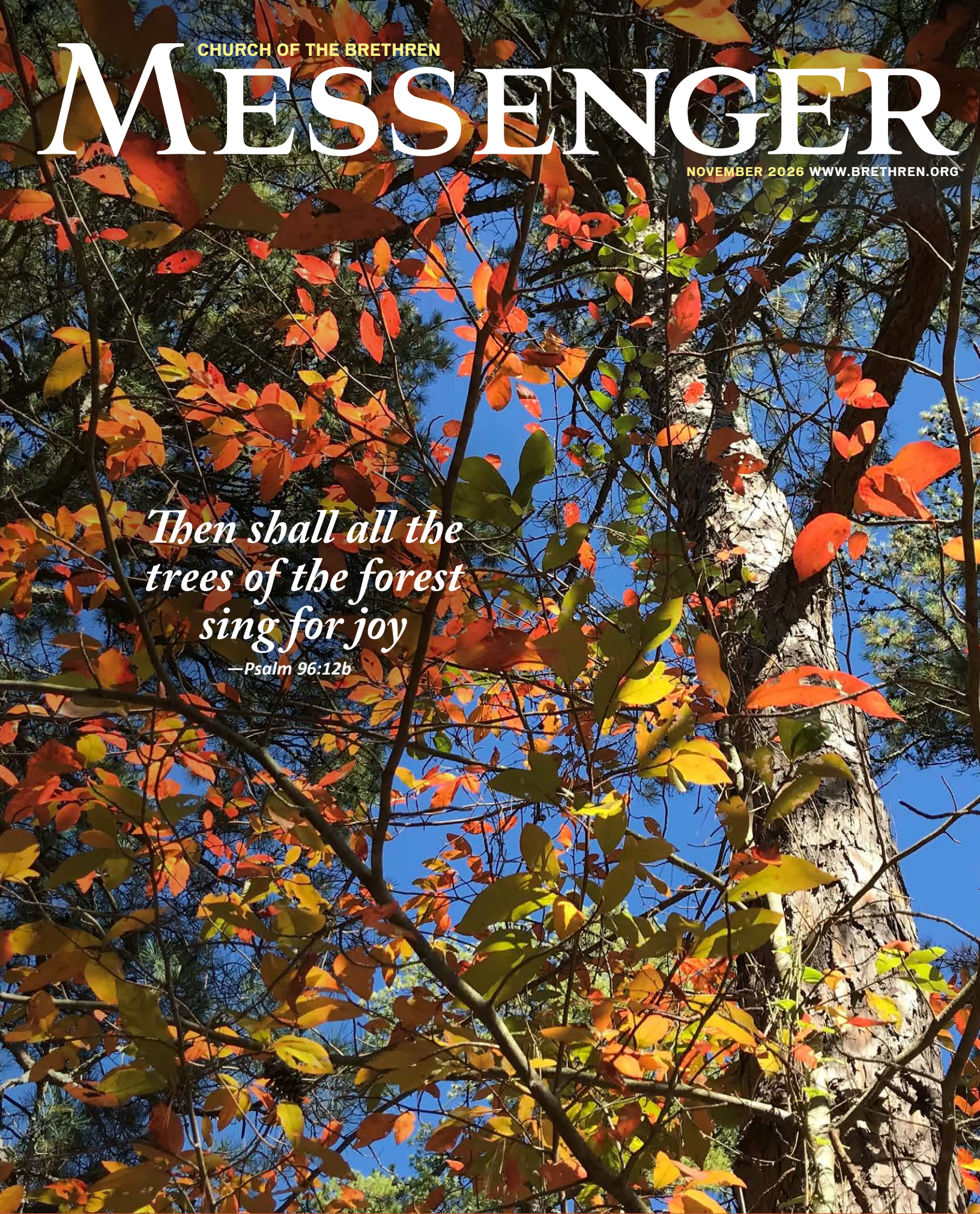
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2026 WWW.BRETHREN.ORG



Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

—Psalm 96:12b

AN OFFERING IN REVERSE 8 IS THERE ENOUGH? 11 LEAVING ANTIETAM 14 INGLENOOK 18 JUNIOR HIGH 24



CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
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Room to learn

I wanted the candy.

It was September and I was at the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District Conference, participating in a poverty simulation. I was assigned to portray Brian, an 8-year-old boy and the youngest in a family of five. As a 40-something woman and an eldest daughter, I had some method acting to do.



MADALYN METZGER
PUBLISHER

When Brian earned a ticket at school for a free treat, I excitedly started considering my options. Peanut butter cups? Something with lots of gooey caramel? Maybe those sweet and sour gummy cluster candies?

But at home, Mom was trying to figure out how to feed us. Her pay had been docked for getting to work late. Dad was looking for a job, and we barely had enough money for transportation to the store, much less for actual groceries.

So, I handed her the ticket. Maybe she could use it for food. At 8, I wasn't sure what else I could offer.

Later, with our parents out job hunting and signing up for assistance programs, my 10-year-old brother and I were home alone when bill collectors knocked on the door. We couldn't help them, obviously, but we understood enough to be scared. By the end of that round, our family had been evicted.

It was a simulation—pretend. Still, the fear caught me off guard. Growing up, my family sometimes had to make careful financial choices. But I never wondered whether we would have food in the fridge or a home to sleep in. And I hadn't fully considered how heavily an 8-year-old might carry his family's worries. Brian couldn't get a job or pay a bill. But he had that ticket—and giving it to his mom was something he *could* do.

In Philippians 2, the Apostle Paul asks us to look beyond our own concerns and follow the example of Jesus, who became human and took the form of a servant. Following Christ involves both a change of heart and a way of living. His love teaches us to pay attention to what our neighbors need—and sometimes that begins with admitting what we don't yet understand.

I'm still thinking about that ticket. For a moment, I was a kid wondering whether giving up a treat could help his family. I left the simulation with questions about children whose worries I hadn't wholly comprehended. I can't completely know another person's experience—but I can make room to hear what they have to say.

That's also how I want to approach the stories in this issue, ready to listen and curious about what they might help me see. As you read these reflections on generosity and belonging, I hope you'll join me in making room to learn.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford



A tiny retreat is a chance to take a break from the day and, just for a moment, lay down all you are carrying. Retreat to a sacred space of beauty, scripture, and meditation. Be blessed.

Thanksgiving

"May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
—Colossians 1:11-14

Activity

Spend time considering this blessing from the New Testament book of Colossians.

Receive God's blessings of strength, endurance, patience, light, redemption, and forgiveness.



"Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality to strangers.... If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." —Romans 12:13,18

"Whenever we come together, whenever we share this spirit of encounter around the same table... we are truly building a different world." —Pope Leo XIV, speaking at a July 2026 meal with people experiencing social and economic hardship

"Use the resources that God has given you... to bless the community where he has planted you."
—Rev. Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, writing about the church's calling to serve its neighbors

"We are responsible for one another. We are not called to be indifferent to the suffering of others."
—Rev. Botrus Mansour, secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, addressing the 2026 Religions for Peace International Council

"Carrying out the simple commands of Jesus—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, making peace—now involves risks for the church."
—Episcopal Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe, calling the church to faithful action amid fear and injustice

A RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY

Solve each clue. Then take the indicated letter from each answer to discover something everyone can bring to the table.

1. Work undertaken to meet the needs of others:
   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *Take the **first** letter.*
2. The practice of welcoming and caring for guests or strangers:
   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *Take the **first** letter.*
3. Concern for another's suffering that moves us to act:
   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *Take the **fifth** letter.*
4. The work of restoring broken relationships:
   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ *Take the **first** letter.*
5. Wholeness and right relationship—not merely the absence of conflict:
   _ _ _ _ _ *Take the **second** letter.*

What can you bring to the table? _ _ _ _ _

BY THE NUMBERS

1,000

The number of recipes advertised in the 1901 *Inglenook Cook Book*. Contributed largely by Brethren women, the recipes had been tried in home kitchens and recommended by the cooks who shared them. Read more about the cookbook's history beginning on page 18.

DID YOU KNOW?



The small white church at the center of the Battle of Antietam was built by German Baptist Brethren—the forebears of today's Church of the Brethren—who were commonly called Dunkers. The meetinghouse survived the 1862 battle but was flattened by a storm in 1921. A house, and later a gas station and souvenir shop, occupied the site before the church was reconstructed on its original foundation in 1962. The present structure incorporates pieces of the original church preserved for decades by Elmer G. Boyer, a resident of Sharpsburg, Md.

THIS YEAR IN HISTORY

80 years ago, Brethren in Ohio and Indiana collected, sorted, and packed 55,800 fertilized chicken eggs for an airlift to war-torn Poland. Organized through the Brethren Service Committee in partnership with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the 1946 effort helped Polish families rebuild their food supply after World War II.

1. Service – S. 2. Hospitality – H. 3. Compassion – A. 4. Reconciliation – R. 5. Peace – E. Final answer: SHARE.

As simple as ice cream

Sometimes bringing Jesus into the neighborhood can be as simple as a bowl of ice cream.

Nappanee (Ind.) Church of the Brethren is a congregation of about 25, most in their eighties, worshiping in a small-town neighborhood where many residents don't even know the people next door. So the congregation decided to help neighbors become neighbors.

The week before a free ice cream social, members walked the surrounding streets delivering invitations door to door: "Free ice cream social. No donations accepted. Come and meet your neighbors!" On the day, tables waited beneath shade trees, along with soft-serve ice cream, toppings, yard games, and a donated bounce house.

Then the congregation waited. Would anyone come? They did—one, two, four at a time. Soon the tables were filled, children were playing, and neighbors were talking and laughing together. No sermon. No offering. No strings attached. Just hospitality—and Jesus in the neighborhood.

