

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT OF 2025

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Church of the Brethren



... we are one body in Christ,
and individually we belong to each other.”

— Romans 12:5b, CEB

In 2025, the Church of the Brethren was able to meet more frequently with others in the Global Church of the Brethren Communion, responded to disasters in the US and around the world, and advocated for immigrant church members threatened with deportation. Church members nurtured their faith through an array of resources produced to help them grow and through conferences and gatherings that brought church people together for learning and inspiration.

The organization also experienced obstacles in 2025. Financial constraints affected personnel and workloads. Staff labored throughout the year to recover from a major data breach at the end of 2024, which caused double work for many departments. And the organization said goodbye to a program that for generations helped define the church’s commitment to service.

Whatever the times, we are reminded that the church we serve is one body in Christ. Whether we are faced with opportunity or obstacle, we belong to each other.

GLOBAL MISSION

The Church of the Brethren understands that Christian mission is God’s mission. Christian mission encompasses all God-motivated efforts to make Christ known, active in human life, loved, and obeyed, so that the good news may result in faithful discipleship in personal lives, in institutions, and in the whole range of human relationships.

The ultimate objective of the Global Mission office is to redeem, heal, and lift all of life to God’s intended purpose for all creation. Recognizing the increasing dominance of insular and nationalistic tendencies throughout the world, the church must heed the Christian call to be a global community. Church of the Brethren mission philosophy statements have long called for this; it is now time to live more fully into being the global church.

Global Church of the Brethren Communion

After pauses in 2024 due to staff changes, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion (GCBC) met almost monthly in 2025. To succeed previous moderator Joel Billi, the GCBC elected Pastor Santos Terrero of Iglesia de los Hermanos, Una Luz en las Naciones (the Church of the Brethren in Spain). Terrero has led meetings and helped the group get organized for the anticipated gathering of the GCBC in Gijon, Spain, in April 2026.

The GCBC is working on the process of inducting new national churches into membership. In 2025, the Communauté des Églises des Frères au Burundi was invited to apply for membership, and that application is being processed.

Partnerships

The Global Mission office, led by executive Sharon Norton, partners with colleagues handling emergency disaster relief on the international side, particularly with the Church of the Brethren in Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and South Sudan. Staff also participate in the quarterly meetings of Brethren World Mission.

Haiti Medical Project is finding solid management through a working group that meets regularly to discuss various projects and workflow. That has led to improved funding accountability and transparency, a commitment to use funds as designated, and the training of Haitian bookkeepers in best practices.

The Global Mission office secured membership in Mission Flights International, a long-standing Christian group that flies personnel and supplies in and out of northern Haiti. With commercial flights not currently available, this membership allows people in the US to visit the Haiti Medical Project and the Church of the Brethren in Haiti. One trip to Haiti was taken by Haiti Medical Project volunteers.

Travel

Norton, who began her position just before the year began, took her first trip in February. The two-week trip to South Sudan with four other travelers, was an intense time of learning the context and history of the Church of the Brethren in Sudan and South Sudan and getting to know mission worker Athanasus Ungang, who has served sacrificially there for many years.

In May, Norton traveled with Roy Winter and Roger Schrock to Kampala, Uganda, to consult with Ungang, a peace worker, and community development people about developing a strategic plan to strengthen the church's presence in South Sudan at this precarious time politically and socially. The group decided it was time to build a headquarters that would position the Church of the Brethren to carry out church planting, relief, and community development, and to purchase land in Nesitu, just outside the capital of Juba. Funds were delivered for initial building-related costs.

While in Kampala, the group had the opportunity to meet the founder of the Church of the Brethren Uganda, Pastor Bwambale Sedrack, who came by bus from Kasese in western Uganda. The group also met his brother and

local pastor, Bwambale Hezekiah, and worshiped with the Shalom congregation just outside of Kampala. Later that month, when significant violence broke out in South Sudan, Pastor Sedrack and the Uganda church helped evacuate South Sudan leaders and their families.

Norton traveled to Nigeria in June with General Secretary David Steele to visit the Kwarhi headquarters of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and meet national leadership. The group enjoyed a lively worship service in Garkida to belatedly celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren there. They marveled at the tamarind tree, still standing, where the first worship service was held, and took a trip through time at the adjacent museum of the Garkida church. The group traveled to Yola and surrounding areas to learn about different ministries and income-generation projects.

In September, Norton visited Jos and Abuja to learn about the churches, ministries, and schools related to EYN. She also brought Bishop Expert Bukene, founder of the Communauté des Églises des Frères au Burundi (Community of the Churches of the Brethren in Burundi), to Abuja to learn more about him and the church in Burundi. It was a fruitful time of sharing and blessing.

Bukene recounted how someone gave him the Brethren Press book *A Dunker Guide to Brethren History*. After reading it, he decided to become Brethren and start the denomination in his country. He was particularly drawn to the church's emphasis on service in the name of Christ. The Methodists in Burundi ordained him to plant Church of the Brethren congregations and gave him the title of bishop so that he would be invited to official meetings in Burundi with other denominational leaders.

The Global Mission office sponsored a peace conference in Tanzania with the emerging Church of the Brethren there. Pastor Rhobinson Baiye hosted the event in Mwanza. The conference included presentations by Global Food Initiative manager Jenn Hosler and Nathan Hosler from the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, remarks from the Rev. Esther Muhagachi from the Tanzania General Council of Churches, and greetings from Pastor Bwambale Sedrack, Bishop Expert Bukene, and Bishop Amos Muhagachi of the Mennonite Church Tanzania.

Global Mission sponsored travel for a number of people: Bukene's visit to the emerging Church of the Brethren in Kenya, a visit by Pastor Roger Moreno Padilla

of Venezuela to Cuba to visit an emerging Church of the Brethren in that country, and travel by several Country Advisory Team members to visit the countries with whom they relate. In February, Dava Hensley, moderator of the US Annual Conference, and David Steele participated in the *asamblea* (annual conference) of the Iglesia de los Hermanos in the Dominican Republic.

Connections in the US

With assistance from office manager Carole Davenport, Global Mission hosted nine international guests at Annual Conference: Daniel Mbaya, president of EYN; Anastasia Bueno Beltre, pastor, Comunidad de Fe, Dominican Republic; Arely Cantor, pastor, La Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe, Honduras; Mario Cantor, pastor, La Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe, Honduras; Ashok and Upama Solanky, pastors, First District Church of the Brethren, India; Etienne Nsanzimana, president, Rwanda Church of the Brethren; Brigitte Zawadi, Bethany Seminary student from Rwanda; and Emerson Pierre, physician with Haiti Medical Project.

