



“Is there no balm in Gilead?  
Is there no physician there?  
Why then has the health of my poor  
people not been restored?” —Jeremiah 8:22

# Brethren and health care

**A**s we applaud the efforts of doctors, nurses, and other health care workers in the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, it’s a good reminder that medical care is often a part of ministry. Brethren have a long history of being involved in this area, including the following:

- Bethany Sanitarium and Hospital, later renamed **Bethany Brethren Hospital**, opened on the west side of Chicago in 1921 as a project of adjacent Bethany Bible School (later Bethany Theological Seminary). The hospital merged with another community hospital in the late 1960s and eventually moved into a new building. While no longer connected to the Church of the Brethren, it operates today as Advocate Bethany Hospital.
- In the early 1940s, a Civilian Public Service camp held under the auspices of the Brethren Service Committee converted an abandoned barracks in Castañer, Puerto Rico (site of the first Heifer Project cattle shipment in 1944), into a 25-bed hospital. A more modern hospital was built nearby and opened in 1960. It still operates today as **Castañer Hospital**. The Heifer International 75th anniversary celebration in Castañer this past October included a tour of the facility.
- Brethren mission workers in China established the “**Friendship Hospital**” (You’ ai) in Shanxi Province under Dr. Daryl Parker. The hospital later moved to another site and continues to operate today, focusing on cancer care. Brethren mission workers Ruoxia Li and Eric Miller oversee a pioneering hospice program there (see p. 4). Another hospital was opened on the site of the original Brethren hospital and contains a bust of Dr. Parker.
- There are 22 retirement communities related to the Church of the Brethren, part of the **Fellowship of Brethren Homes**. The homes are located in 11 states, spanning from Pennsylvania to California. They can trace their denominational spirit of caregiving back to the Pettikoffer House, a home used by the early Brethren to care for widows in Germantown, Pa., in the 18th century (see p. 11).
- The **Association of Brethren Caregivers**, successor to earlier health-related organizations, began in 1991 and later became an official Annual Conference agency. Its work merged into the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board and continues in part today under the denomination’s **Discipleship Ministries**, which provides resources for deacon ministry, older adult ministries, and other programs. Several nursing scholarships are awarded each year to Church of the Brethren members through the Health Education and Research Endowment.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

## Scrambling to help

Can you unscramble the following medical-related terms? Answers below.

- HOTPOSTCEES
- GRUYERS
- SAINTAHESE
- FONENICIT
- CTDOOR
- LISPATHO
- TENUPAINTO
- INDIMEIC
- NATEMERTT
- GOONISUCAT
- SOULIONTTANC
- SEESAID
- GOADSSINI
- MMOPSTY

ANSWERS: Stethoscope, surgery, anesthesia, infection, doctor, hospital, outpatient, medicine, treatment, contagious, consultation, disease, diagnosis, symptom.

Sources: The Brethren Encyclopedia, Brethren Historical Library and Archives, brethren.org, Peggy Reiff Miller



**“To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future.”**

—quote by Pope John Paul II inscribed inside the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

**“We are still living in the aftershock of Hiroshima; people are still the scars of history.”** —English playwright/poet Edward Bond

# HIROSHIMA: 75 years later

**A**ug. 6 marks three-quarters of a century since the first atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan (the second fell on Nagasaki three days later). The resulting explosion destroyed about 90 percent of the city and killed about 80,000 people on impact, with many more later falling victim to effects of radiation sickness.

Today the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park sits near the site of “ground zero,” centered on the Genbaku Dome (or “Atomic Bomb Dome”)—the only structure left standing in the area after the bombing. A statement by UNESCO says, “It symbolized the tremendous destructive power which humankind can invent, on the one hand; on the other hand, it also reminds us of the hope for world permanent peace.” The museum opened in 1955. A memorial service with paper lanterns is held on Aug. 6 each year. Survivors of the bombing are known as “Hibakusha.”