—Deb Downing



Deb Downing

Nappanee neighbor Junelle Stutzman with four of her grandchildren.

Bringing peace and justice ministries to the neighborhood

Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren has found that we can bring peace and justice ministries into the neighborhood by providing space in the church building for organizations that will provide such services.



Gerald Rhoades

For example, "Gather the Spirit for Justice" each Saturday morning uses the church fellowship hall and kitchen to provide a free breakfast to anyone who comes. During breakfast, they also give out personal hygiene items and help people get or renew their identification papers. On a monthly basis, other organizations such as the Red Cross have information tables at the breakfast. And those who wish to learn Spanish or English can go to one of the church classrooms where they engage in conversation in both languages, with the help of teachers.

Over the years, Harrisburg First has brought GED classes, Alcoholics Anonymous support groups, women's support groups, Friday Food Distribution in partnership with South Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, and others to serve our community by providing ministry space.

Our congregation does not have the staff or membership that could provide these ministries. But by welcoming other organizations into the church building, we can help provide more peace and justice ministries for the neighborhood.

Perhaps your congregation could build their peace and justice ministry in a similar way. **—Gerald Rhoades**

"Gather the Spirit for Justice" serves breakfast at Harrisburg First Church.

Do you have district or congregational stories that might be of interest to Messenger? Short items with a photo are best. Send them to Messenger, c/o In Touch, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or messenger@brethren.org.

In the news



Joel Peña

The Back to School celebration *at Alpha and Omega Church of the Brethren in Lancaster, Pa., offered a blessing for school children. "When the children and young people of our congregation start the school year, we hold a blessing service where we pray for all the students, their schools, and their teachers, asking that it be a year of growth and blessing," reported pastor Joel Peña. "That day, SirJames was very happy and excited because he was going to kindergarten."*

Shirley Braner of Crest Manor Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind., received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Dismas House of Indiana which helps people transition into the community after incarceration. Braner was honored for her longterm work in the community, dating back to 1995 and including participation in the Progress Club, the Center Township Gleaners, and the Northern Indiana Food Bank. "Here in South Bend, Shirley cooks one day each week at St. Margaret's House, a women's shelter, showing the women warmth, dignity, and that they matter," said a commendation. "Every other week she brings that same love to the residents of Dismas House. Her home-made dinners, prepared with care, delivered with a smile, and served with kindness make this house feel like a home."

Beverly Johnston, a 75-year-old retired nurse, in July was named "*Dayton Daily News* Community Gem" for founding the laundry outreach ministry of Troy (Ohio) Church of the Brethren. The ministry started in 2019 serves people in the community who do not have their own washer and dryer or who cannot afford expensive laundromat costs. Johnston is just one of the volunteers who make the ministry possible. She told the newspaper that this year the ministry is on track to spend at least $22,000 helping the community wash clothes and bedding. Funds come from a variety of organizations including Southern Ohio and Kentucky District. Laundry sessions are twice a month and may include education about how to do laundry and organize loads. Johnston's friend Mary Ann Cornell, who nominated her for the recognition, said the ministry "has been so successful that another church has begun a similar service in another community."



Beverly Johnston (at right) at Troy Church of the Brethren's laundry ministry. This photo appeared with a Dec. 2021 Messenger *article*

Greenville (Ohio) Church of the Brethren celebrated its 125th anniversary on Sunday, Oct. 18. According to the *Daily Advocate,* former pastor Ron Sherck was to bring the message for the morning worship service, followed by a time of celebration and remembrance. Pastor Steve Short and the congregation issued an invitation for friends and former members to join in a time of sharing memories and blessings.

Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., and its president, **Jeff Carter,** received the David Rodgers Friend of the RSO Award in recognition of their service and generosity to the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. "Established in 2025, the David Rodgers Friend of the RSO Award is named after the organization's long-term board member and benefactor who died in May 2025," said a Bethany release. Carter is a member of the symphony board and served as president of that group from 2021-2024.

Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., marked 20 years of its Empty Bowls fundraiser for food insecurity in Huntingdon County, in early October. The college celebrated the milestone with new ways for the community to get involved, said the *Huntingdon Daily News*. This year the celebration included a "20 Years of Empty Bowls" exhibit at the Juniata College Museum of Art featuring handmade bowls created by students and informational and interactive elements. The annual sale of bowls was both online and in-person with the soup dinner held at Stone Church of the Brethren. "Since its founding at Juniata, Empty Bowls has raised more than $98,000 for local food banks, food pantries and the Huntingdon County Area Elementary School Backpack Program," said the newspaper.

Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria president Daniel Mbaya participated in an ecumenical service in Abuja, Nigeria, in August with World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Jerry Pillay. He was one of the Nigerian church leaders offering prayers during the event. Mbaya is a former student of the WCC Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.



An offering in reverse

by Harry Jarrett

One Sunday this fall, ushers at Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren in Weyers Cave, Va., did something unexpected. Instead of collecting money, they gave it out.

We had been journeying together through a stewardship series called *Our Money Story*, exploring the narratives that shape our relationship with money. The series invited us to consider not only our habits and fears, but also the spiritual imagination behind them.

It was in that spirit that we introduced an unusual act of worship: a reverse offering.

A practice rooted in scripture and memory

We engaged with Exodus 16:1-18, where Israel stumbles into the desert with Pharaoh's scarcity still rattling in their story. God answers their fear with manna—bread from heaven—enough for each day, not more and not less.

We invited the congregation to notice their own "manna moments," when provision shows up just when we need it, or when the community becomes our safety net. "If you don't have a manna moment yet," we said, "we're going to fix that this morning."

Into every open hand, ushers placed a $10 bill. Not symbolic. Not a prop. A genuine grace-gift. A tangible, transferable "manna moment." Now, everyone was free to imagine a new money story based on the economy of God's enough.

Years ago, in another congregation, I had held a similar reverse offering of $5. I watched people use their $5 in all kinds of creative, kingdom-shaped ways. In one memorable case, an 8-year-old turned his $5 into $500 for a church ministry. I can't recall exactly how he did it; I only remember the astonishment and joy when he handed that gift back one hundredfold.

Small gifts, placed in the hands of imaginative people of faith, become seeds. They multiply. They inspire. They become reminders that God is still writing our money story.

A congregational manna moment

Two weeks after the reverse offering at Pleasant Valley, we invited people to share what they had done with their $10. The stories came slowly at first, then steadily, warmly, and humbly enthusiastic.

One person shared that on the day the $10 was placed into their hand, they went out to eat. Thinking about how hard restaurant servers work and how little they are paid, they used their manna moment to bless their waitress with her own unexpected manna moment.

A high schooler had "topped up" a fellow student's lunch money account after learning she didn't have enough for lunch that day.

Parents overheard their children sharing with their friends, "You won't believe what happened at church this week! . . . Yes, it's real!"

Four R's from scripture

The four movements **Remember, Release, Reimagine, and Restore** come straight from scripture's own money stories:

- **Remember** asks us to look back at the earliest messages we absorbed about scarcity, sufficiency, and God's provision. It also invites us to recall Israel's wilderness story where God gave manna "enough for each day, not more and not less" and taught a people anxious for survival to trust in God's "economy of enough."
- **Release** calls us to loosen our grip on the myths that bind us, the myth that accumulation equals security, the myth that we stand alone without a safety net.
- **Reimagine** invites us to picture a world where God's abundance, not fear, drives our decisions. We proclaimed, "Reimagining is not wishful thinking . . . it is at the heart of our faith." It is the work of prophets, of Jesus, and of the Spirit who "works newness into old places until hope arrives."
- **Restore** moves us toward Jubilee hope: a shared community life in which systems of scarcity devour no one, and everyone has room to flourish.

> God's economy is always one manna moment away from breaking into our ordinary lives.

Others who still had the $10 bill tucked in their wallets were expectantly looking for ways the Spirit might lead them to create a manna moment for someone else.

A person who wasn't in worship for the reverse offering had listened to the sermon podcast later that week, and the idea stayed with them. They took their own $10 and gave it to someone they knew was in need.

The imagination spread beyond the moment. The stories continued one after the other. None were grand gestures, just small, deliberate acts of kingdom imagination. A gift freely received became one freely given.

Learning to notice

That's how manna works. It is small enough to seem insignificant, yet meaningful enough to reshape how we see God, one another, and our place in the world. Manna invites us not to accumulate, but to trust. Not to hoard, but to share. Not to accept the world as it is, but to reimagine what it could be under God's reign.

The reverse offering became a small Jubilee seed planted in the life of our congregation.

And it worked! It sparked reflection, conversation, generosity, awareness, imagination, and joy. It reminded us that enough is never measured by accumulation, but by the trust we place in God and in one another. And the ripple effects will continue in our community.

God's economy is always one manna moment away from breaking into our ordinary lives. If manna teaches us anything, it is that God provides enough for the day, enough for the journey, enough for the work ahead.

And sometimes, that provision looks like a $10 bill placed in an open hand, waiting for imagination to take root.

Harry Jarrett serves as pastor of Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren and produces the weekly podcasts *Faith at Work* and *Faith in Process*. His background spans missions, church planting, hospitality, and entrepreneurship. He writes regularly on Substack and can be followed at pastorharryjarrett.substack.com.



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Is there enough?

A reflection on Matthew 14:13-21

by Kurt Borgmann

Is there enough?

It's a question anyone who has cooked for a large and hungry crowd asks. Did I make enough food? Will everyone get something to eat?

When my daughter Leyna began her college track-and-field career, she quickly made friends with the other throwers—the athletes who throw discus, shot put, hammer, and weight. Before long, she invited a group of them to our house for a meal.