Global Mission led two equipping sessions at Annual Conference and hosted the annual Global Mission dinner, at which Norton spoke. In her address, “Leaves of the Tree for the Healing of the Nations,” based on Revelation 22, Norton outlined her vision of partnership with global churches. Formerly mission had been understood as “from the West to the rest,” she said, and now it is understood as mission “from everywhere to everyone,” emphasizing every nation’s participation in world mission.

Global Mission sends constituents a monthly prayer guide, compiled by Davenport. It is full of updates and prayer requests from global churches and is a resource for informing the US church of needs around the world.

Norton held a workshop on global churches at Northern Indiana District conference and spoke at three congregations.

Budget

The Global Mission program and grant budget for 2025 was \$892,760, funded partially by individuals and churches or organizations.

In addition, \$234,065 was donated for Haiti Medical Project and \$141,403 for other special projects. Some of these restricted donations were spent in 2025, with

the balance being used to fund future projects. Grants of \$561,781 were given to global partners, with the Haiti Church of the Brethren receiving over \$307,000, mostly for Haiti Medical Project, and the South Sudan mission project receiving over \$183,000, including staff and travel costs.

Education grants given to individuals from Nigeria, Venezuela, Rwanda, and Honduras totaled \$23,199.

Global Food Initiative

Much of 2025, the first full year for GFI manager Jennifer Hosler, was focused on strengthening partnerships with churches in the US and around the world. Visits to Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania provided insight, strengthened relationships with global Church of the Brethren church partners, and provided opportunities for learning and fellowship.

Hosler shared about GFI through communication resources such as Newslines, newsletters, and *Messenger*; at two equipping sessions at Annual Conference; and through international visits.

In April, Hosler traveled to the headquarters of EYN to represent the US Church of the Brethren at the *majalisa* (annual conference). She delivered greetings on behalf of US church leaders whose visas didn’t arrive in time, and preached the opening sermon on “Another Way of Living,” Jesus’ model of servant leadership. Her time in Nigeria included partnership meetings with EYN’s Integrated Community-Based Development Programme (ICBDP) and its agricultural staff.

Hosler traveled to Uganda with the denominational FaithX trip, which spent time in fellowship and service with the Church of the Brethren in Uganda. The six-member group visited congregations, toured church ministries, and participated in service projects at a church-run orphanage and elementary school (Radiant Star Orphanage and Junior School).

While there, Hosler and the group also visited GFI-related projects—a grinding mill and farmland. Other highlights included walking through the fields during the maize harvest, seeing dump trucks full of maize brought to the church-run orphanage and school, and eating beans grown on the church’s farmland.

In Rwanda, Hosler visited the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda and toured a church poultry farm that later in the year received funding. Designed to address local

food insecurity, the Kanembwe poultry farming initiative builds on years of experience with a pig farming and training operation that was funded earlier by GFI, as well as the church's dedicated ministry to the Batwa community. A second GFI grant in 2025 provided funds to extend a water pipe to a Batwa village, dramatically shortening the distance needed to carry water.

At the ECHO International Agriculture Conference in Fort Myers, Fla., Hosler networked with other organizations and individuals ministering in sustainable agriculture in the US and around the world.

The GFI review panel met four times, discussing how to strengthen projects and ensure project viability and sustainability. The panel's six members bring expertise in agriculture, fisheries, agricultural education, accounting, and church ministries.

The GFI Fund allocated eight international grants in seven countries. These grants supported global Church of the Brethren partners in Burundi, Ecuador, Honduras, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Venezuela. Projects included grain mills and storage containers for subsistence farmers, a clean water project, agricultural extension training, school garden and nutrition education, and support for church-based agricultural projects. Grants were also given to nongovernmental

organizations in Ecuador, Honduras, and South Africa. International allocations totaled \$95,286.

The year saw a significant increase in interest from congregations in the US, following a year of staff transition. A communication push via Newline and outreach with district offices prompted many congregations to apply for grants in 2025, following a year with no applications.

In the US, grants supported churches as they seek to be "Jesus in the neighborhood" through community gardens, food pantries, blessings boxes (or Little Free Pantries), community meals, and more. Small grants (\$2,500) supported food purchasing to supplement emergency food programs. Other grants built local capacity to grow food and to help community members learn to garden. Nine churches in four states received grants totaling \$35,078.

Each year, GFI expands the scope of its ministry through administrative grants to US-based organizations focused on advocacy, food justice, and food security. GFI made contributions to Bread for the World, Growing Hope Globally, and the National Farm Worker Ministry, with these allocations tallying \$8,000.

Total income to the GFI Fund in 2025 was \$278,136. The sum of all funds given as international, domestic, and administrative grants was \$138,364.

SERVICE MINISTRIES

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24 NIV).

At the heart of Service Ministries programs is a desire to "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2) and the recognition that "it is the Lord Christ [we] are serving" (Colossians 3:24). Colossians also speaks of an inheritance from the Lord. Many who participate in and support these ministries find at least part of that inheritance in the blessings they gain (often unexpectedly) when they serve others.

As Brethren Volunteer Service volunteer Lieketseng

(Keke) Phooko remarked, "I have learned that service is not just about giving; it's also about receiving. You may just find that in giving of yourself, you receive far more than you ever expected."

Leadership for Service Ministries is provided by executive director Roy Winter.

Brethren Disaster Ministries

The programs of Brethren Disaster Ministries are committed to supporting survivors of natural and human-caused disasters, working with and walking alongside them on their journey toward recovery. BDM brings hope and healing by mobilizing and working

with volunteers, partners, and supporters as they live out the call to serve others in the United States and around the world, often many years after a disaster has devastated a community.

In 2025, the call to serve took volunteers from the Rebuilding Program and Children's Disaster Services to 10 locations in the US. BDM's Global Response provided funding to partners serving people in need in 12 countries. Six staff members managed this ministry under the leadership of Roy Winter, including administrative, communications, and international projects support from office manager Sharon Franzén. Darlene Hylton provided database support.

