: *Youth and leaders at National Junior High Conference.* Inset: *Musicians at Young Adult Conference.* Left: *At National Older Adult Conference, Bible studies were led by Bob Neff (pictured) and Christina Bucher.*

Lauren Flora

Chris Brumbaugh-Cayford

■ **"Voices for Peace,"** based on Romans 15:1-6, was the theme for the summer lineup of FaithX service trips. Twelve trips took place in the US and in Spain, with a total of 172 youth and adult participants. The trip to Spain focused on relationship-building and intercultural education with members of Eglesia Evangélica Una Luz en las Naciones (Light to the Nations Church of the Brethren).

■ Brethren Press and MennoMedia, co-publishers of the Shine curriculum, were awarded a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant of $1.25 million for an initiative called **Shine Everywhere**. The five-year project will accompany congregations and households in developing spiritual practice materials that inspire families to embody faith in everyday life. Shine also published *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible.*

■ **Brethren Volunteer Service** marked its 75th year with various events and publication of *A Year of Living Differently* by Brethren Press. In 2023, 22 volunteers began a time of service and 50 served over the course of the year. Project sites were in the US, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and several new sites were added in 2023.

FaithX

SHINE

The God who said, "Out of darkness the light shall shine!" is the same God who made his light ***shine*** in our hearts —**2 Corinthians 4:6, GNT**

FaithX

Brethren Volunteer Service

Top: *Volunteers at the FaithX trip to Palmyra, Pa., worked with horses and other animals and assisted with riding lessons at Capital Area Therapeutic Riding Association.* Bottom left: *Another FaithX group went to Roanoke, Va., where the group volunteered at the Rescue Mission of Roanoke.* Bottom right: *Brethren Volunteer Service Unit 333 went through orientation at Camp Inspiration Hills in Ohio.*

LOVE

Several of the sessions at **New and Renew**, a church planting and revitalization conference, were held in Spanish, and translation at all five worship services was offered in both Spanish and English. The conference, held at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., was offered for the first time as a hybrid event.

A resolution lamenting the **Doctrine of Discovery** was sent to Annual Conference by the Mission and Ministry Board. The resolution, which was approved by delegates, committed to "ongoing advocacy, dialogue, education, and relationship-building regarding rights of Indigenous peoples" and endorsed specific action steps.

The board continued progress on its **strategic plan**. Two areas of focus are recognizing racial injustice in the organization and completing extensive training in Kingian Nonviolence.

The **Office of Peacebuilding and Policy** worked with Churches for Middle East Peace and others to appeal for a ceasefire in Gaza. A board statement on "Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine" called on church members to advocate for solutions to end the violence.

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Main photo: *Richard Kyerematen, pastor of Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, reminded the group gathered for the 300th anniversary that God "is always in the building business."* Inset: *Worship was lively at New and Renew, a church planting and revitalization conference held in Elgin, Ill.*

Love one another deeply from the heart —**1 Peter 1:22**

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

With all your ***heart*** —Zephaniah 3:14

While giving to Core Ministries decreased, combined giving from individuals and congregations increased, mostly due to bequest giving. Total net assets increased because of investment gains.

Many of the Church of the Brethren's ministries are in a centralized budget called Core Ministries. In addition, the organization has special-purpose funds that support Brethren Disaster Ministries and the Global Food Initiative. Two ministries—Annual Conference office and Material Resources—are considered self-funding because they cover their expenses with income from fees.

Combined giving to **Core Ministries**—both congregational and individual—ended $108,000 below budget and $105,000 behind 2022. Congregational giving was $1.5 million, a decrease of $47,000, and individual giving was $653,000, a decrease of $58,000. With a transfer of $186,000 in designated funds, income to Core Ministries ended the year $221,000 behind budget.

Director-level expenses finished the year at $5.2 million, which was $171,000 under budget, despite rising costs and high inflation. Even so, Core Ministries ended the year with a net deficit of $50,000. This lowered the Core Ministries' net asset balance to $2.1 million.

Material Resources, which ships disaster relief materials for Brethren Disaster Ministries and other organizations, covers expenses by charging fees for its services. It posted a deficit of $69,000, as donations remained below pre-pandemic levels and expenses for supplies continued to increase. This worsened the deficit balance of the program's net assets to $257,000.

The board made a decision to close Material Resources, winding down the program over a period of up to 30 months. The decision followed a review of best practices in material aid and in consultation with staff and partner organizations.

