

Summary of the Actions of the 2022 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference

(see Official 2022 Annual Conference Minutes when published)

Reports

Reports of the Church of the Brethren, Inc.: (1) Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board, (2) Leadership Team, (3) Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee, (4) Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, (5) Delegates to Christian Churches Together, (6) Delegates to the National Council of Churches of Christ, and (7) Delegates to the World Council of Churches;

as well as reports of the Annual Conference Agencies: (1) Bethany Theological Seminary, (2) Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust (now Eder Financial), and (3) On Earth Peace;

along with the financial statements of Church of the Brethren, Inc.; Bethany Theological Seminary; Eder Financial (formerly Brethren Benefit Trust, Inc.), and On Earth Peace Assembly, Inc. were received.

Unfinished Business Items

UB 1 Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted the Leadership Team's recommendation that its "Proposed Update Regarding Polity for Annual Conference Agencies" be approved and that its recommendations for implementation be adopted.

This motion was adopted by more than a two-thirds vote (299-70) as a change in polity with recommendations for implementation that are items of major consequence for the life of the church.

New Business Items

NB 1. Amendments to the "Appeal" Section of the "Ethics in Ministry Relations" Polity

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that the amendments to the "Appeal" Section of the "Ethics in Ministry Relations" Polity be adopted, with one amendment incorporated.

The amendments were adopted by more than a two-thirds vote as a change in polity.

NB 2. Query: Standing with People of Color

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that the query "Standing with People of Color" be accepted with thanks to the church and district for this important reminder. The concerns were answered with this response, which incorporates one amendment:

We recognize the struggles faced by many of our sisters and brothers of color and believe the church should be agents of change. We encourage congregations, districts, agencies, and other denominational entities to continue to follow the teachings of Jesus by living out the great commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. We understand the great diversity that the word neighbor implies. So, we encourage congregations to study the teachings of Jesus and how they apply to our relationships with all people of color, to express solidarity with all people of color, offer sanctuary from all forms of violence, and identify and dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions, and then begin to live out those findings by being Jesus in the neighborhood.

This response becomes an official statement of Annual Conference. (continued on next page)

This response to the query on “Standing with People of Color” will be implemented through a two-year study/action process. This will include Southern Ohio-Kentucky District and On Earth Peace collaborating to develop various materials for congregational, district, and denominational use. Standing Committee members will support and encourage the use of these materials and participation in the process and report back to Annual Conference in 2023 and 2024.

NB 3. Query: Breaking Down Barriers – Increasing Access to Denominational Events

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the Query: Breaking Down Barriers – Increasing Access to Denominational Events be adopted and that Annual Conference create a study committee to examine the theological, philosophical, and practical implications of the query along with a feasibility study. The committee is to bring recommendations to the 2024 Annual Conference.

The committee will consist of three (3) persons elected by Annual Conference who are familiar with denominational events; issues related to broad accessibility; virtual/hybrid meetings and/or webcasting. The committee will consult with the Director of Annual Conference, the Annual Conference webcast coordinator, and others as determined by the committee. In subsequent action, Annual Conference elected Jeanne Davies, Brandon Grady, and Daniel Poole to serve as members of this study committee.

NB 4. Revisions to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc.

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the proposed Revisions to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc. be adopted.

The amendments were adopted by more than a two-thirds vote as a change in polity.

NB 5. Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement and revised Guidelines for Pastors’ Salaries and Benefits

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement and Guidelines for Pastor’s Salaries and Benefits be adopted.

Moderator David Sollenberger noted that this year’s revisions are presented with the understanding that in the future, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee will be able to simply report to Annual Conference about minor changes to these guidelines in order to correct typographical errors, ensure compliance with relevant employment and insurance law, and reflect other actions taken by Annual Conference. Based upon the precedent set at this Annual Conference, however, it is our understanding that any major changes that alter the framework of the IAMA or the Guidelines for Pastors’ Salaries and Benefits would require the direct action of the Annual Conference delegate body.

NB 6. Revised Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the Revised Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors be adopted.

NB 7. Recommended Cost of Living Adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors

Action of the 2022 Annual Conference: After considering several alternate cost of living increase percentages, Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the proposed 8.2% cost of living adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors be adopted.

Election and Appointments – see separate document