The year provided opportunities to focus on the larger picture. A conference in May brought together staff and district disaster leaders to exchange ideas and experiences, learning from each other and encouraging communication and collaboration. Later in the year, a strategic planning process provided an invaluable opportunity to gather a broad range of information about current work and impact, and to envision how it can be improved and extended in order to serve more disaster survivors. The process was enabled by a \$50,000 Lilly Endowment planning grant, which included an invitation to apply for a larger three-year implementation grant.

Rebuilding Program

The Rebuilding Program supports long-term recovery from disasters by providing volunteer labor to repair and rebuild homes. The primary location was in Eastern Kentucky, repairing homes and building new houses on reclaimed mining land in a higher ground community to help families affected by flooding in 2022. This work was carried out in partnership with HOMES Inc., with additional support from the UPS Foundation through National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

Short-term responses brought relief to survivors of 2024's Hurricane Helene. These projects were two weeks in the spring in Spruce Pine, N.C., and two months in the fall in Johnson City, Tenn. Local construction work, supported with Emergency Disaster Fund funds, was carried out in York County, Pa., through a collaboration with Southern Pennsylvania District.

In December, a new construction assessment team was formed after the initial team training was held

in Allegany County, Md., in an area that experienced flooding in May. This team of five is now equipped to perform damage assessments on homes to determine the work and cost needed to complete repairs.

These responses were coordinated by program assistant Kim Gingerich and BDM director Jenn Dorsch-Messler (who concluded her service with BDM shortly after the end of the year). Crucial volunteer leadership consisted of 65 monthly disaster project leaders; long-term office managers Lynn Evans and Mary Mueller; long-term construction leaders Steve Keim, Rex Miller, and John Mueller; and BVS volunteer Lieketseng (Keke) Phooko. A disaster project leadership training took place in January with four participants and six trainers.

Serving in the love of Christ, 676 volunteers gave 40,376 hours. This labor served 42 families, providing a cost savings to the families and local partners of \$1,404,681.

Children's Disaster Services

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) responded to seven disasters in 2025, sending 61 volunteers to care for 759 children.

After wildfires devastated large areas of the Los Angeles region, multiple teams cared for 515 children over five weeks. CDS also responded to a terrorist attack in New Orleans, La.; catastrophic flooding in Texas; and tornadoes in Missouri. Local teams responded to a fire in Sonora, Calif., and flooding in Washington state.

Five entry-level and one project manager trainings were held, resulting in 73 newly trained potential volunteers and eight new project managers. A training manual update retreat was held in February.

Carolyn Neher is associate director, and support was provided by program assistant Michael Scalzi, who retired Dec. 31.

International Response

For many years, the Church of the Brethren international disaster response has been concentrated on support for global churches and partners in conflict areas. In 2025, nearly 16 percent of global EDF grants (\$163,350) were in response to natural

disasters. This included flooding and storm damage in Venezuela and Uganda.

When Hurricane Melissa brought extensive damage in the Caribbean in the fall, a unique opportunity emerged to support churches in Cuba with emergency relief through their relationship with the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela. An EDF grant also supported agricultural recovery programs of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti following the storm, in areas that received little international attention.

The majority of international grants in 2025 supported relief and recovery programs in response to conflict affecting Global Church of the Brethren Communion members in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria, and the Church of the Brethren Mission in South Sudan. Conflict in DRC between the national army and the rebel group M23 has created destruction, chaotic conditions, economic hardship, and food insecurity, which have spilled over to the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Burundi, with the latter receiving many refugees.

EDF grants have helped Brethren leadership in DRC and Burundi to serve church members and neighbors. In South Sudan, BDM has partnered with the Global Mission office on strategic planning, while concentrating on humanitarian relief to support families affected by flooding and by escalating conflict between the two major power groups in the government.

The Nigeria Crisis Response, a partnership between the Church of the Brethren and Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) since 2014, has supported relief and recovery programming in response to violence by the terrorist group Boko Haram, and, more recently, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

The program has provided food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, distribution of seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, education assistance for orphan children, trauma workshops, and home repairs for the most vulnerable.

Originally scheduled to be completed by 2023, the response was extended until the end of 2026 because violence has delayed the ability of some EYN members to fully resettle and become self-sufficient. Some are still living in one of four camps for internally displaced people, and others are slowly being resettled from camps in Cameroon.

The additional years of funding and support from the Church of the Brethren have strengthened EYN's capacity to minister to members who are navigating the challenges of rebuilding lives. The strong partnership between BDM and EYN will continue, but future responses will be based on specific disaster events rather than on a multiprogram and multiyear response such as the Nigeria Crisis Response. EDF funds of \$185,000 supported the crisis response in 2025.

Brethren Volunteer Service

Brethren Volunteer Service bears witness to a different way of living—one grounded in relationships, hope, and faithful service.

As volunteer Josiah Esch reflected, “Though the world certainly seems chaotic currently, even these few months in BVS have given me hope and shown me the sheer incredible number of people who are working toward making a more just world where everybody looks out for their community and everyone has enough.” This hope is sustained through relationships between volunteers, staff, placement partners, and communities.

Orientations were held at Camp Colorado in Sedalia, Colo., and at Camp Mardela in Denton, Md. At these gatherings, 19 volunteers (10 of them international volunteers) built community, shared stories, and attended sessions that prepared them for service.

Throughout the year, 43 volunteers served across eight states and three countries in nonprofit organizations committed to meaningful, community-centered change.

Building relationships is a fundamental aspect of what makes BVS unique. From the earliest stages of discernment through completion of volunteers' year of service, staff walk alongside volunteers and projects.

This relational work takes many forms. For example, volunteer coordinator Virginia Rendler supported BVSers through regular check-in calls; Europe coordinator Sara Cook cultivated strong partnerships and community connections for new and existing projects; and director Chelsea Skillen engaged with supporters and future volunteers at Church of the Brethren events. Through these relationships, BVS created space for experiences that foster growth and belonging.

Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX)

The 2025 FaithX theme “Living with Purpose”

invited participants to explore the unique ways that Christ calls them to serve and love others. Grounded in Ephesians 4:1-3, 165 youth and adults reflected on how their passions, their gifts, and the needs that they see in the world shape a call to live with intention and create positive change.

Ten week-long trips were held in the US and one in Uganda. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 70 and came from 26 Church of the Brethren congregations, with 36 percent being first-time attendees.

“The knowledge that these trips bring is astounding,” said one youth. “A lot of it is getting to know what goes into serving people and understanding what people are going through. It is very interesting and eye-opening.”