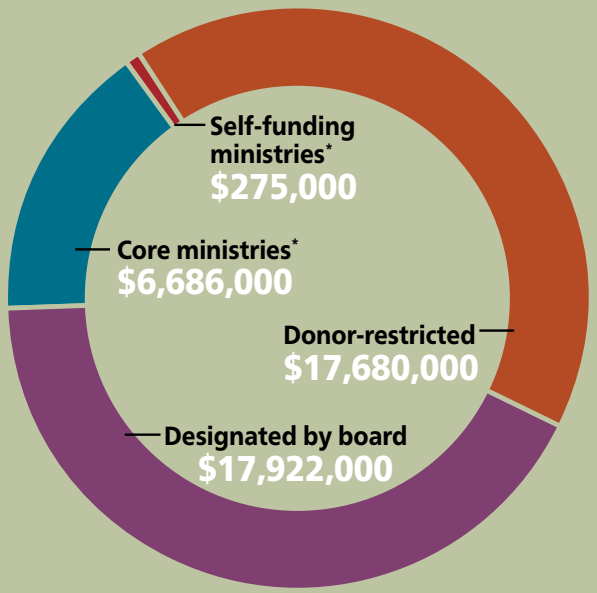
The **Annual Conference office** budget, also self-funded through registration fees, initially sustained a deficit of $63,000 because of lower attendance and rising expenses. But the budget benefited from a distribution of $129,000 from Brotherhood Mutual Partnership Funds, an action taken by the Leadership Team. This enabled the Conference office to finish the year with a surplus of $66,000, increasing its net asset balance to $434,000.

Donations to the **Emergency Disaster Fund** totaled $1.9 million, a decrease of $328,000. Giving to the **Global Food Initiative Fund** came to $262,000, a decrease of $60,000.

Investments reached approximately $36 million at the end of 2023. This was up $2.7 million from 2022. The investment gain in 2023 helped total **net assets** increase $2.9 million, resulting in a year-end balance of $42.5 million.

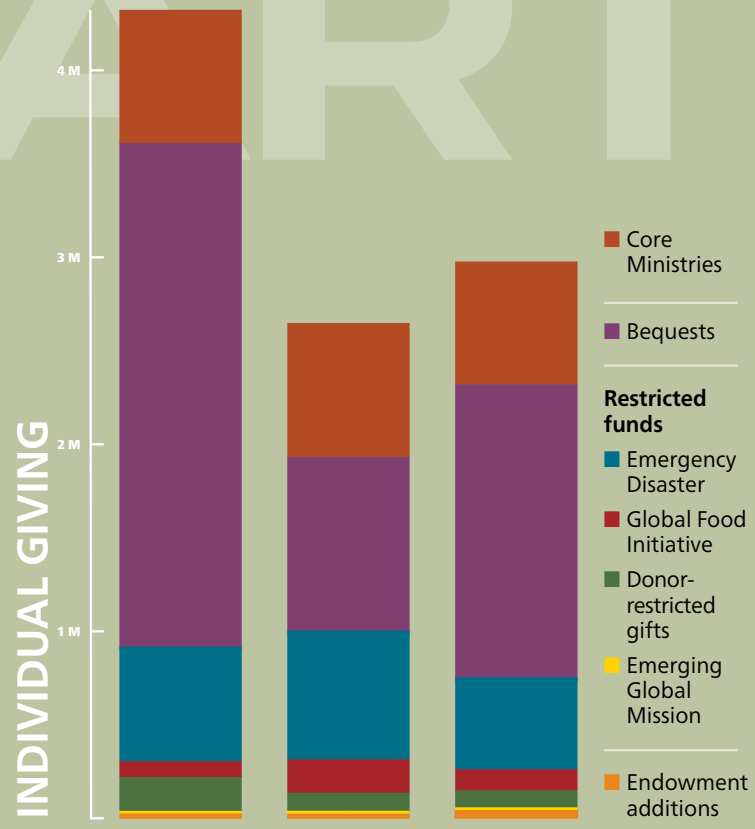
For complete financials, see the audited financial report.

NET ASSETS



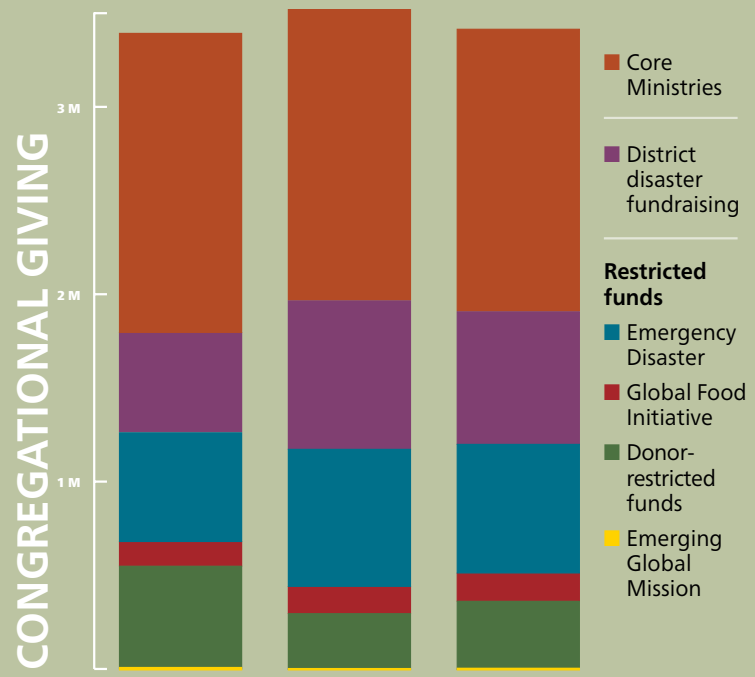
*Totals include Land, Building, and Equipment Funds

