

Standing Committee revises appeal process

The Standing Committee of district delegates revised the appeal process during pre-Conference meetings in Greensboro, N.C. It also approved a two-thirds majority vote requirement as part of a new *Standing Committee Manual*, among other business. An attempt to continue discussions that have taken up much time in recent years—about Michigan District and On Earth Peace—failed when the committee voted against adding them to the agenda.

The revised appeal process was proposed by a three-member committee: Loren Rhodes of Middle Pennsylvania District, Susan Chapman Starkey of Virgina District, and John Willoughby of Michigan District, who worked closely with the Conference officers. The document combined two existing documents on appeals with revisions to the process. Willoughby explained that the group attempted to consider how Standing Committee might work beyond the scope of the existing process.

Significant changes included a call to exhaust other options before initiating an appeal, addition of a section on conflict of interest and recusal, clarification of the time frame for initiating an appeal, and limiting Standing Committee to one appeal each year unless required by polity. A change that garnered questions and conversation was insertion of the word “fair” as a consideration in an appeal, in addition to polity considerations. The section as approved reads: “Issues on appeal shall be limited to questions of whether the process and reasoning by which the district or denominational entity made this decision were fair and consistent with Annual Conference polity.”

Another year was granted to work on other aspects of the judicial role of Standing Committee.

A new *Standing Committee Manual* compiling existing policies, procedures, and guidelines into one document was used for the first time. A revision that “any recommendations from Standing Committee to the full delegate body will require a two-thirds majority vote of Standing Committee” was made. An amendment added language to the effect that should a two-thirds majority not be reached options for moving forward



Susan Chapman Starkey, John Willoughby, and Loren Rhodes propose revisions to the Standing Committee appeal process.

would include appointing a task team to work on refinements to achieve a two-thirds majority, recommending deferring to a future Conference, or suspending the two-thirds requirement to permit forwarding an item of business to the full delegate body by a simple majority.

Two district boundary changes were affirmed. Pacific Southwest District incorporated the state of Nevada into its geographic boundaries. Virgina District has negotiated with the districts of West Marva and Southern Ohio/Kentucky to rear-range boundaries.

Elected to the **Nominating Committee** were Michaela Alphonse of Atlantic Southeast District, Kurt Borgmann of South Central Indiana District, Becky Maurer of Southern Ohio/Kentucky District, and Dennis Webb of Illinois and Wisconsin District.

Elected to the **Appeals Committee** were Stafford Frederick of Virgina District, Kim Ream of Atlantic Northeast District, John Willoughby of Michigan District, Timothy Vaughn of Western Pennsylvania District as first alternate, Phil Miller of Missouri and Arkansas District as second alternate.

Named to the **Program Feasibility Study Committee** was Janet Elsea of Shenandoah District.



Children's Disaster Services has announced fall training workshops

Go to www.brethren.org/cds for more information and to register.

Sept. 20-21 in Fort Lupton, Colo., at Fourway Baptist Church

Sept. 20-21 in Roanoke, Va., at Oak Grove Church of the Brethren

Oct. 11-12 in Tampa, Fla., at Hyde Park Presbyterian Church

Oct. 11-12 in Portland, Ore., at Fruit and Flower

Oct. 18-19 in Omaha, Neb., at Omaha Rapid Response

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Mission and Ministry Board approves budget parameter

A budget parameter for core ministries of the Church of the Brethren in 2020 was on the agenda of the Mission and Ministry Board in pre-Conference meetings. This was the final board meeting presided by chair Connie Burk Davis, who has concluded her term.

The board approved a parameter of \$4,969,000 for the core ministries next year. Treasurer Brian Bultman and assistant treasurer Ed Woolf reported that the parameter reflects work to create a balanced budget. It also reflects a \$220,000 expense reduction. Finance staff said that while reductions are not yet finalized they could include removal of campaign expenses, restructuring, and employees making personal changes in their health insurance coverage. More details will be presented in October. The parameter includes the use of \$121,000 in designated funds.

Additional financial projections for next year include expectation that a decades-long slide in congregational giving will continue, a one-percent increase in salary and benefits, a four-percent increase in medical insurance cost, and a planned decrease in the “draw” from the Brethren Service Center quasi-endowment.

In other business

The board approved \$325,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) to continue the **Nigeria Crisis Response** through 2019 and into March 2020. A budget of \$275,000 is planned for 2020 and a budget of \$135,000 for 2021.

Three congregations were welcomed into the **Open Roof Fellowship**: Center Church of the Brethren in Northern Ohio



President Joel S. Billi of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) addresses the Mission and Ministry Board in pre-Conference meetings. At left is Global Mission and Service executive Jay Wittmeyer.

District, Polo Church of the Brethren in Illinois and Wisconsin District, and J.H. Moore Memorial Church of the Brethren (Sebring Church of the Brethren) in Atlantic Southeast District.

The annual **Rev. 7:9 recognition** from the Intercultural Ministry was awarded to René Calderón. Originally from Ecuador, he was a member of the denominational staff in former decades and worked on intercultural ministries including support for sanctuary churches and translation of resources into Spanish, among other efforts. He worked in Puerto Rico for a time, and served as a co-pastor with his wife, Karen. The award was given in absentia.

Named to continue the Annual Conference assignment **“Living Together as Christ Calls”** were Thomas Dowdy, John Hoffman, and Carol Yeazell.

Named to a new **Strategic Design Team** were Carl Fike, Lois Grove, Paul Schrock, and Colin Scott.

Recognized for completing their terms of service were board chair Connie Burk Davis, Mark Bausman, Luci Landes, and Susan Liller.

Named to the **executive committee for 2019-2020** were Lois Grove, Paul Liepelt, and Colin Scott, joining the new chair, Patrick Starkey, and chair-elect, Carl Fike.

Personnel notes

Brian Bultman resigned as chief financial officer and executive director of organizational resources for the Church of the Brethren as of Aug. 2, to become vice president of finance and CFO at Central Credit Union of Illinois. He was CFO of the denomination since Feb. 9, 2015. He oversaw the finance office, made regular financial reporting to the board, held responsibility for annual financial and audit reports, oversaw sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.; and made initial preparation for the sale of excess vacant land at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Gabriela Carillo Chacón began as admissions recruiter at Bethany Seminary on June 26. She is a 2019 graduate of Earlham College.

Kendra Harbeck has resigned as manager of the office of Global Mission and Service effective Aug. 31, to pursue a graduate degree in teaching students with visual impairments. She worked in the position for six years, since Sept. 1, 2013. She produced the Global Mission email prayer guide, helped host international guests, provided logistics for visits of Brethren to international venues, helped organize Mission Alive, related with staff working internationally,

maintained communication with international church leaders, and more.

Dylan Higgs began July 8 as director of instructional design at Bethany Seminary. Higgs will support faculty and students in the use of technology.

Hannah Shultz began Aug. 5 in a staff position as coordinator of short-term service for Brethren Volunteer Service. Earlier, she was volunteer assistant workcamp coordinator for the 2015 season.

Nikifor Sosna has begun as BVS orientation assistant, serving as a second-year volunteer. His first year of BVS was with Brethren Disaster Ministries.