## The Brethren connection

The World Friendship Center (WFC) opened in Hiroshima in 1965, about a mile from the bomb’s epicenter. Its motto: “To foster peace, one friend at a time.” Founded by Quaker peacemaker Barbara Reynolds, the center offers accommodations for visitors, tours, stories by bombing survivors, a Peace Ambassador Exchange, a Peace Choir, English conversation classes, and other educational and service events.

Over the past four-plus decades, more than 50 people have come to the WFC to serve as volunteer resident directors via the Church of the Brethren, most of them serving through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). Current volunteers at the WFC (since August 2019) are Roger and Kathy Edmark of Lynnwood, Wash.

For more information on the WFC, visit [wfchiroshima.com/english](http://wfchiroshima.com/english). For more information on the BVS project there, visit [brethren.org/bvs/projects/1129.html](http://brethren.org/bvs/projects/1129.html).

## About Hiroshima

**Population today:** More than 1.1 million, making it the 11th largest city in Japan

**Location:** Southwestern end of Honshu (the largest island), about 500 miles from Tokyo

**History:** The city’s origins date to the late 6th century and early 7th century.

**Highlights:** In addition to the Peace Memorial Museum and Park, the city is known for its rebuilt Hiroshima Castle, Manga Library, the Mazda Museum, and its baseball team, the Hiroshima Carp.

## Brethren Voices

The Brethren community television program *Brethren Voices*, operated out of Peace Church of the Brethren in Portland, Ore., highlighted the World Friendship Center in an episode earlier this year. Hosted by Brent Carlson, it opens with the song “One World” by Mike Stern (later reprised with some Japanese voices) and includes an interview with current WFC volunteers Roger and Kathy Edmark. View the episode at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVQCNmwL8Sk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVQCNmwL8Sk).



**“For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given, and  
the government will be  
on his shoulders.”**

—Isaiah 9:6a, NIV

## A BRETHREN CHRISTMAS

*This story is excerpted from Frank Ramirez’s book *The Meanest Man in Patrick County* (Brethren Press, 2004). It paints a picture of the first Brethren baptisms in the US, which occurred on Dec. 25, 1723, near Philadelphia.*

**T**he group walked carefully down the little roads that made up Germantown, until soon they were beyond the buildings and nearing Wissahickon Creek. At the water’s edge, or rather at the edge of the ice, all was still, except for the flutter of a few small birds watching the people and hopping from branch to branch.

At a signal from Peter Becker, the six who were to be baptized knelt down, and he laid his hands on them one by one and prayed aloud. As they all shivered together and huddled close for warmth, he then began to crack the ice with a long stick.

The sound of rushing water greeted them. “See, even in the cold of winter, God’s Spirit is bright and alive,” Peter said.

Anna (Gumre) watched Peter take a very deep breath and shudder as he stepped into the water. After that he did not hesitate, but walked until the water reached his waist. Quickly, one by one, Martin Urner and his wife, Catherine, and Frederick Lang and John Mayle and Henry Landis with his wife took

their turn in the stream while the others on the shore sang Alexander Mack’s hymn, “Count Well the Cost.”

As quickly as he could, Peter asked the six their baptismal questions and then quickly dunked them three times beneath the water. They sputtered and spluttered in turn, struggling to catch their breath as they were helped to their feet. . . . It occurred to Anna as she watched that there was something old about this, like the first Christians who were baptized, and something new, for it was the first Brethren baptism in America—and not illegal!



## AND HEAVEN AND NATURE SING

*Southern Living* magazine in 2018 ranked these as the top 10 Christmas carols. How do they compare with your favorites?

- “Silent Night”
- “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”
- “O Come All Ye Faithful”
- “O Holy Night”
- “What Child Is This?”
- “We Three Kings”
- “The First Noel”
- “Away in a Manger”
- “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
- “Joy to the World”



**“Christmas isn’t just a day; it’s a frame of mind.”**

— *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947 version)

**“‘Maybe Christmas,’ he thought, ‘doesn’t come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.’”** — *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

**“Seeing is believing, but sometimes the most real things in the world are the things we can’t see.”** — *The Polar Express*

**“That’s what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.”** — *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (spoken by Linus after reciting sections of Luke 2)