INDIVIDUAL GIVING



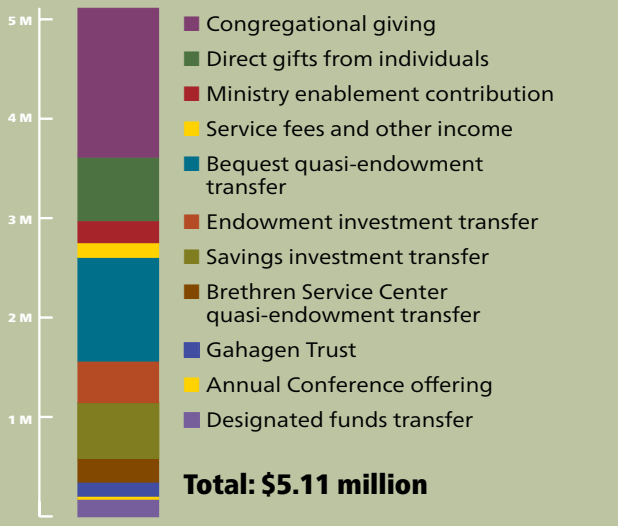
	2021	2022	2023
Individual total	$4,316,908	$2,644,019	$2,969,461

CONGREGATIONAL GIVING



	2021	2022	2023
Congregational total	$3,391,365	$3,518,375	$3,413,369
Combined giving total	$7,708,273	$6,162,394	$6,382,830

CORE MINISTRIES 2023 INCOME



Total: $5.11 million

CORE MINISTRIES 2023 EXPENSE

Total: $5.16 million

Some departments generate income through subscriptions, sales, or fees. The numbers here show net expense. Internal transfers between ministries have been included.

EMERGENCY DISASTER FUND

Beginning balance	2,307,222
Donations	1,882,738
Less ministry enablement contribution	(169,419)
Less BDM expenses and disaster grants	(1,800,821)
Year-end balance	**$2,219,720**

GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE FUND

Beginning balance	215,686
Donations	262,381
Less ministry enablement contribution	(23,614)
Less expenses and grants	(223,163)
Year-end balance	**$ 231,290**

Under the direction of the Mission and Ministry Board, whose members are elected by Annual Conference, the Church of the Brethren engages in ministries across the United States and around the world.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ▪ BRAZIL ▪ BRETHREN ACADEMY FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP
BRETHREN DISASTER MINISTRIES ▪ BRETHREN FAITH IN ACTION FUND ▪ BRETHREN PRESS ▪ BRETHREN HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES ▪ BRETHREN SERVICE CENTER
BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE ▪ BURUNDI ▪ CHILD PROTECTION ▪CHILDREN'S DISASTER SERVICES ▪ CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP SEMINAR ▪ CHURCH PLANTING AND REVITALIZATION ▪ COACHING ▪ CONGREGATIONAL ETHICS ▪ CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION
CREATION CARE ▪ CURRICULUM AND BOOKS ▪ DEACONS ▪ DEATH ROW SUPPORT PROJECT
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO ▪ DISABILITIES ▪ DISASTER HOME REBUILDING
DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION ▪ DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ▪ ECUMENICAL RELATIONS ▪ EMERGENCY DISASTER FUND ▪ EVANGELISM ▪ FAITHX ▪ FELLOWSHIP OF BRETHREN HOMES ▪ FINANCE OFFICE ▪ GENERAL OFFICES ▪ GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE
GLOBAL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN COMMUNION ▪ GLOBAL FOOD INITIATIVE ▪ GLOBAL MISSION ▪ GLOBAL WOMEN'S PROJECT ▪ HAITI ▪ HAITI MEDICAL PROJECT ▪ HONDURAS
HUMAN RESOURCES ▪ INDIA ▪ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ▪ INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES
INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES ▪ MATERIAL RESOURCES ▪ MESSENGER MAGAZINE
MINISTRY OFFICE ▪ MISSION ADVANCEMENT ▪ NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE
NATIONAL OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE ▪ NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE ▪ NEW AND RENEW ▪ NEWSLINE ▪ NIGERIA ▪ NIGERIA CRISIS RESPONSE ▪ NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS
OFFICE OF PEACEBUILDING AND POLICY ▪ OLDER ADULTS ▪ OUTDOOR MINISTRIES
PART-TIME PASTOR; FULL-TIME CHURCH ▪ RACIAL JUSTICE ▪ RWANDA ▪ SHINE
SOUTH SUDAN ▪ SPAIN ▪ SPIRITUAL DIRECTION ▪ THRIVING IN MINISTRY ▪ VENEZUELA
WEBINARS ▪ WWW.BRETHREN.ORG ▪ YEARBOOK ▪ YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE

Church of the Brethren

Benjamin Hoffmann

Visit www.brethren.org/annualreport for the full written report, a video report, and a digital version of this pictorial report.

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