Another remarked, “I think FaithX was something that I needed to get out of the house. It made me realize that sometimes you just have to help out and be nice to others and care about others before yourself.”

The program was organized by Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred, coordinator of short term service, and Rachel Johnson, a BVS volunteer serving as assistant FaithX coordinator.

Material Resources

In 2025, the Material Resources program marked 81 years of leading the way in collecting,

processing, and shipping blankets, clothing, medical supplies, medicines, and goods for humanitarian assistance. The program emerged out of the processing of relief goods in 1944 on the campus that became the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Based on an October 2023 decision of the Mission and Ministry Board, the Material Resources program ended at the close of 2025. Committed staff kept the ministry going through the time to close down operations and clear out inventory.

During the year, they facilitated shipments totaling 902 tons of donated hospital supplies, quilts, health kits, school kits, baby kits, cleanup kits, and other supplies valued at over \$15.5 million. The program also received more than 318,500 pounds of donations on behalf of Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service, which were processed and shipped out.

Loretta Wolf directed the program, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operations, respectively. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Melissa Fritz, and Brenda Giles packed items for shipping. Ed Palsgrove drove the commercial trucks to deliver shipments and pick up donations. Medical supplies were sorted and prepared for shipment by Sam Carter. These employees’ roles ended in 2025, with most having served for decades with the Church of the Brethren.

By the end of December, the remaining inventory had been shipped to locations needing aid or sent to other warehouses of the program partners. The equipment and vehicles were sold or donated to other organizations by mid-January 2026, officially bringing the program to a close.

DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION

Discipleship and Leadership Formation sponsored events for different age levels, hosted sessions on topics such as intercultural competence, and provided congregations with a variety of resources.

Executive director Nate Polzin revised and expanded his evangelism curriculum, *For My Neighbor's Good*, based on suggestions from users.

The L.E.A.D. planning team offered a series of webinars to continue momentum between conferences. Keynote speaker Dennis Edwards was featured in the first webinar, and Paul Munday was interviewed by Brian Messler in the second.

New guidelines for the Health Care Education Scholarship (formerly the Nursing Scholarship) were approved by the Mission and Ministry Board, expanding access to students beyond nursing. Seven Brethren received scholarships.

Discipleship and Leadership Formation compiled a list of coaches, consultants and other experts available to help Brethren pastors, congregations, and districts. Funds are available to provide ministers and congregations with coaching or consulting as they work on ministry priorities, strategic planning, goal-setting, or leadership challenges.

Stan Dueck, director of Organizational Leadership, retired in July. Prior to concluding his service, he worked with a district visioning committee, coached pastors and leaders, and . arranged a partnership with We Rise International, a group that trains congregational leaders to better serve those with mental health struggles.

In June, program assistant Randi Rowan retired and Mishael Nouveau, office manager for the Ministry Office, resigned. New employees are Jazmín Góngora, administrative assistant, and Bethany Kasten, office assistant.

Discipleship and Identity

National Older Adult Conference, coordinated by Christy Waltersdorff and a volunteer planning team,

brought together 502 Brethren (plus online participants) for worship, presentations, service projects, and insight sessions. The theme “Alive in the Spirit,” based on Romans 5:13, shaped the messages of preachers Rebecca Dali, Greg Davidson Laszakovits, Samuel Sarpiya, Audri Svay, and Herb Smith; keynote speakers Cole Arthur Riley and Dominique Gilliard; and returning artistic favorites Ken Medema and Ted Swartz.

With a new title of director of Discipleship and Identity, Josh Brockway increased emphasis on producing videos for churches to use in Sunday school classes and small groups. The first was “Learning to Wash Feet,” available at www.brethren.org.

Brockway led insight sessions and coordinated the attendance of several Brethren at Christian Community Development Association’s annual conference in Grand Rapids, Mich. Through denominational membership, Church of the Brethren congregations have access to tools to help churches better engage their community. Brockway preached and presented in several congregations and led sessions at district conferences.

Intercultural Ministries

Intercultural Ministries carried out 16 intercultural and educational gatherings in collaboration with districts, congregations, agencies, and ministry partners across the Church of the Brethren. These initiatives engaged approximately 500 participants representing diverse cultural, linguistic, generational, and theological backgrounds. The languages represented were English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

Directed by Founa Badet and grounded in the gospel call to love God and one’s neighbor, Intercultural Ministries focuses on strengthening the church’s capacity to live as the family of Christ across differences. The ministry emphasized intercultural competence, discipleship, immigration justice, antiracism, leadership formation, and holistic well-being, equipping faith leaders and congregations to respond faithfully to the

realities of a diverse and changing world.

Intercultural Ministries was deeply engaged in supporting immigrant communities and equipping the church for faithful advocacy. Through multilingual education, public witness, and collaboration with justice-focused partners, ICM affirmed the dignity and worth of all people.

ICM worked alongside On Earth Peace and four districts—Atlantic Northeast, Atlantic Southeast, Pacific Southwest, and Virginia—to support the Deportation Defense Response program. This collaboration has been one of the best opportunities to serve the denomination and make a significant difference in serving Brethren during this difficult time.

Several events focused on developing intercultural awareness, humility, and skill within the church. These gatherings provided participants with theological grounding and practical tools to engage across cultures with respect and understanding. These efforts strengthened congregational awareness, empowered immigrant families, and fostered compassionate and informed responses to the challenges of immigration.

ICM facilitated sessions on discipleship and dismantling racism within church and community contexts. These gatherings emphasized education, spiritual formation, and faith in action. Notable sessions included Spanish-language equipping in the discipling church, finding creative ways to dismantle racism, and a Ventures course at McPherson College.

Large-scale gatherings created space for celebration, storytelling, and shared witness across cultural lines. These events strengthened relational bonds and affirmed the joy of intercultural community within the denomination. Key events included an intercultural gathering in Atlantic Northeast District, National Junior High Conference, and the Intercultural Luncheon at Annual Conference. Through worship, testimony, and mutual learning, participants experienced the church as a diverse yet unified body in Christ.

Recognizing the increasing demands on faith leaders, Intercultural Ministries prioritized holistic care and sustainability in ministry. A session at the end of the year focused on faith leaders' mental health around the holidays.

Ministry Office

The Ministry Office oversees the process of ministerial credentialing renewal for all ordained and commissioned ministers every five years. Required ministerial ethics sessions were held in the 23 districts during 2025, with districts reporting renewal data toward the end of the year.