They were excited by the prospect of a home-cooked meal, but they also wondered whether we realized what we were getting into. We did. Once upon a time, we fed our own college-aged boys. Years earlier, when I was pastoring at Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind., the congregation served Sunday evening meals to Manchester University students, and my wife regularly planned and cooked those meals. We weren't naïve about how much college students—especially college athletes—can eat.

Leyna's friends didn't know that. As they piled out of their cars, one asked, in what he thought was a subtle way, "You know throwers eat a lot, right?"

I smiled. "I am completely aware of that. I promise you, there will be enough."

I'm not sure he believed me until the dishes had gone around the table several times, everyone was full, and we sent them back to campus with leftovers. There was enough.

His question was valid. It hovers whenever hungry people gather around a family table, at a church potluck, or at a food pantry. But "Is there enough?" isn't only about food. We ask it about household budgets, medical care, volunteers, time, attention, and energy. Are there enough resources to meet the needs before us? Is there enough of me to go around?

The question seems to be about measurable resources. Yet it's also a question of perspective—not only what we can count, but what we believe. Do we approach the world through abundance or scarcity? Do we share what we have, or compete for what is available?

That tension runs through the story of Jesus feeding the crowd. Which response sounds more sensible: the disciples saying, "Send the crowds away so they can buy food for themselves," or Jesus saying, "You give them something to eat"? Is it reasonable to feed thousands with five loaves and two fish? Or is it wiser to let people fend for themselves?

My first instinct is to dismiss the story as miracle mathematics. The numbers do not add up—1 deserted place, thousands of hungry people, 5 loaves, 2 fish, 12 skeptical disciples, and 1 prayerful Jesus somehow equal full stomachs and 12 baskets of leftovers. I prefer equations that make sense.

But in the presence of Jesus—who is not always sensible, according to my definition of sensible—I need to pause. Why is it so important to me that everything add up? What about this story pushes against my instincts? Is it the miracle, or is it the premise from which Jesus operates? Once again, Jesus pushes me beyond my comfort zone, just as he pushes the disciples.

Of course, Jesus has the right idea: do what it takes to feed hungry people. I agree in principle. Yet I can think of many obstacles, and I recognize a deep reluctance in myself. I believe sharing is good. I believe we should care about others' needs and help make life easier for those who have less. I also do not want to be taken advantage of, and I wonder whether others have been as responsible as I believe I have been.

This past August, during my final weeks as pastor of Goshen (Ind.) City Church of the Brethren, someone stopped at the church asking for gas money. They said they had run out of gas nearby. The only cash in my wallet was a $20 bill, and I didn't really want to give it away. I did—but the encounter left me wondering if my suspicion makes me stingy even when I help.

My resistance to Jesus' trusting generosity reminds me that I am not as spiritually evolved as I might like to be. I'm willing to share, but too often I want to attach strings. I'm bothered more by other people's wastefulness than by my own—especially when they might waste something I contributed, my five loaves and two fish. My impulse toward generosity is contradicted by my desire for control and judgment.

There's another conflict in me. I believe that everything I have is a gift from God. I have more than I need and more than many people in the world ever will have. Yet I also think, "What is mine is mine. I worked for it. I earned it." I like having enough resources that I rarely face hard choices. Gratitude sits uneasily beside entitlement and possessiveness.

Perhaps this is how we ought to encounter a scripture story like this, by paying honest attention to what it exposes in us. When Jesus' response rubs us the wrong way, we can examine the assumptions and instincts underneath our discomfort.

If I'm honest, I identify with the disciples. Send the people home. Five loaves and two fish are not enough. Why should we feed them? Let them feed themselves. Prayer is not going to turn a little into abundance.

When those thoughts arise, I need to ask, "Is there enough?" again—not only in terms of numbers, but through a perspective infused with faith. "Is there enough to eat?" is hardly the most important question as the disciples look over the thousands sitting on the grass. The deeper question is whether there's enough in your heart—enough room, compassion, determination, tenderness, generosity, and trust.

"Too often I want to attach strings. I'm bothered more by other people's wastefulness than by my own—especially when they might waste something I contributed."

> The deeper question is whether there's enough in your heart—enough room, compassion, determination, tenderness, generosity, and trust.

The number of loaves and fish may not be the point. The challenge is Jesus' spirit of sensitivity, shared responsibility, concern, and open-handedness. This is not a math problem. It is a trust exercise—trusting that there is enough, then acting as though it is true.

Jesus does not ask us to calculate whether there is enough respect, care, or helpfulness to go around. He asks us to choose generosity and hope. As long as we insist on being the controllers, monitors, and judges, we will not experience abundance—not because creation holds no abundance, but because we have left no room for it within us.

Whenever we recognize the humanity of others—seeing a hungry crowd not as a problem but as people—we do our best to ensure there is enough. We need not use the math as an excuse to close ourselves off from the miracle of generosity.

May we become people who answer the question "Is there enough?" with a confident "Yes." Yes, because we trust there will be leftovers after the crowd is gone. Yes, because we are less worried and more willing to share. Yes, because the abundance in the world is finally matched by the abundance in our hearts.

Kurt Borgmann is a writer and longtime Church of the Brethren pastor who recently concluded his service in congregational ministry. This reflection is adapted from a sermon he preached in August 2026, during his final weeks serving the Goshen City and Middlebury Churches of the Brethren in Indiana.



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Leaving Antietam

by Gimbiya Kettering

Gimbiya Kettering

It is a white church on a hill. Like something from a postcard, a painting, a vision—a cliché.

It was our church, back when we were called Dunkers—named for our ritual of outdoor, full-immersion baptism. The meetinghouse is no bigger, no more ornate than its neighboring farmhouses and barns because we were, are, a simple people. Neither we, nor our God, need steeples and stained glass. Even if I had never been inside before, I would know the pews spaced a little too close, a stove for warmth, a table at the front, and wood floors worn smooth as creek stones.

A woman in plain dress—ankle length, black, a bonnet—waits at the door to welcome me and my family. She comes every year from a neighboring congregation. On the other side of the church, the choir is practicing. Acapella. They start the same first stanza over and over, seeking the right key. We are cradled in the rolling hills that stretch along the horizon. For a moment, I think, *Farmland*. Then I remember, *Plantations*.

Our Annual Meeting forbade the owning of slaves. Slave owners were part of this congregation. Being as bright as a light on a hill, generals marked our meetinghouse as landmark on their battle plans. The boom of a cannon shakes in my bones and the air smells of artillery smoke

and woodfire. The war feels unnervingly close.

After all, Maryland was, and is, a border state.

■ ■ ■

A plume of smoke, as gray as the clouds, rises from below the church. Embers are still burning in a stone fire pit. It is a small encampment—a single canvas tent and a few rough sleeping rolls—surrounded by men in Confederate uniforms that are ragged, dirty, mismatched, and missing buttons because these uniforms would have been issued in June, and after the months of hard marching and the battles coming northward, they would have been in poor repair. Defensively, one of the men reminds me that the Southern army was never as well equipped as the Northern army. The South did not have an army before the war, and the blockade prevented them from getting goods—they did not have coffee, canvas tents, or greens unless it was *Capture*.

Capture is a code for anything stolen. I think about the people who were stolen—from their homeland, from one another. From their ownselves. The war was about a state's right to hold people as captured. For their entire lives, the lives of their children, the lives of their grandchildren. It would have been my life, stolen.

The men pretending to be soldiers have muskets that are not pretend. The gunpowder in their bags is also real. They slept here overnight, next to my church. One man, two nights. Their hunger is real. A man brushes ants off the last egg, peels it—tossing the shell into the embers, and eats it standing up. Only an hour before he had told me that he does not like hardboiled eggs except in salad. Their real wool socks stick out of the real holes in their leather-soled shoes.

They are, I suppose, my enemies twice over. Once because they are soldiers of treason, again because they fight for my enslavement. I have a commandment to love my enemies. The smoke from the firepit blows into my face. When I move, the smoke follows me. I am in jeans, I have a cell phone, my car is parked just out of sight. I have to remind myself, *This is all pretend*. This Civil War ended over a century ago, we are not at war with one another.

In another life, we could meet at a friend-of-a-friend's barbeque. One of them is a Southerner, a doctor, and the father of a mixed-race child. He is not always a Confederate soldier. He tells me about the traffic he fights every morning, a family reunion, working in the emergency room. Sometimes he, all of them, pretend to be Northern soldiers in the reenactments. He is a battlefield ambassador. He knows his stuff—which is to say, he knows our history. He tells me that the Northern veterans of the Civil War, as they made their way home among the Southern veterans of the Civil War who also were heading home, were wary of the lack of repentance, saying, *Someday we will have to fight them again*.

In another life, we could be shooting at each other.

An atheist, he says, he hopes that I find what I am looking for in the church.

It feels like a benediction. Or a truce.

Or a cliché.

■ ■ ■

Inside the church is my family. My parents, my father's brother and his wife. My cousin. Also, my sistern and brethren. The Dunkers are now called Brethren. So, we are a family of believers even though we no longer have a congregation at Antietam. The building belongs to the National Park Service, which is a way to say it belongs to the American story. Among us are curious tourists, taking selfies and consulting maps on their phones. We are all visitors, even those who have been coming for decades. Some of us are wearing the Plain Garb, others look like we stopped in the middle of hike, still others are dressed for church. We beat the still air with our programs. My mother and I are the only Black people at the service.

There is more cannon fire—close enough to shake the walls.

