

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Guidelines and Expectations for Annual Conference Exhibits

Purpose for the Exhibit Area

Consistent with the mission of Annual Conference, the purpose of the exhibit hall is to unite, strengthen, and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus as innovative, adaptable, and fearless disciples and embody Jesus in the Neighborhood. It is a place to become informed about denominational ministries and resources to inspire and empower congregational and individual ministry.

As Brethren and people of God, we come together at Annual Conference as those who affirm that Christ is Lord of all our lives and His spirit and love guide us in our relationships and in our Christian ministry. We also acknowledge that we are called to “encourage one another and build one another up” in faith and service for Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:11). To that end we maintain the Exhibit Area at our Annual Conferences, and we call on exhibitors to observe this high purpose in their design and presentation of exhibits and in their relationship to both fellow exhibitors and Conference attendees.

Guiding Principles for Exhibits

We come together as a Christian community — that part of Christ’s Body called *The Church of the Brethren* — which calls us to remember and honor the principles that unite us in a common kinship to our Lord and Savior and to each other.

Therefore, we shall use the following principles to guide the intention and activity of the Exhibit Area.

1. The exhibits shall give witness to our denominational commitment to continuing the work of Jesus by nurturing discipleship and becoming Jesus in the neighborhood
2. The exhibits shall promote ministries of the Church of the Brethren.
3. The exhibit area shall be dedicated to encouraging connections between and among exhibitors and Conference attendees that build community.
4. The exhibits shall provide a safe environment in which the Christian principles of hospitality, fellowship, and personal respect are honored.
5. The exhibit area is a Conference space in which we honor our fellowship in Christ, including our respect for the faith of one another even if there are differences in interpretation. The granting of exhibit space to a Brethren-related group or agency does not mean that the Program and Arrangements Committee of Annual Conference sanctions in whole the positions and ministries of the group, but rather wishes to apply the mission and vision of Annual Conference and provide an arena for interaction among all Brethren who are sincerely seeking to follow Christ.

Criteria for Granting Space

The Program and Arrangements Committee (P&AC) is charged with the responsibility to plan and organize the activities of Annual Conference. Included in its functions is the granting of exhibit space for the Conference exhibit hall. The available space varies as Conference moves to a different location each year. The committee's decisions are also guided by the traditional intent to use the exhibit space to further the work and fellowship of the Church of the Brethren and its congregations. The P&AC has developed the following criteria for the granting of exhibit space.

1. Organizations or groups granted space in the exhibit hall shall have a commitment to follow Jesus.
2. Annual Conference agencies and their ministries shall be given priority for exhibit space.
3. Remaining space may be granted to groups that 1) do not duplicate the services or programs provided by Annual Conference agencies and ministries and 2) equip individuals and congregations to lead a life of faithful discipleship and embody Jesus in their neighborhoods, in this priority:
 - a. Organizations comprised of Church of the Brethren individuals who are addressing church concerns or ministering to Church of the Brethren people.
 - b. Organizations that have a historical connection with the Church of the Brethren, or that have denominational program relationships, or that reflect a particular interest for the denomination.
 - c. Organizations with no connection to the Church of the Brethren, but whose mission aligns with Church of the Brethren values.
4. The ministry and mission of all exhibitors shall honor the New Testament and Annual Conference statements and decisions.

Expectations of Exhibitors

The Annual Conference exhibit area is considered to be a "safe environment" in which Conference attendees and their families can learn of Church of the Brethren resources and services available for their individual and congregational ministries in the name of Christ. In helping to facilitate that objective, exhibitors shall honor the following expectations.

1. Respect for fellow exhibitors and exhibits shall be exercised at all times.
2. Annual Conference statements and decisions shall be respected and followed.
3. Materials or actions of exhibitors should support the unity and vitality of the denomination and avoid divisiveness and fragmentation. No exhibit shall invite or encourage members of the Church of the Brethren to depart from the denomination.
4. Sales and commercial displays at any exhibit must have the permission of the Program and Arrangements Committee.

5. Collecting of monetary donations in the exhibit hall is discouraged.
6. Lobbying for Annual Conference to adopt a particular action is inappropriate in an exhibit presentation.
7. For the safety of Conference-goers and out of courtesy to other exhibitors, anyone who wishes to have special programs or entertainment in the exhibit hall should receive approval from the P&AC before Conference begins.
8. In order to keep a normal “traffic flow” through the exhibit area we ask that any program or entertainment interests on the part of exhibitors be limited to periods of not more than five minutes with a minimum of 30 minute intervals between such periods.
9. Exhibitors or individuals who wish to challenge the guidelines and expectations of the exhibit policy may appeal to Standing Committee.

Use of Denominational Name

Exhibitors and potential exhibitors at Annual Conference should be advised of an Annual Conference policy related to the use of the “Church of the Brethren” name. The following is taken from the Annual Conference Minutes of 1987 and revised to acknowledge current organizational structures.

Only Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, Inc., a district, or a congregation duly recognized by a district shall be entitled to use the name “Church of the Brethren” in its own name or to indicate in any way it is an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity without the express written authorization of Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, Inc., or a district board. Unless expressly recognized as an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity, no institution or interest group should suggest in its documents, publicity, or communications that it is the agent of a Church of the Brethren organization.

Current understanding is that an organization which has been authorized by Annual Conference to serve as an Annual Conference agency is thereby authorized to use the name “Church of the Brethren.”

Application for Exhibitors

To apply for exhibit space at any Annual Conference, contact the Director of Annual Conference, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120. Request forms are due by November 1 of the year before the next Annual Conference.

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference
1451 Dundee Avenue
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Phone: 800-323-8039 ext. 364
annualconference@brethren.org

Mission Statement

*Church of the Brethren Annual Conference exists
to unite, strengthen and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.*