Director Nancy Sollenberger Heishman guided district search teams in Middle Pennsylvania, Southern Pennsylvania, and Shenandoah districts.

As part of its consideration of the 2002 paper on Guidelines for Sabbath Rest, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory committee, launched a survey in three languages to ascertain ministers' experiences and perspectives on sabbath renewal. The committee also produced a brief video featuring committee member Angela Finet, author of the new Covenant Bible Study *Sabbath: God's Call to Peace*. The committee's recommended cost of living increase of 2.6 percent for 2026 was approved by the 2025 Annual Conference.

The Ministry Advisory Council is reviewing the 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper by examining the interaction between current best practices within districts and the paper's expectations for calling, training, and credentialing. Working with the Council of District Executives, the Ministry Advisory Council recommended two adjustments for consideration by the 2026 Annual Conference.

Statistical information regarding the ministerial body that is normally provided in this report was unavailable due to an interruption in the collection of data as a result of a breach of the organization's data.

Funds to support ministers seeking advanced ministerial training and continuing education were disbursed through Leadership, Development, and Training grants of \$7,782.

The Ministry Assistance Fund provided financial support of \$6,961 for five ministers experiencing unexpected emergency expenses. Donations to the fund included approximately \$3,517 from individuals and congregations and \$3,500 from the Robert C. Wenger Trust.

The Ministry Office supported Bethany Theological Seminary students with a scholarship grant of \$7,500.

The Ministers' Association pre-Annual Conference continuing education event featured Jeanne Davies, executive director of the Anabaptist Disabilities Network, speaking on "A Place for Every Body: Disability, Accessibility, and the Church."

The grant-sponsored program Part-time Pastor; Full-time Church, which began serving multi-vocational ministers in 2019, transitioned to a smaller sustainability budget. Ryan Braught was hired as an independent contractor. Former program manager Richard Wehrle shifted to managing a new Rural and Small Town Churches Initiative, in partnership with Ashland Seminary.

The Part-time Pastor; Full-time Church program supported ministers and districts with grants totaling nearly \$40,000. The program's cohorts for ministers offer continuing education and peer support, grants for sabbath renewal, leadership for district conference events, and mentoring and coaching relationships with one of the five circuit riders, who are able to serve in the three languages of Brethren ministers.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary, equips leaders through programs in English and Spanish and oversees continuing education for the denomination.

In 2025, Training in Ministry (TRIM) engaged 18 students. The congregationally based training program, Education for a Shared Ministry, and its Spanish-language counterpart involved eight congregations, with a combined 11 ministry students. Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano de la Iglesia de los Hermanos (SeBAH-COB), which the academy offers in partnership with Hispanic Ministries for Mennonite Church USA, supports 16 students.

Additionally, there are six Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) that serve 11 districts. ACTS are district-based programs with oversight from the Brethren Academy. ACTS leadership meets regularly for sharing ideas and mutual support.

As of December, nine international students were enrolled in SeBAH-COB, five from Venezuela and four from Honduras. Three have completed coursework and are fulfilling requirements for supervised ministry. The Church of the Brethren of Venezuela (ASIGLEH) and the Brethren in Honduras (VAG, Viviendo en Amor y Fe) have worked with the academy to adapt SeBAH-COB to their settings.

As part of Bethany Theological Seminary's initiative

Building Bridges Across Ideological Divides, the academy has offered a series of TRIM-level courses to help clergy recognize and meaningfully address division in their congregations and communities.

The academy hosted two Strength for the Journey cohorts and the Clergy-Tax Seminar.

Janet Ober Lambert is director of the Brethren Academy, and Arlyn Morales is coordinator for Spanish-language programs. Tabitha Rudy became coordinator for English-language programs, succeeding Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey.

Youth and Young Adult Ministries

In preparation for National Youth Conference in 2026, a first-ever NYC preview event was held in October to introduce youth advisors to the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. The three-day gathering was led by Becky Ullom Naugle, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, and NYC volunteer coordinators Rachel Johnson and Anna Schweitzer. The 28 participants from 14 districts toured the campus, met advisors from across the country, and learned from Charles Hunt of the Fuller Youth Institute.

Christian Citizenship Seminar was held in April in Washington, D.C. Gathered around the theme, "Faith for Change," based on Matthew 25:31-46, 16 youth and 8 adults explored how faith can be lived out publicly.

Young Adult Conference, held in May at Camp Brethren Woods, focused on "Hope: Roots and Branches," based on Jeremiah 17-7-8. Participants—12 of whom were first-timers—came from 25 congregations in 10 states. Twenty-one were under the age of 30, and 17 were over.

National Junior High Conference, held in June at Juniata College, brought together 72 youth and 56 adults from 23 districts across 9 states. The youngest participant was 11, and the oldest was 72. The theme, "Let Your Gentleness Be Known," came from Philippians 4:5.

Naugle makes regular video updates for youth advisors. In September, her update was the most viewed video on the Church of the Brethren YouTube channel.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Organizational Resources supports all denominational staff and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. The department includes the Brethren Historical Library and Archives, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Information Technology. Shawn Flory Replogle is 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. The archives are available to districts, congregations, and individual members for research, historical study and donating items to the collection.

Keith Call began as director in June. Since then, he has catalogued 45 new titles for the non-circulating library, and accessioned 51 unique items, including books, photographs, artifacts and administrative records.

Call has welcomed 45 onsite visitors and researchers, guided tours of the archives for staff and guests, and answered approximately 200 emailed question and 90 phone calls. BHLA has retrieved material from a donor in Oak Park, and visited a closing church in Mount Morris, Ill. Staff have processed six collections and are arranging three large donations for processing.

In November, Call hosted a meeting of the Brethren Historical Committee. This committee stimulates interest and research in Brethren history, encourages study of Brethren history by students and others, and serves an advisory group to the archives. The committee also nominates members of the Germantown Trust, for approval of the Mission and Ministry Board.

Buildings and Grounds

Buildings and Grounds staff maintain the physical spaces where employees carry out many of the ministries of the church. Salvador Campero directs the work at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., assisted by Lee Marsh until his retirement in May. Francie Coale directs the work at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., assisted by Felix Hill.