During and after the battle, the wounded Confederates were carried into the Dunker meetinghouse. There were sides, and there was also the senseless, side-less reality of a battle waged with muskets, cannons, bayonets, and neighbors. According to the cliché, it was a scene of unimaginable gore. I believe we are capable of imagining it. I believe we just prefer not to imagine it.

Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson did not have to imagine it.

He witnessed it, afterwards writing that: *The carnage on both sides was terrific. The hottest fight seemed to center about Dunker Church, where there were no less than four charges and counter-charges. Each army had taken and retaken the ground until it was literally carpeted with dead and dying men.*

Carpet, like steeples and stained glass, was viewed by the Dunkers as an unnecessary, worldly luxury. So,

> "I have to remind myself, *This is all pretend.* This Civil War ended over a century ago, we are not at war with one another."



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

I wonder if they, my ancestral sistern and brethren, would have compared the carnage to harvesting chickens or butchering hogs. Or to a biblical hell of writhing and moaning and pain. The battle that surrounded this church remains the bloodiest single day in American history. Bloodier than Pearl Harbor. Bloodier than Bloody Sunday at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Bloodier than 9/11. Bloodier than whatever we did last night in Iran. Inside the church more and more wounded, more and more dying. Blood until the floor where we kneel to pray would have been slick with it.

The sermon is always about peace—and about what it means to be pacifist in the time of war. We are always a nation at war. Always, in the sermon we remember that the church, hit by musket rounds and grazed by artillery, was wounded too. It is said that afterwards the Dunkers debated if the meetinghouse should be repaired or abandoned. Some members believed that the meetinghouse had been damaged, not just physically but also spiritually. They stayed, in the end. I do not know how they cleaned it. Hallowed and haunted. Consecrated and contaminated. Blood that stains, blood that saves. It still feels that way.

For a moment, I can believe that the church has always been here. But it was built only 10 years before the war. And having survived the war, been repaired and cleaned, it would stand another 60 years. A storm would take it down. Seventy years—old for a human, young for a sycamore tree. This building is a replica. Another reenactment.

■ ■ ■

After the benediction, sending us into the world—sending us in peace—we, the Brethren, linger. It feels like there should be a potluck of egg salad and banana pudding but there is no fellowship hall, so we stand in the lengthening shadow of the church. After the oppressive humidity of the summer, the cool wind feels like forgiveness. I never forget that I am Black. But for an afternoon, I also feel that I am Brethren. Completely Brethren. That I belong to these people, to this place, to this history. We are American, we are pacifist. We are citizens of a bellicose nation, we pray for peace. It feels like a contradiction. We walk slowly towards our cars, knowing that we are only borrowing this space, that was once ours, and knowing that we all have to leave.

The road home twists through rolling hills, small towns, and fields. At the four-way stops, that intersect with still smaller county roads, there are plastic signs for roofers, high-speed internet, plumbers, candidates for upcoming elections, for Jesus. There are signs for the Battle of Antietam and the Battle of Sharpsburg. One name was chosen for the town, the other for the river. One used by the Union, the other by the Confederacy. The signs, like the history, overlap, twist, and layer. Saint and sinner. The blessed and the damned. The sheep and the goats. A government of free people and a slave society. After all, Maryland is, and was, a border state.

My whole life feels like a border state.

Gimbiya Kettering wrote an essay for the September 2022 issue of Messenger titled "If Only that Were True" about why she had never attended the Antietam service. It won the James Solheim Award for Editorial Courage from the Associated Church Press. It took even more courage for her to go to Antietam a few years later. She is also the author of *Washing My Sister's Feet*, a Brethren Press picture book about how and why we do love feast. More about her and more of her writing are at www.gimbiyakettering.com.

> "The sermon is always about peace—and about what it means to be pacifist in the time of war. We are always a nation at war."



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Smashing pumpkins . . .
for a squash soufflé-inspired casserole

by Anna Lisa Gross

The Halloween season is spooky enough without a single horror film or zombie costume. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. Power-lusters strut their narcissism on social media, and bullies get the most clicks. *When*, I pray with desperation, *will the first become last and the last become first?* I long for Advent and Mary's vision that the rich be sent away empty and the poor be filled. This year, could it be more than a hymn?

In the meantime, we have fall décor, which is a horror story unto itself. The pumpkins we decorate with will contribute to climate change: most pumpkins end up in a landfill, rotting into methane and leachate.

For the following ideas, start by removing stickers, candles, lights, or other foreign matter. Paint is okay.

Dealing with leftover decorations could be an introduction to composting for your grandkids, congregation, or neighborhood association. If you already have a working compost pile, smash up pumpkins and add them. If you have never composted, this could be a fun way to start.

If you have trees or bushes nearby, simply smash your leftover gourds and pumpkins and scatter the pieces underneath for wildlife to enjoy.

Your congregation could host a "pumpkin smash" for the whole neighborhood or town—an outreach and fellowship opportunity.

You can cook any uncut pumpkin decorations. I have made pumpkin soup, pumpkin pie, and other various recipes to use up fall decorations. Honestly, I prefer butternut or acorn squash, which also make beautiful fall decor. Consider decorating with something you want to eat! You can paint faces on any of these vegetables and still eat them later—but peel the skin or wash off the paint, of course.

Anna Lisa Gross is co-pastor of Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Ind. This article originally appeared in *Anabaptist World* and is reprinted by permission.

Fall soufflé-inspired casserole

Every recipe I've found for pumpkin or squash souffle is at least 75 percent fats—eggs and dairy, and then a bit of vegetable tossed in. So I created this recipe that maximizes the squash and minimizes the fats. There's a point at which you can go savory or sweet, according to your mood or what the potluck needs.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 10 fresh sage leaves or 5 dry
- 2 tablespoons milk (dairy or nondairy)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 5 eggs
- 1 cup grated cheese (Swiss, cheddar, etc.)
- 1/2 cup yogurt, sour cream, or cream cheese
- 3 cups peeled, cooked butternut squash (or other squash or pumpkin)

Savory options include a few cloves of garlic or 1 teaspoon garlic powder, sautéed onion or shallot, spices such as paprika, or herbs such as parsley or basil.

For a sweet option, add 1 tablespoon grated fresh or candied ginger or up to 1 teaspoon powdered ginger, as well as 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and other spices (nutmeg, allspice, etc.). You also can add 1 teaspoon vanilla and 2 tablespoons maple syrup or honey.

Directions

1. Melt the butter and add the sage, simmering until the butter browns. If you are NOT using a food processor or blender, strain out the sage, leaving the strainer over the pot to let as much butter drip back into the pan as possible.
2. Combine all other ingredients in a food processor (or powerful blender) and process until smooth and uniform. Add in the butter. If you do NOT have a food processor or powerful blender, beat the eggs and then add the dairy. Beat until smooth. Add everything else and combine.
3. Bake in a greased 13- by 9-inch pan or casserole dish. For a savory dish, sprinkle grated cheese, breadcrumbs, or almond flour around the pan before pouring the batter in. For a sweet dish, use a little sugar. (You also can bake in individual containers.)
4. Bake in a fully preheated 375° F oven for about 35-40 minutes, or until the soufflé-like casserole is brown and puffy on top. Resist the temptation to check by opening the door; just turn on the light to check.

125 yummy years of Inglenook

Stories, recipes, and other tidbits

Old Inglenook recipes

Thanksgiving cake

Take 8 eggs (beaten separately), 1 pound of butter, 2 pounds of dark sugar, 1 pound of raisins, 1 pound of figs, 1 pound of currants, 1/2 pound of citron, 1/2 cup of molasses, 1/2 cup of coffee, 2 pounds of flour, 2 teaspoonfuls of soda, 1 1/2 teaspoonfuls of cinnamon, 1 1/2 teaspoonfuls of nutmeg, 1 1/2 teaspoonfuls of cloves, 1 teaspoonful of pepper, and 1 teaspoonful of salt. This will keep 3 months if kept in a proper place.

—Sister Nettie Stine, Leaf River, Ill., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1911)

Pumpkin fritters

Take 1 quart of pie pumpkin, mash, add 1 to 3 eggs, 1 teaspoonful of salt, and enough flour stirred in to make them into a batter. Fry like pancakes in hot lard.

—Sister Daisy Evans, Los Angeles, Calif., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1911)

Sweet potato rolls

Take 2 pounds of boiled sweet potatoes, mashed very fine, 2 tablespoonfuls of butter, 1/2 cup of yeast, 1 pint of sweet milk, and pinch of salt. Use enough flour to make a soft dough. Let rise till light, then cut into any shape desired, put into pan, and let rise one hour and bake. Irish potatoes can be used in the same way.

—Sister Cassie Martin, Bloom, Kan., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1911)

Corn bread

Take 2 cups of buttermilk, 2 tablespoonfuls of sorghum molasses, 2/3 of a cup of sifted graham flour, 1/2 a teaspoonful of salt, 2 teaspoonfuls of soda, and 1 1/2 cups of corn meal. Mix together and bake in a moderate oven.

—Sister Rachel C. Merchant, Laporte, Ind., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1901)

The Inglenook story

The *Inglenook Cookbook* has been a cherished tradition in the Church of the Brethren, passed from generation to generation. The first edition was published by the Brethren Publishing House in October 1901 containing 1,000 recipes from women across the church.



The cookbook was a gift given to subscribers of *The Inglenook*, a weekly magazine for all ages that provided entertainment and education on a variety of subjects from nature to history to current events. For $1 a year, a subscriber received the weekly magazine and a copy of *Inglenook Cook Book*.

In 1911, a revised edition was published, with even more recipes, and became even more popular. Both the 1901 and 1911 editions were bestsellers of their time, selling more than 100,000 copies combined.

