

## Denomination offers vacant land for sale in Elgin

**T**he Church of the Brethren denomination has retained the services of A. Rick Scardino of Lee & Associates for the purpose of selling excess vacant land at its address at 1451 Dundee Avenue (State Route 25) in Elgin, Ill.

The Church of the Brethren is not selling its General Offices and warehouse building nor the land immediately surrounding the building. Approximately 12 acres of vacant land is for sale east of the General Offices, bordered by I-90 on the north. The vacant land is zoned general industrial.



## Board opts not to change delegate numbers



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

decision in order to seek more information about practical outcomes. In March, the board reviewed scenarios for Standing Committee and the Conference based on total eligibility of congregations and actual delegate attendance in 2018. Charts showed potential delegate numbers and percentage shares of representation grouped by district and areas of the denomination.

Moderator Donita Keister spoke about the intent of the recommendation, to increase participation and vitality at Annual Conference by encouraging more people to attend. The proposal would be a way to increase numbers at the Conference even as the average size of congregations is decreasing. If each congregation actually sent its allotted delegates, overall effect of the proposal would have been to increase the delegate body by about 50 percent.

After viewing the scenarios showing an increase in the percentage share of representation by larger districts and Area 1 at the expense of other areas and smaller districts, discussion centered on concerns about detrimental effects for small congregations and Brethren in the west.

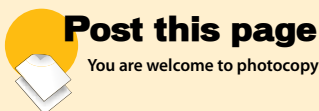
**T**he Mission and Ministry Board turned down a recommendation from the denomination's Leadership Team to change delegate representation at Annual Conference, during its spring meeting March 8-11. The recommendation had potential to increase the number of delegates that some larger congregations could send to the Conference and the number of delegates some larger districts could appoint to Standing Committee

The recommendation would have changed denominational bylaws for district delegations to Standing Committee from a ratio of 1 delegate for every 5,000 members of a district, to 1 delegate for every 4,000 mem-

bers; and for delegate representation at Annual Conference from a ratio of 1 delegate for every 200 members of a congregation, to 1 delegate for every 100 members.

The Leadership Team made up of the Conference officers, general secretary, and a representative of the Council of District Executives initiated the proposal in early 2018 and brought it to Conference that year. However, it was withdrawn from Conference consideration because proposals to amend the bylaws must come through a query or as a recommendation from the Mission and Ministry Board.

The board received the recommendation last fall but postponed a



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## Housing allowance is upheld by appeals court

The housing allowance provision providing ordained ministers, including pastors and retirees, with a tax benefit for their housing expenses is constitutional. That decision was announced March 15 by the Seventh Circuit Appeals Court in Chicago.

The case was heard by the appeals court last Oct. 24. It originally was heard by Wisconsin District Court Judge Barbara Crabb, who ruled in favor of the Freedom From Religion Foundation that the housing allowance was unconstitutional. However, in its 29-page ruling, the Seventh Circuit Appeals Court cited a number of court cases and actions by Congress. “We conclude (Internal Revenue Code, Chapter 1, Section 107 that describes the housing allowance) is constitutional. The judgment of the district court is REVERSED.”

“Although FFRF can appeal this decision and ask that the US Supreme Court hear this case, the decision by the Chicago appeals court is a major victory for pastors, regardless of denominational affiliation,” said Nevin Dulabaum, president of Brethren Benefit Trust.



Three Brethren Volunteer Service workers have completed the first BVS “fast track” orientation, allowing for quicker filling of openings at projects and earlier placement of volunteers. **Cory** (Smithtown, N.Y.) and **Mycal Alwais** of Community of Joy Church of the Brethren in Salisbury, Md., are serving with incredABLE in Richhill, Northern Ireland. **Alyssa Parker** of Midland (Va.) Church of the Brethren is serving with Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren.



## Disaster programs respond to floods

Heavy snowstorms this spring led to extreme flooding in the midwest and plains states. Disaster response coordinators from Western Plains and Northern Plains Districts reported no known damage to Church of the Brethren buildings or member homes as of mid-April.

In early April, Material Resources made shipments to Nebraska on behalf of Church World Service: 600 blankets, 150 school kits, 540 hygiene kits, 540 tubes of toothpaste, and 350 cleanup buckets were shipped to Omaha; 360 hygiene kits, 360 tubes of toothpaste, and 360 cleanup buckets went to Fremont.

On April 5-6, Children’s Disaster Services sent a team to care for children at the Multi Agency Resource Center in Valley, Neb. Additional deployments were expected as flood waters receded.

Brethren Disaster Ministries is planning to support long-term recovery and home repairs in some of the affected communities.

## Personnel notes

**Amy Beery** resigned April 30 as program director of youth engagement at Bethany Seminary. She began employment in July 2016 as an admissions counselor and was named to her current position on Nov. 1, 2017. Beery graduated from Bethany in 2013 with a master of divinity and an emphasis in youth and young adult ministry.

**Debbie Butcher** began March 25 as employee benefits specialist at Brethren Benefit Trust. She comes to BBT after working for 24 years at a publishing company, providing customer service.

**Stanley J. Noffsinger** began in early March as chief executive officer of Timbercrest Senior Living Community in North Manchester, Ind. He is a former general secretary of the Church of the Brethren (2003-2016) and director of the Office of the General Secretariat for the World Council of Churches

(2016-2018). Previously he was executive director of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. (1999-2003). He is a graduate of Manchester University.

**Dan Poole** has been named assistant professor of Ministry Formation at Bethany Seminary, beginning July 1. He began employment in August 2007 as coordinator of Ministry Formation and in July 2018 was named visiting instructor of Ministry Formation. He also was advancement associate 2009-2014 and has held the title of director of Educational Technology since 2014. Poole holds degrees from Manchester University, Bethany Seminary, and Columbia Theological Seminary.

**Vita Olmsted** resigned April 1 after a little more than a year as director of Information Technology for the Church of the Brethren, to accept another position.