The General Offices provide office space for staff of the Church of the Brethren and Eder Financial and a warehouse used by Brethren Press for inventory and shipping. Until Oct. 31, the warehouse was also a drop-off location for Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief donations. Living Gospel Church of God in Christ has rented space in the building for over 25 years.

Major projects included repair of the boiler, removal of asbestos from 300 feet of basement piping in order to fix a leak, repair of circuit breakers and time-sensitive lighting following a heavy wind and electrical storm, and repair of a leaking valve underneath the parking lot.

At the Brethren Service Center, there are hopes of finding a new tenant after closure of the Material Resources program, and staff are preparing the warehouse for that possibility. SERRV continues to use one-third of the warehouse as its main distribution center. The center also has offices for several denominational ministries.

The Church of the Brethren owns two other properties. One is Germantown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, where the Germantown Trust maintains the property and helps interpret the history of the “mother church” of the Schwarzenau Brethren groups. The property includes the cemetery that contains the grave of Alexander Mack Sr. and other early Brethren leaders, as well as the 1770 meetinghouse.

The second is in Lybrook, N.M., where the Church of the Brethren worked with Lybrook Community Ministries until it ceased to exist in August. Other partners are being sought to maintain the facilities of a ministry that has been there since 1955. Community outreach includes distribution of clean water and burials in the Lybrook cemetery.

Finance

The Finance team oversees the Church of the Brethren's financial health and liability concerns. The 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 our independent auditors can provide regarding the financial health of the organization.

Ed Woolf, director of finance and treasurer, manages estate giving, split-interest gifts, pastors' housing fund accounts, corporate credit card accounts, and 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.

Other members of the team are Lynn Phelan, accounts payable specialist; Barb Watt, financial operations specialist and payroll manager; and Nancy Watts, donation and accounts receivable specialist.

Due to the December 2024 ransomware attack, the Finance team had to manually rebuild the 2024 financials while balancing their time to keep up with the 2025 financials. The rebuild was completed in September, and the Church of the Brethren received a clean opinion from the auditors on the 2024 financial statements. In early 2026, the Finance team was working to complete the 2025 financials.

Information Technology

The Information Technology team provides computer, telephone, internet, and audiovisual support to keep denominational staff connected and communicating effectively. The team's work includes internet access and security, network management, computer hardware and software, database, phone system, keycard system, support for online registration, and technological support for onsite meetings.

Francie Coale is the director, Joshua Rowan is information technology specialist, and Lauren Bukszar is database specialist.

While the December 2024 ransomware attack affected all employees, the IT team was at the epicenter of the organization's efforts to respond, repair, replace and restore critical networks and staff files.

Financial results

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, Conference Office and Material Resources, are considered self-funding because they cover their expenses with income from fees.

Combined giving to Core Ministries from congregations and individuals totaled \$2 million. This is \$65,000 below budget and \$109,000 behind 2024. Congregational giving was \$1.35 million, a decrease of \$117,000, and individual giving was \$694,000, an increase of \$8,000 from last year. With a transfer of \$125,000 in designated funds, total income to Core Ministries ended the year \$97,000 above budget.

Director-level expenses finished the year at \$5.5 million, which was \$214,000 above budget, primarily due to rising costs, inflation, and expenses related to the ransomware attack. As a result of higher expenses, Core Ministries ended the year with a net deficit of \$138,000. This lowered the Core Ministries' net asset balance to just under \$2 million.

Material Resources charges fees for its services, including shipping disaster relief materials for Brethren Disaster Ministries and other organizations. The program closed at the end of 2025 and Material Resources finished the year with a \$225,000 deficit. This expense increased the deficit balance of the program's net assets to \$496,000.

The Conference Office budget, self-funded through registration fees, sustained a deficit of \$25,000 in 2025. This expense lowered the Conference Office net asset balance to \$374,000.

Donations to the Emergency Disaster Fund totaled \$2.6 million, an increase of \$766,000 from last year. Giving to the Global Food Initiative Fund totaled \$278,000, an increase of \$19,000.

Investments totaled \$37.2 million at the end of 2025, up \$1 million from 2024. The investment gain in 2025 helped total net assets increase \$1.4 million, resulting in a year-end balance of \$44.4 million.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2025 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren, Inc., audit report published in June 2026.]

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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. Shannon McNeil Smith is executive administrative assistant of the General Secretary's Office.

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., in the spring and fall; prior to Annual Conference in Greensboro, N.C.; and virtually in November. Meetings included reports on finances, ministry areas, committees, and denominational agencies, along with time spent in worship, prayer, training, and fellowship.

The Board's Strategic Plan supports the denominational vision to be "Jesus in the neighborhood." Mid-term and short-term goals guide progress toward that vision. The final report of a committee working on "Foreground Vision 6: Each in Our Own Language (Plan for Recognizing Injustice)" was approved in July. The work has been passed on to a newly created group, the Revelation 7:9 Committee.

At the end of the year, the church completed closure of the Material Resources program, a legacy program of the Church of the Brethren based at the Brethren Service Center. The decision to close the program was made in 2023.

Board statements and resolutions issued this year addressed concerns about immigration, weapons transfers, and gun violence.

- A statement and call to prayer was issued out of concern for "immigrant, migrant, refugee

church members, who may be under threat of deportation following presidential executive orders. These renewed threats of deportation are already affecting the lives of many in the denomination's congregations."

- A resolution on weapons transfers called on the Church of the Brethren to examine and respond to the impacts of the arms industry and reiterated the denomination's long history of opposition to war and militarization. The resolution said it was important to once again "affirm the Church of the Brethren's commitment to peace as God's will and the call of Christ, and in that context to recognize the transfer of US weapons as a form of participation in war." This resolution is being sent to the 2026 Annual Conference for adoption.
- A statement "Renewing the Call to Prevent Gun Violence" reaffirmed the 2018 statement "Lukewarm No More" and called the Church of the Brethren to "recommit its members to work to change this devastating pattern."

The Board merged the Audit and Investment Committee and the Sustainability Committee, forming a Finance and Sustainability Committee.

The Board authorized appointment of a committee to work on the assignment from the 2025 Annual Conference as recommended by the "Breaking Down Barriers" study committee. In October, the Board extended David Steele's contract by two years, until August 2028. In November, the Board approved a 2026 Core Ministries budget of \$5.45 million, with a net deficit of \$260.