By 1940, the children of those who supplied and used the recipes from the first two cookbooks were ready for their own. *Granddaughter's Inglenook Cookbook* published in 1942 included several new features including an index and charts and tables providing guidelines for such things as measuring food, distinguishing between cuts of meat and how to cook them, and processing times for canning. It originally sold for $1 a copy.

The recipes in these cookbooks were tested in kitchens across the country and selected for their value, excellence, and simplicity. The success of the series was its appeal to common people—those who embody the principles of simple living and value wholesome food.

The *New Inglenook Cookbook* (2013) and *Inglenook Desserts* (2018) followed in that same tradition, assembling the best recipes from today's kitchens, upholding the values we share, and representing the tables of those who choose to live simply.

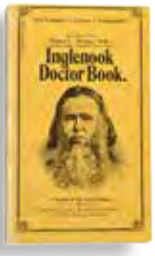




Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Home remedies for common ailments

The *Inglenook Doctor Book* was published in 1903. The idea sprang from the knowledge that there were tried-and-true remedies for diseases and ailments hidden away in the private homes of people across the church that needed to be shared. The book contained 916 home remedies for common problems like colic to more serious illnesses like cholera morbus and neuralgia. It shied away from the efficacy of the remedies: "There is no guarantee of the effectiveness . . . but they do represent successful experience which in practice is worth more than science."



Who was 'Miss Inglenook'?

Kermon Thomasson, a former Messenger *editor, wrote two editorials about the* Inglenook Cook Book *of 1901 and the iconic "Inglenook Girl" who graced its cover.*

November 1984

For insights into what the Brethren were like at the turn of the century, no serious student of that era could afford to overlook the *Inglenook Cook Book*.

That the Brethren were still largely rural is evident, for instance. From its pages you can learn how to dry or "corn" beef—100 pounds at a time. It tells how to make "Twentieth Century Apple Butter," but it's not something you would make in the kitchen: "For 10 gallons, take 20 pounds of sugar, and a 3-hooped tub of quartered apples."

The recipe for roast goose devotes its first 12 lines just to getting the feathers off. And you have to skin and clean the



Blessed is the teacher who is not wasteful of words, who is not wasteful of time, who is not wasteful of opportunities, but who is wasteful of smiles.

—*The Inglenook*, Feb. 21, 1911

Creamed chicken

Dress and joint the chicken. If it is an old one, boil a little soft and then take out, place in a dripping pan, cover with sweet cream and a little of the broth in which the chicken was cooked, add pepper, salt, and a little butter. Set in the oven to cook, and by the time the cream is pretty well cooked away the chicken is done. If using young chickens, it is not necessary to boil them.

—Sister Sadie E. Sollenberger, Lemasters, Pa., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1901)

Salad dressing

Take 1 tablespoonful sugar, not quite 1 tablespoonful of flour, butter size of a shellbark, 1 egg, milk, 1/2 teaspoonful mustard mixed with the vinegar, boil, and let cool if you do not wish the salad wilted.

—Sister J. T. Myers, Oaks, Pa., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1901)

Mock turtle soup

Take 1 calf's head ready cleaned and cracked; put in cold water, season with salt and pepper; let boil till soft, then take the meat off the bones, cut fine, strain the broth; add 1 tablespoonful of sweet marjoram, 1 teaspoonful of whole allspice; let all come to a boil; have about 4 hard-boiled eggs cut up fine in soup tureen, pour soup over the eggs. If there is not enough broth, add boiling water, and it is ready to serve.

—Sister Annie E. Evans, Lancaster, Pa., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1901)

Squirrel croquettes

Dress squirrel ready to cook, cook until meat will fall off the bones, then let cool. Work out the bones with the hands and chop meat fine. Season with a little salt, pepper, and sage; make into cakes; roll in corn meal, and fry in butter.

—Sister Effie I. House, Montserrat, Mo., from *Inglenook Cook Book* (1901)

Staff picks

Bev Anspaugh's peanut butter granola

***The New Inglenook Cookbook*, page 3**

I haven't had a chance to try nearly all the recipes I'd like to from *The New Inglenook Cookbook*, but a few have become tried and true in our household. One is Bev Anspaugh's peanut butter granola. I love to add something crunchy to my yogurt and fruit parfaits. This granola hits the spot. It is crunchy without being hard. It also is a recipe you can adapt easily. I love peanut butter, but sometimes swap it out for other nut butters like cashew or almond butter for a different flavor profile.

—Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Annual Conference Director and Brethren Press Interim Director

Sweet potato chili

***The New Inglenook Cookbook*, page 110**

When the kids were going through their vegetarian phase, this was a hit. However, it still remains on the meal rotation during the cool weather months, they like it so well.

— Karen Warner, Brethren Press Customer Service Representative

Cheese sauce

Inglenook Cookbook

There is really only one recipe I use from the *Inglenook Cookbook*, and it is the cheese sauce. I have the original spiral book. I used it so much, now it is stained and a little torn. I've just left it open to that page.

When my children were young, I wanted to make homemade macaroni and cheese. I found this basic cheese sauce, which became my base. It is really a roux, so once I knew how to use the base, I could make any kind of creamy sauce with it.

We also taught our children this recipe so that no matter where they went, they would know how to make a basic roux.

—Carolyn Neher, Children's Disaster Services Associate Director

Cloud biscuits

***The New Inglenook Cookbook*, page 14.**

I serve these biscuits with our Virginia-style sausage gravy, made with seasoned flour milled in rural Virginia. Whether I am making a single batch for house guests or 12 batches to share with the local soup kitchen, these biscuits are equally well suited to sausage gravy or homemade strawberry jam.

On a separate note, our family and church friends at Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren used to gift *The New Inglenook Cookbook* to graduating seniors. The book and our well-wishes served as a reminder of the fellowship, warm food, and comforts of home that Inglenook represents.

—Nancy McCrickard, Mission Advancement Advocate



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

squirrels before you can make your "Squirrel Croquettes."

You don't have to look far to catch the "Pennsylvania Dutch" character of the Brethren. There are six recipes for "Snitz and Knep." There is "Pawn Haas" and "Green Tomato Pie." And, of course, there's "Chow Chow."

I must tell my real fascination with the *Inglenook Cook Book*: The original book cover shows a drawing of a Dunker cook in her kitchen. Not everyone knows that the drawing was done from a 1901 photograph. Who was she—the daughter of some Elgin staffer of the time? Did she go on to a career in modeling or home ec, or have her own TV cookery show? Is she still alive, aged and forgotten in some Brethren retirement home, living in the now dim glow of her brief fling as "Miss Inglenook 1901"? If any reader knows, or has a clue, let me know at once.

February 1985

It wasn't long before letters started arriving. A few offered speculation that proved wrong. But on Nov. 7, I got a letter from Lula M. Carrier Henderson, of Perkins, Okla., telling me that "Miss Inglenook" was her cousin, according to what her mother had always said. In a few days another letter came, from Rena Neff Wright, of Nokesville, Va., substantiating Mrs. Henderson's claim with photocopied pages of a book about the Carrier family.

In December, I got a phone call from Beth Wilson, of Torrance,

I can truthfully say that I've seen far more copies of the* Inglenook Cookbook *than* The Brethren Encyclopedia *in Brethren homes.

—Frank Ramirez in *Brethren Brush with Greatness*

Grandma

Other people make cookies but grandma's cookies, while they are made of the same kind of flour and sugar, have some extra good taste to them that no other cookies have.

And then her peppermint candy is different from what other people buy. Why, a whole meetinghouse full of crying babies can be hushed in a moment by one little red stick of peppermint candy which grandma had hidden away in her pocket for such emergencies.

But after all these sweet cookies and the red candy only indicate the sweet disposition and loving heart in the bosom of our grandmas. The cookies and candies would not be half so good if she was not so good herself. God be blessed for our dear old grandmothers.

—*The Inglenook*, December 3, 1907

A prayer of thanksgiving

For the beautiful world of nature and mystery about us; for the balmy zephyrs of spring, the sweet-scented summer breeze, and autumn's placid days; for the infinite blue of the skies, the thousand sunset tints, and the roseate clouds of morning; for the songs of birds making our hearts glad; for murmuring brooklets and rustling leaves and sighing winds; for flowers, for color, for music, for sunlight; for broad prairies and rugged mountain scenes; for all these tangible creations of thine which make this world so beautiful and life so varied and sweet, we bless thee, O God.

—*The Inglenook*, November 26, 1907

Calif. Her husband, Steven Wilson, is a great-grandson of "Miss Inglenook." And through Mrs. Wilson, I got in telephone contact with Ellen Wilson Sanner, of Placerville, Calif., 81-year-old daughter of "Miss Inglenook" herself! "Miss Inglenook" was Anna Evans Wilson.

Why or how Anna came to be on that book cover, even her last surviving child, Ellen, was unable to tell me. Anna married a Baptist man, Samuel Wilson, and joined his faith. They wound up in Oakland, Calif. Anna died relatively young, on Nov. 10, 1928, and is buried in Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery.

Sweet and sour meatloaf

***The New Inglenook Cookbook*, page 162**

While there are many great recipes in *The New Inglenook Cookbook*, this is our family favorite. I've modified the recipe by just putting it in a loaf pan instead of basting it. It freezes well and makes a good freezer meal gift. It reminds me of my dear friend Margaret Drafall, who submitted the recipe.

—Karen Stocking, Brethren Press and Communications Finance and Production Assistant

Let us be kind

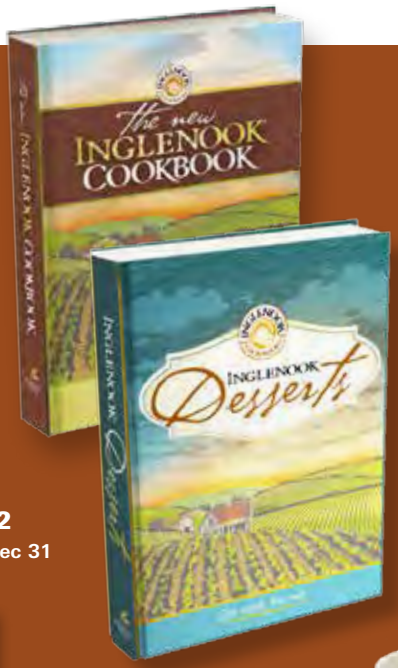
Let us be kind;
This is a wealth that has no measure,
This is of heaven and earth the highest treasure—
Let us be kind.
A tender word, a smile of love in meeting,
A song of hope and victory to those entreating,
A glimpse of God and brotherhood while life is fleeting—
Let us be kind.

—*The Inglenook*, May 4, 1909

The New Inglenook Cookbook
$28

Inglenook Desserts
$25

➤ **Special price for bundle of 2 cookbooks: $32**
Special price Nov 1 – Dec 31

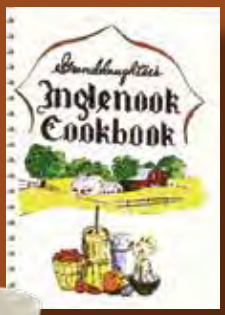




Inglenook Cook Book, 1911
$15.99

Inglenook Cook Book, 1901
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Granddaughter's Inglenook Cookbook
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Bowl and spoon, Wheat, Fruit, Veggies
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The season that reminds us change is good

by Allie Crowe

Jan Fischer Bachman

Every person has their favorite season of the year. Forty-five percent of people surveyed across the US will say autumn is their favorite season. It is a popular season, celebrated for Thanksgiving, beautiful colors, crisper weather, comforting foods and beverages, and cozy clothing. For many of my family members, it's the time of year to be out in the woods.

For followers of Christ, autumn comes with the ability to teach us about life, death, and God. As the summer fades away, autumn brings the reality that, just like the leaves change color and fall, I too will not last forever on this earth. That seems morbid, but it is the reality.

This season also reminds us why change can be good. N. D. Wilson reminds us, "In autumn, the creativity of God hollers. Look at these things! These paper-thin solar cells that convert sunlight into acorns. They are everywhere, and they are made by God, who doesn't know how to stop creating. Autumn reminds us that there is a world of wonder."

It is easy to become complacent. We get into routines (not always a bad thing), and we take for granted things that are changing around us. These changes remind us that even when things are coming to an end, the beauty of the final journey can leave an impact on our hearts. How often do you walk around outside, seeing the changing colors of the leaves? Leaves still attached to branches, waving in the wind. Do you recognize that, in the moment, God is reaching into your soul and trying to get your attention?

There is a promise of glory

Autumn is a time of reflection and gratitude. It reminds us of God's faithfulness and ability to take all things, good and evil, and use them for his glory and for our growth. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." This isn't a promise that our life will be smooth and without change. God's sovereignty and ability to manage every aspect of our lives is living proof that all things work together for good.

We will face times of suffering, painful change, death, grief, and mourning. God can make those sufferings work for our good and his good. In hindsight, the darkness of painful change is an opportunity to allow God to mold our hearts and help us grow

> "We are called to shed old habits as we develop our relationship with God."

in areas where we may be weak.

Did your faith strengthen? Did you learn patience? (Don't even pray for it, you will be put in situations to learn it.) Did you learn compassion for someone or compassion for yourself? When you look back at change, do you see how God worked in all things, not just some of them? He uses the good change and the bad change to work together, not isolating each aspect. "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains" (James 5:7).

Be willing to let go

When the leaves fall from the trees, leaving the trees bare, it reminds us to be willing to let go of things that hinder our spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical growth. We are called to shed old habits as we develop our relationship with God. We are called to examine how we operate and rid ourselves of attitudes that cause us and others to stumble. We are called to look at our life choices and get rid of the sin that cause cracks in our relationship with God who wants to bring newness. "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

There is a vulnerability that comes with shedding the old and baring our natural state. In a world full of filters and masks, procedures and aids to hide imperfection, autumn celebrates the imperfections. It is in our raw state that we can be most open to God. It is then that we are open to the purpose for which God designed us. In our weakness and at our most vulnerable, God's strength is made perfect. When we mask who we are, to try and fit in, we tell God we do not need him.

Vanity seeks the approval of the world. It is a form of pride. When we shed vanity, like trees shed their leaves, we grow in humility and allow God's grace to work through us. We become a testimony to his transformative power. "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

At Thanksgiving, we celebrate the harvest and rejoice in the hard labor of the harvesters and the provisions God has provided. God waters the land and prepares it for a bountiful harvest. God is also at work in our life, preparing us for seasons of abundance. "You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance" (Psalm 65:9-11).

In this season, be open to what God has in store for you. It may not be comfortable. It will come with some change. Until you are ready to let go, you will never know the truest potential you have with God leading the way.

Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go.

Allie Crowe pastors Westernport (Md.) Church of the Brethren and writes a blog that is posted on the church website. She previously served as a chaplain and holds a doctor of ministry in Pastoral Counseling.




Caden Beyer


Caden Beyer


Caden Beyer

‘Whoever welcomes one such child’

Ministry with junior high students

by Becky Ullom Naugle

Have you noticed the strong reactions junior highers draw from others? Kids who are no longer in elementary school but not yet in high school are fascinating. They are capable of deep and theological thought, yet they have a reputation for “potty and body” humor—burping and passing gas is never as funny as it is in a junior high classroom.

They are in a time of rapid change in their bodies, their emotions, and the expectations placed on them. Everything becomes a little more intense. They look forward to driving—and may be scared to actually learn to drive. They might beg for more freedom with their voices while demonstrating the need for strong boundaries with their actions. People tend to watch them with both awe and dismay.

Do you wonder what Jesus sees? Given Jesus’ preference for those who are not quite accepted, it seems to me Jesus likely has a soft spot for junior high students. I think Jesus sees an abundance of joy, potential, and hope in this age group.

It also tends to be true that many junior high students have not yet learned to be as self-conscious as high schoolers. Junior highers generally have fewer expectations placed on them, which often allows greater availability and creativity. Prayer becomes accessible as a meaningful personal practice rather than something to endure while sitting in church or at the dinner table. Sunday school discussions become more nuanced. Theological concepts like trust, fear, and the value of community seem a lot more relatable.

We used to think that capturing the spiritual attention of high school-aged youth was the perfect time; now we know the tween and younger teen years are critically important times in a young person’s spiritual development.

Matthew 18:1-6 reminds us of what’s at stake when it comes to our kids and God. Eugene Peterson in *The Message* puts it this way:

> At about the same time, the disciples came to Jesus asking, “Who gets the highest rank in God’s kingdom?” For an answer Jesus called over a child, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, “I’m telling you, once and for

> “They are in a time of rapid change in their bodies, their emotions, and the expectations placed on them.”

all, that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you're not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom. What's more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it's the same as receiving me. But if you give them a hard time, bullying or taking advantage of their simple trust, you'll soon wish you hadn't. You'd be better off dropped in the middle of the lake with a millstone around your neck.

Clearly, we as disciples of Jesus are called to walk with junior highers with love and wisdom. How should we do that?

1. Teach them well: In addition to the junior youth *Shine* curriculum, Brethren Press offers a junior high devotional, *Ignite*. Use these tools to focus their God-given curiosity and energy.

2. Invite them to share and grow through leadership: Celebrate National Junior High Sunday each November! Depending on your junior highers, invite them to plan and lead part or all of worship. Worship planning resources can be found at www.brethren.org/jr-high-resources.

3. Provide opportunities for supported independence and growth: National Junior High Conference provides junior high youth and their advisors a structured away-from-home faith formation adventure! Worship, recreation, small groups, and workshops help junior highers think about both their relationship with God and their relationship with others. It might also be the first time they stay overnight on a college campus and eat in a cafeteria. Emerging research tells us that as confidence and independence increase, anxiety and depression decrease. What a win-win situation!

What if we don't have any junior high youth?

- Show the 2 1/2-minute wrap up video from the last National Junior High Conference (www.brethren.org/njhc), followed by congregational prayer for the junior highers in your community and in the Church of the Brethren.
- Pray for the upcoming National Junior High Conference and junior high FaithX journeys that will happen in the summer of 2027.
- Write encouraging cards and notes to junior high youth. Mail them to: Youth and Young Adult Office, Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL, 60120. We will distribute the cards to kids attending National Junior High Conference.

In this glorious, chaotic, and beautifully tender time in a young person's life, we should draw ever closer to the tweens in our midst so that they might draw closer to God. We must offer companionship as they try to figure out who Jesus is and what it means to try to pattern our lives on his teachings.

May God bless your ministry with junior highers!

Becky Ullom Naugle directs the Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Church of the Brethren. She and her family attend Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

2027
National Junior High Conference
JUNE 18-20
Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Virginia
"GROWING IN FAITH"
2 THESS. 1:3
Junior High youth (those who have completed grades 6 – 8) and their adult advisors are invited to this weekend of faith formation, friendship, and fun!
Registration begins online Jan. 22
Register and pay deposit by Jan. 31 to receive a free t-shirt!
www.brethren.org/njhc
GROWING IN FAITH
NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE 2027
2 THESS. 1:3
Photos by Caden Beyer



2 Samuel 5:1-12

David's coronation and the capture of Jerusalem

by Frank Ramirez

David's ascension to the throne and his defeat of the Jebusites to take Jerusalem seem easy and inevitable. From the perspective of a child reading Bible stories, it seemed that everything fell into place so easily—play the harp, kill Goliath, play tag with Saul while fleeing him, then rule in might and glory. But war, intrigue, and assassination are all part of the mix leading up to David's reign as king over all 12 tribes.