Approval of \$960,000 in Emergency Disaster Fund grants included \$185,000 for the Nigeria Crisis Response and \$259,600 to Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in Democratic Republic of Congo) to support a six-month emergency humanitarian aid program for families affected by war in the eastern part of the country. The Executive Committee approved

an additional \$53,000 in grants for international and domestic responses.

The elected membership of the Mission and Ministry Board consists of 10 women and seven men. One member is Japanese American, one is white and Hispanic/Latinx, one is Dominican, three are African American, and 12 are white.

Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C., represents the Church of the Brethren in coalitions, working groups, and at related events based on denominational policy. The office equips church members to engage in policy issues and supports the broader ecumenical and interfaith community in D.C. in addressing areas of concern to people of faith.

The office convened and contributed to nine policy working groups in Washington, including groups focused on Nigeria, US-Asia policy, immigration, environmental concerns, and the US weapons trade. Staff publicly endorsed 22 letters to Congress and the presidential administration and sent out five action alerts to engage members of the Church of the Brethren. The office produced writing and policy analysis for *Messenger* and other audiences.

Marcia Sowles joined the office in January as a legal advisor. She assisted the denomination in joining as a plaintiff in *Mennonite Church USA v. DHS* relating to the Department of Homeland Security's rescission of a policy limiting immigration enforcement at sensitive sites including churches. Sowles also engaged in interfaith policy advocacy on immigration issues.

At the end of January, Cornelius Raff completed a term with the office through Brethren Volunteer Service. Hannah Nelson continued as BVS associate, focusing on US weapons transfers, US-Asia policy, and creation care. Brigitte Zawadi, a student at Bethany Seminary, joined the office as an intern. Volunteer Mary Abraham represented the office at Creation Justice Ministries board meetings in May.

The office worked with Doris Abdullah, the Church of the Brethren representative to the United Nations, to

assess current and future UN engagement.

Director Nathan Hosler convened the Nigeria Working Group, the Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare, and the Asia Policy Working Group, and represented the denomination on the boards of National Farm Worker Ministry, Heifer International, Churches for Middle East Peace, and the National Council of Churches.

In August, Hosler visited the emerging Church of the Brethren in Tanzania and co-led workshops at a peace conference with Jennifer Hosler.

The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy convened the Brethren Creation Care Network and produced four issues of the newsletter "Rooted," sharing creation care information and ideas with congregations and members.

The Death Row Support Project continued with a dispersed network of volunteers.

In partnership with Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the office hosted Christian Citizenship Seminar with the theme "Faith for Change." Youth learned practical ways to engage on issues they are passionate about and met with their elected officials.

The office collaborated with Intercultural Ministries to bring information and workshops on immigration issues and advocacy to Annual Conference in July and National Older Adult Conference in September.

Annual Conference

The author of Hebrews encourages the early church to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up on meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV). Taking this call to heart, members of the Church of the Brethren met in Greensboro, N.C., July 2-6, for the 238th recorded Annual Conference.

"Faith Working Through Love," the theme chosen by moderator Dava Hensley, rooted in Galatians 5:6b, amplified this call. Together, Brethren built and renewed relationships, attended to business, raised voices in song, joined hearts in prayer, and worshiped God, as they explored this theme guided by the moderator, who led with grace, humility, and humor.

The Conference included equipping sessions, Bible studies on the Conference theme, programing for children and youth, a trip to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, a vigil honoring victims of gun violence, and a concert from the Rockingham Male Chorus. New this year was an opening dinner designed to help attendees get acquainted.

The 1,342 registrants included 409 delegates, 881 non-delegates, and 52 non-delegates participating virtually. Virtual registrants could observe business sessions, the concert, and selected equipping sessions. Worship was livestreamed at no charge.

Conferencegoers donated 116 units of blood to the local blood bank. They also supported the Witness to the Host City Project—Backpack Beginnings—contributing \$16,967 and several pallets of backpacks, school supplies, and other goods to benefit children and their families in and around Greensboro.

Participants gave \$35,183 through offerings to support Annual Conference and core denominational ministries. A silent auction raised an additional \$13,790 to support Annual Conference and efforts to expand accessibility.

Onsite coordinators were Dewey and Melissa Williard from Virgina District, who were serving in this capacity for the fifth time. Other volunteers assisted in tasks as varied as registration, ushering, staffing the onsite office, age-group activities, first aid, Spanish and Haitian Creole translation, and Bible study leadership.

Annual Conference continues to experience financial challenges. Attendance has been affected by the financial struggles of many smaller congregations, as well as conflict and division in the church. The year ended with a small deficit that can be absorbed by the Annual Conference contingency fund. Staff collaborate with various committees to address concerns about the future of Annual Conference.

In addition to planning the annual meeting itself, Annual Conference director Rhonda Pittman Gingrich and Conference assistant Debbie Noffsinger provided administrative support for the Annual Conference officers, Program and Arrangements Committee and Worship Committee, Standing Committee and its subcommittees, Nominating Committee, Leadership Team, the Annual Conference study committees that completed their work at the 2025 Annual Conference,

and the newly called Review and Evaluation Committee.

Brethren Press

Brethren Press published *Between You and Me*, a volume of poetry written by Audri Svay. Since the publishing house publishes little poetry, this put her in a small and distinctive group of poets published by the Church of the Brethren—including William Stafford, Julia Esquivel, Kenneth I. Morse, and Ken Gible.

Brethren Press devotionals were *Take Up Your Cross*, by Tim Harvey (for Lent), and *Word Among Us*, by John Fillmore (for Advent). New titles in the Covenant Bible Studies series were *Sabbath: God's Call to Peace*, by Angela Finet, and *Martha and Mary: Friends of Jesus*, by Frank Ramirez. Through a collaboration with Pacific Southwest District, *Samuel: Leader for a Different Tomorrow*, by Gene Roop, was published in Spanish.

The four quarters of *A Guide for Biblical Studies* were written by Herb Smith, Mary Jessup, Calvin Park, and John David Bowman. Brethren Press published four quarters of the Living Word Bulletin Series. Editorial oversight for these publications is provided by managing editor Heidi Gross.

The Shine Everywhere project, a Lilly Endowment-funded effort of Brethren Press and MennoMedia, surveyed congregations and families to learn more about what those groups need most in order to help families grow faith in their children. Shine Everywhere also led groups that met together to dig deeper and tested new resources with them. Learnings gained through the project are informing the development of each quarter of the Shine curriculum, and there is increased emphasis on at-home resources.