As coronations go, this is a rather modest event. The tribes meet with David at Hebron. Interestingly, they tell David what the Lord had said to him: "You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be Israel's leader" (5:2b, CEB). David, who once shepherded actual sheep, has been called by God to shepherd the Israelite people. As the people's shepherd-leader, David is expected to rule for the sake of the people, not for his own glorification.

Three things are worth noting. First, David makes a covenant with the tribes. The conditions of the covenant are not revealed, but it's likely some sort of agreement between David and the tribes would have been established. Second, David is anointed. Anointing with oil was a physical act performed to install a person into a position of leadership. Third, both the covenant and the anointing take place "before the Lord," that is, in God's presence.

Rulers need a central place from which to rule. Saul had ruled from Gibeah, a city located within the tribal allotment of Benjamin. Up to this point, David's capital city had been Hebron, but Hebron was located in the tribal allotment of Judah. In order to establish his leadership of all 12 tribes, David needs a neutral location. He chooses the city of Jerusalem, which became known as the city of David.

One problem. Jerusalem is occupied by the Jebusite people. We know very little about the Jebusites. They were one of the peoples occupying the land of Canaan before the time of Joshua and the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan. Although the Jebusites taunt the invaders, saying that it will be impossible for them to conquer the city, David's troops take Jerusalem away from the Jebusites.

Establishing Jerusalem as his capital gives David a strategic location both militarily and economically. Surrounded by deep valleys, Jerusalem is a natural fortress that can be defended against all but the most powerful armies. In an arid land, access to a water supply is essential, and

> “In light of attempts to sugarcoat a history that never was, it’s important for us to confront the true past, as well as to celebrate our true—and triumphant—history of faith.”

Jerusalem has a natural water supply. Finally, the city is situated at the intersection of major trade routes.

A history of trauma

The biblical historian we call the Deuteronomist, writing from the perspective of one whose nation had been conquered, temple destroyed, and people scattered, wrote a history of a people looking back on their ancestors who had been traumatized by defeat, destruction, and deportation. The wounds imposed by the Babylonian conquerors were passed down through the generations of those living in exile.

It is understandable that the exiles carried trauma—but we should note that they also created trauma. When they returned home, they, in turn, uprooted their cousins. These cousins, the “poor of the land” who had remained in Judah following the Babylonian conquest (2 Kings 24:14 and 25:12), were pushed aside by the returning exiles.

We have arrived at what some might call the central spoke of holy history—the ascension of David as ruler of the 12 tribes that have been brought together into a united kingdom. This is the high point. Never mind that from the vantage point of the writer, David’s kingdom had been destroyed. This is a golden moment. And this is true for the New Testament writers as well. All biblical roads, looking forward and backwards in time, appear to lead to David.

And never mind that the history of David we inherit is as blunt about his shortcomings as it is celebratory about the glory of his times. What matters is that David—boy shepherd and singer-songwriter, conqueror of the giant Goliath, and protector of his people—not only sings about the Lord as a shepherd but covenants with the people to reign as a shepherd, not a despot, in the neutral city of Jerusalem, wedged between the rival kingdoms of Judah in the south and Israel in the north.

Healing history

You can’t go to an Amish home without spotting a copy of *Martyrs Mirror*, that compendium of the Anabaptist martyrs’ faithfulness against fire and sword. We love this history. Indeed, that print of Dirk Willems, who turned back from his escape attempt to rescue his pursuer, is a favorite in Mennonite circles. Rescuing the pursuer who fell through the ice and would have otherwise drowned, led to Willems’ agonizingly botched execution at the stake.

I recall with a smile an order from the publisher of Sunday school materials to a group of writers that we were no longer allowed to tell Willems’ story because we’d overused it in our lessons! But this story of faithfulness against hatred masquerading as Christianity needs to be told.

Brethren enjoy reflecting on what the late, great archivist Ken Shaffer referred to as “the Brethren service explosion,” when Brethren led the way in creating Heifer International, CROP, and Church World Service. It was a time when Brethren Volunteer Service was deliberately used as the model for creating the Peace Corps, and when Brethren leadership was instrumental in the founding of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches.

Our foundational stories really happened. They need to be told. But our stories as religious refugees are set against sometimes sanitized histories of the United States and Canada. We were traumatized people who intentionally or unintentionally unleashed trauma on the indigenous people while seeking God’s will for our own lives.

In their book *Healing Haunted Histories*, Mennonites Elaine Enns and Ched Myers discuss how traumatized people may not see the trauma they are creating for others. They map a personal story that stands in for the larger story of Mennonites who, traumatized by religious and economic persecution in Russia and Ukraine, found a new life in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. They settled land taken from the First Nations and Native Americans, thereby contributing to a larger cycle of trauma that began before their arrival. Enns, whose ancestors settled on Cree land in the Saskatchewan River watershed, analyzes her own family story, which she calls “our entangled story.”

Aspects of the Mennonite immigration story fit the archetypal narrative of leaving the old country under duress, arriving poor in the new land, “pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps,” and through hard work and faithfulness achieving prosperity.

There is some truth in this, but as a simple story it overlooks many things: privileges we were given on arrival (or even guaranteed before immigration), who we displaced, and our assimilation into the unearned benefits of white privilege in the racialized societies of the US and Canada. Indeed, our long history of Anabaptist dissent against systems of domination was blunted by these arrangements, which eroded much of our distinctiveness.

In light of attempts to sugarcoat a history that never was, it’s important for us to confront the true past, as well as to celebrate our true—and triumphant—history of faith.

Frank Ramirez is a prolific writer and retired Church of the Brethren pastor. He is a member of Rock Run Church of the Brethren in Goshen, Ind. This Bible study comes from *Salt & Light: A Guide for Biblical Studies*, a new adult quarterly co-published by Brethren Press and MennoMedia.

Grants



courtesy of BDM

Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers at work in North Carolina following Hurricane Helene.

Emergency Disaster Fund:

- **$132,000** to Brethren Disaster Ministries supports Hurricane Helene recovery in North Carolina, including rebuilding in Yancey, Buncombe, and Ashe counties. Partnerships with Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders and the Western Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church support a 50-home affordable housing initiative in Black Mountain and rebuilding in Ashe County, respectively.
- **$200,000** to Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo) supports five months of emergency aid for about 12,400 people displaced by war in eastern DRC and living in refugee camps in Burundi.
- **$75,000** to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) supports women in Ukraine's Odessa and Mykolaiv regions through business training and planning, career guidance, and grants for businesses and vocational training.
- **$55,000** to the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela (ASIGLEH) supports aid following the June 24 double earthquake while long-term plans and budgets are developed. It follows a **$5,000** grant for emergency food and water.
- **$50,000** to IOCC supports 300 children in Gaza with psychosocial care, recreation, and nutrition to help them cope with the trauma of war.
- **$20,000** to the Western Maryland Long-Term Recovery Committee supported repairs to 70–80 homes and construction of 2–4 homes following May 2025 flash flooding. Mid-Atlantic District provided half the funds.
- **$20,000** to the Shepherd Society of Bethlehem Bible College provides food and medical assistance to vulnerable families in Gaza and the West Bank, with an emphasis on children.
- **$15,000** to Child Life Disaster Relief supports responder training and deployment to assist children affected by disasters. Children's Disaster Service, a program of Brethren Disaster Ministries, is a partner.
- **$13,500** supports back surgery for a leader of l'Eglise des Freres au Congo injured in an auto accident while providing refugee relief in Burundi.
- **$10,000** to the Anabaptist Peace Center in Jos, Nigeria, supports storm repairs and programs for families affected by violence. The independent center includes Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria members among its supporters and those it serves.
- **$8,800** to Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe (VAF) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, provides cash for vulnerable families to purchase water during drought. The church belongs to the Global Church of the Brethren Communion.
- **$5,000** to ASIGLEH provided building materials, food, water, and blankets to families affected by flooding and landslides following a June 2025 tropical wave.
- **$5,000** to ASIGLEH supported recovery from Hurricane Melissa in Cuba, helping local church leaders provide food, household supplies, and bedding to affected families.

Global Food Initiative:

- **$2,500** to Lighthouse Community Church of the Brethren in Sebring, Fla., supports a food pantry and Wednesday Night Meals serving about 100 people weekly.
- **$2,500** to Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren's Plot of Hope Farm supports its expansion from a small garden to a 4.5-acre urban farm on church property.
- **$2,500** to Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren's Mountaineers' Table Ministry provides food to 112 families weekly.
- **$2,500** to Alpha and Omega Community Center's Food Bank Ministry in Lancaster, Pa., supports about 500–600 people monthly.
- **Up to $15,000** supported Brethren leaders from Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda attending ECHO's East Africa Sustainable Agriculture and Appropriate Technology Symposium in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in late June.

Steele announces plans to conclude service in 2028

David A. Steele will conclude his service as General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren on Aug. 31, 2028, completing 12 years in the role. He looks forward to time with family and serving church and community in other ways.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

"The strength of the church isn't found in any one person or position, but in the people and congregations who live out their faith every day," Steele said. "Their commitment to serving others and building community gives me great hope for the future of our church."

The Mission and Ministry Board will lead the search for his successor.

"I am deeply grateful for David's many years of service to the Church of the Brethren and the wider church," said Kathy Mack, board chair.

Steele will continue serving through the end of his term. The advance announcement provides time for a prayerful search and preparation for his successor. Updates will be shared at www.brethren.org.

Bethany Seminary leaves federal student loan program

Bethany Theological Seminary's trustees approved leaving the federal student loan program at their Sept. 18–20 meeting, following five semesters without student borrowing through the program. A new scholarship also covers full tuition for Church of the Brethren students.

The seminary recently completed its "Flourish" campaign, raising $13.7 million in cash gifts and estate commitments from more than 1,200 donors to support students, faculty innovation, and operations.

Personnel

Joel Brouwer is interim president and CEO of Brethren Hillcrest Homes in La Verne, Calif., succeeding **Matthew Neeley**, who resigned after more than 20 years of service. Brouwer joined Hillcrest in 2023 and brings more than 25 years of financial and strategic leadership experience.

Britnee Linton began Feb. 15 as a Mid-Atlantic District Regional Ministry associate, joining **Charlotte Bear** and **Rusty Curling**. She previously served as co-pastor of Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren and program director at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry Center.

Dan Radcliff, Jeremiah Thompson, and **Ann Vang** resigned from Eder Financial to join Everence Financial. **Radcliff**, program director for Organizational Investing, Deferred Gifts, and Client Services, resigned Oct. 30; **Thompson**, program director of Health and Life Benefits, Aug. 28; and **Vang,** operations coordinator, Products and Services, Sept. 11.

Elizabeth A. Rider will retire June 30, 2027, as president of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College after nearly 40 years of service. She joined the college in 1988 as a psychology professor and became its 16th president in 2022.

Jerry Ruff will step down Dec. 1 as chair of the Shenandoah District Disaster Response Team Committee after more than 25 years leading district disaster response.

Jonathan Whitsel begins Jan. 1, 2027, as Middle Pennsylvania District executive minister. Pastor of Sugar Run Church of the Brethren in Shirleysburg, Pa., since April 2024, he brings 31 years of experience as a self-employed logger and seven years on the Camp Blue Diamond board.

Post this page You are welcome to photocopy these news pages. For more Newsline stories, go to **www.brethren.org/news**

Discussion starters for small groups

Leaving Antietam, author Gimbiya Kettering reflects on having attended the peace service at the Dunker Church on the Civil War battlefield. What emotions does this article bring up for you, and why? The service is "about what it means to be pacifist in the time of war," Kettering writes, adding, "We are always a nation at war." How has the Church of the Brethren been a peace church during wartime—including the present day? How does Kettering bring her identity as Black and Brethren to the experience of being at Antietam? What made her feel like a visitor or tourist, and what made her feel she belonged? Name some of the layers of her experience and then think about the layers of meaning in the title word "leaving." If you have been to Antietam, write down what that was like including how your own identity affected that experience.

125 yummy years of Inglenook is an opportunity to celebrate the way values of simplicity and wholesome living have been embodied in our kitchens and around our tables. The 1901 cookbook was a landmark recognition of the contributions of women in the life of the church, at a time when women did most of the cooking. How did cooking give women importance in the church when they were not otherwise recognized? If you have an Inglenook cookbook, look for your favorite recipes. How do they exemplify simplicity and wholesomeness? For example, do they use inexpensive ingredients, are they quick and easy to make? Choose an Inglenook recipe to make for your next study gathering or to share with family or friends.

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TurningPoints

Centenarians

Boos, Ellen, 102, Plymouth, Ind., Oct. 17
Walton, Darwin, 100, Lombard, Ill., Sept. 16

New members

Beacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Bradley Bake, Amber Oda
Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.: Robert Wilson, Kim Young, Steve Young
Little Swatara, Bethel, Pa.: Michael Kolbe, Olivia Kolbe
Spring Creek, Hershey, Pa.: Steven Beck

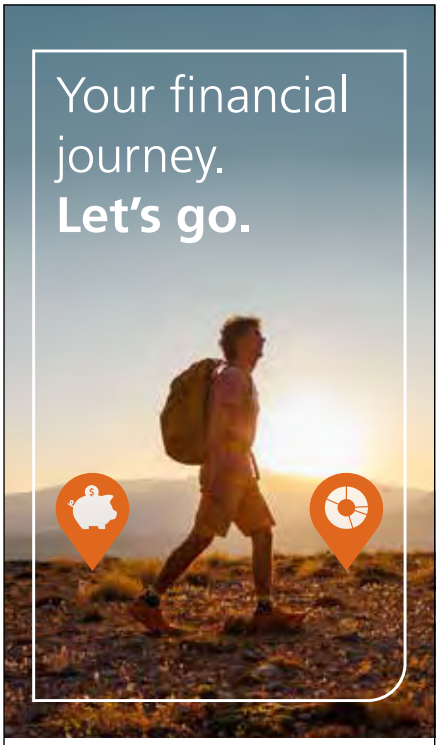
Wedding anniversaries

Claussen, Larry and Pat, Mt. Morris, Ill., 50
Groff, John and Sue, Lititz, Pa., 60
Henry, Joanne and John, Lititz, Pa., 69
Prentice, Lowell and Sheryl, Ashley, Ind., 50
Rinehart, Dave and Lois, Hudson, Ind., 69
Skelly, Julie and Marvin, Ashley, Ind., 50
Tubbs, Martha and Roger, Hudson, Ind., 50

Deaths

Cunningham, Charles "Chuck" Carmen, 86, Peoria, Ill., Sept. 4
Edris, Debra, 72, Myerstown, Pa., July 7
Fluke, Gary, 81, Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 19
Heid, Robert, 71, Wheatfield, Ind., March 5
Kimmel, Glenn Sr., 85, Shelocta, Pa., Sept. 11
Lauderdale, Kerby, 87, Portland, Ore., Sept. 17
Long, Harlan, 83, Mt. Morris, Ill., Aug. 13
Smith, Sandra, 86, Roaring Spring, Pa., Sept. 15
Stuck-Moats, Beth Ann, 54, Myerstown, Pa., Aug. 28
Walker, James "Jake," 93, Thornville, Ohio, Aug. 27

To submit information for Turning Points, go to www.brethren.org/turning points. Or send information by email to messenger@brethren.org or by mail to Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.



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In all things

by Jan Fischer Bachman

The shocking phone call came: my tiny 18-year-old vision-impaired dog with a paralyzed leg had disappeared. I couldn't stop my imagination from conjuring grisly scenarios: Tyra had tumbled off the sharp drop at the end of our street into traffic below. Or maybe that hawk came back and grabbed her this time. Would she instantly die or …?

I was out of town for a work trip, unable to look for her in person. From across the country, I immediately posted in our neighborhood group online, as well as on numerous "lost pet" sites. I checked the "found pets" section of animal control every few hours.

Knowing that I was away, neighbors I've never even met went out searching for her. The weather was mild, so there was hope—but it faded as the days passed. There were no sightings.

Once home, I made a flyer that I took to a local printer. When he handed me a stack of them, he said, "I am not charging for that little dog." Then he taped a copy to the front door of his business.

My husband and I dropped a flyer at every house within blocks of our location. A neighbor told me there were text chains discussing how to help.

My troubled heart was eased by the overwhelming kindness of strangers: the printer, the people searching, the comments and promised prayers on the lost pet lists.

I re-read Jesus' parables about the lost that were found, thinking I might find a parallel or a deeper understanding. We didn't have other dogs we were leaving behind to search for her. She wasn't simply misplaced. The cost of losing her was not financial but paid in grief and guilt. After many years with us, Tyra deserved to die at home with her family, not by herself, terrified and confused.

A week after she disappeared, someone online cross-posted a Craigs List ad that had a photo of my dog. I retrieved her within the hour. It felt miraculous. People had scooped her up a block from our house—but returned to their home across town with her. She had never been alone. She had not suffered.

I emailed the printer to let him know. He replied that the entire staff was crying.

Cars stopped when I took her outside to the front yard: people I didn't even know said they were misty eyed to see us reunited.

Caring for an elderly dog can be challenging; you remember when things were different. You hope she is not suffering in a way that she can't express. You wonder about timing. You doubt yourself and your decisions.

Having lost her once, I took Tyra outside and tucked her beside me as frequently as needed, with gratitude.

Six weeks later she came to the end of her life—in a soft, familiar blanket surrounded by family. We miss her every day. But we were so grateful to have what seemed like an almost miraculous opportunity to be there and provide comfort.

"Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

I sought a lesson in losing and finding and instead learned about gratitude: The privilege of certainty. The surpassing beauty of everyday tasks. The bittersweet joy of providing care at life's end. The healing stroke of every kindness offered.

I am still sad. I am still grateful.

> "I sought a lesson in losing and finding and instead learned about gratitude."

Venezuela Earthquake Response

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
—Matthew 5:16

Brethren Disaster Ministries is partnering with the **Church of the Brethren in Venezuela** (ASIGLEH) to support their **Mercy Project**—a volunteer-based relief program supporting vulnerable earthquake survivors living in underserved areas.

The Mercy Project provides:
Meals, food, & water
Social, emotional, & spiritual support
Educational support · Household supplies
Medical/First aid clinics & supplies
Support for orphaned children

Give to the Emergency Disaster Fund and help the Church in Venezuela bring light, hope, and God's love to earthquake survivors.

BRETHREN Disaster Ministries
Emergency Disaster Fund
1451 Dundee Ave,
Elgin, IL 60120

ASIGLEH Dept.
of Social Action &
Disaster Response

On June 24, 2026, a rare double earthquake in northern Venezuela struck the most populated areas, causing catastrophic damage and loss of life.













All photos courtesy of AISGLEH