The Shine partnership developed a new youth curriculum, *Reach*, that was field-tested in several congregations in the fall and then rolled out to all customers at the end of the year.

On behalf of the Shine partnership, Brethren Press handles order fulfillment for customers outside the original audiences of the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites. Project customers come from dozens of other denominations.

Warehousing, shipping, and customer service are

overseen by Sarah Radcliff, who began in November as manager of Brethren Press operations. She is assisted by Karen Warner, half-time customer service specialist, and Dan McFadden, who does shipping on a part-time basis. Jeff Lennard retired in March as director of marketing and sales.

Wendy McFadden is publisher of Brethren Press and executive director of Communications, and Karen Stocking is production and finance assistant for both areas.

Communications

With the July/August issue, *Messenger* magazine launched a year of observing its 175th anniversary. *The Gospel Visitor*, one of the several publications that were part of the current magazine's lineage, published its first issue in April 1851.

In 2025, the magazine took readers to Honduras, Haiti, South Sudan, and other places around the world; covered major denominational events; published various perspectives on the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism; explored timely questions such as artificial intelligence and how to share church buildings; and published a collection of reader-submitted writings on hope.

The magazine received three awards from the Associated Church Press for material published the previous year: an award of excellence for “The Holy Family,” art by Paul Grout; award of merit for “Healthy Planet, Healthy People,” by William L. Miller; and honorable mention for “What Do We Spend on War?” by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford.

Messenger is produced by the Communication team. Diane Stroyeck is half-time subscriptions specialist.

News Services communicates up-to-date news and information about the Church of the Brethren, covering not only denominational ministries but also congregations, districts, Annual Conference agencies, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion, ecumenical partnerships, and more.

The main vehicles for this communication are Newline, the church's free email news service; the news section of the Church of the Brethren website www.brethren.org; the Newline Digest pages of *Messenger*

magazine; and social media.

News Services director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford was aided by a cadre of skilled volunteer writers and photographers and many others on staff and across the church who contributed articles, stories, photos, and news tips. In-depth coverage was provided for Annual Conference, National Older Adult Conference, the Clergywomen's Retreat, and meetings of the Mission and Ministry Board.

Website producer Jan Fischer Bachman and website developer Russ Otto supported the work of the church through web page updates, bulk email messages, online forms and surveys, online photo storage and sharing, online video, social media posts, and music playlists.

In 2025, Otto developed a new technology setup for conferences, making it much faster to process and upload thousands of photos.

The www.brethren.org website had 673,782 views over the year, up 5 percent from 2024.

Over one million email messages went out during the year. The Church of the Brethren has around 25,000 email subscribers; subscribers can choose which messages to get by going to www.brethren.org/intouch.

This year the web team added a translation widget so the website can be read in Spanish, Haitian Creole, French, Portuguese, and Arabic. To translate the site, users find the small word “English” at bottom right and click to choose a different language.

The Communication team produced annual reporting in four formats—the full written report, a magazine-style version, an exhibit at Annual Conference, and a video that premiered at Annual Conference. Titled *Take Heart*, the 2025 video highlighted three powerful stories representing Global Mission, Brethren Disaster Ministries, and Intercultural Ministries.

Human Resources

The Human Resources office, staffed by manager Shamek Cardona, oversees recruitment and hiring processes, onboarding and training, benefits administration, employee relations, and the organization's employment policies and services, while ensuring legal compliance.

Employees hired in 2025 were Keith Call, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives; Jazmín Góngora, administrative assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; Jon Lucas Keller, Mission Advancement advocate; Bethany Kasten, office assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; and Sarah Radcliff, manager of Brethren Press operations.

A number of people ended employment because of the closure of the Material Resources program: Melissa Fritz, packer; Sam Carter, sorter and packer of medical supplies; Richard Best, baler; Deborah Black, donation pickup assistant; John Black, truck driver; David Davis, driver and warehouse assistant; Sara Wanionek, sorter and packer of medical supplies; Brenda Giles, packer and sorter; Wesley Senseney, forklift operator and warehouse coordinator; Loretta Wolf, director; Glenna Thompson, office assistant; Harold Kline, truck driver; Jeffrey McKee, donation pickup assistant; Brenda Palsgrove, warehouse assistant; and Kevin Rice, donation pickup assistant.

Other departures in 2025 were Jaqueline Claire Flowers, director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives; Lee Marsh, Building and Grounds assistant at the General Offices; Randi Rowan, program assistant for Discipleship and Leadership Formation; Jim Miner, Yearbook specialist; Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales for Brethren Press; Stan Dueck, director of Organizational Leadership; Michael Scalzi, program assistant for Children's Disaster Services.

Total regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs: 49. As requested by Annual Conference, the report of ethnic/racial composition of these employees is the following: Asian-1; Black or African American-2; Hispanic or Latino-3; White-43.

The organization also has contract, shared, and casual employees, as well as program volunteers.

Mission Advancement

Mission Advancement staff educate and equip individuals and congregations about the needs of the organization and how their financial gifts are used to carry out the ministries of the church. The team builds relationships through visits, interpretation, and education, and provides ways for donors to support those ministries.

Mission Advancement welcomed a new advocate, Lucas Keller. He and Nancy McCrickard communicated regularly with donors, focusing on “stewarding relationships” as a means of keeping donors educated and informed about the work of the denomination in the United States and internationally.

Matt DeBall, Mission Advancement communication coordinator, managed quarterly congregational offerings, eBrethren email communication, and monthly direct letters. He represented the Church of the Brethren on the ecumenical One Great Hour of Sharing committee, where he was convener.

Traci Rabenstein, executive director, visited with congregation, pastors, and lay leaders to provide insight into the work of the denomination. She also worked with data management for the organization.

The team hosted the annual Faith Forward Donor Circle dinner at Annual Conference to 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.

Early in the year, the Yearbook was moved into Mission Advancement. With the organization's data breach in December 2024 and Yearbook specialist Jim Miner's retirement the next June, the Yearbook was not able to be produced in 2025.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the people named in this report, there are thousands of others across the church who animate the programs described here. The Mission and Ministry Board and its staff are deeply grateful for the many people who bring these ministries to life—giving time and money and participating with vigor.

We offer this report in that spirit of vitality. There are different gifts, but we belong to each other. It is together that we are one body in Christ.

Kathy Mack, Chair

David Steele, General Secretary



Church of the Brethren