

Pastors receive letter of support

The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee in early October sent a letter of encouragement to pastors and credentialed ministers across the Church of the Brethren.

Citing Isaiah 40:28-31, the letter listed many of the reasons people may become weary or discouraged during the pandemic and a time of conflict in the church, but praised God for each ministering person. The letter raised the ministers up in prayer and included helpful information for those facing serious financial hardships.

“We praise God for the love and care that each ministering person has brought to her or his calling in these past few months,” the letter said, in part. “We raise our prayers for you, trusting that God will strengthen you when you feel powerless, sustain you when you are overwhelmed, and lead you as you shepherd God’s people.”

The committee includes Beth Cage, Ray Flagg, Daniel Rudy, Deb Oskin, Terry Grove, and Nancy Sollenberger Heishman as director of the Office of Ministry.

Global Mission and Service Ministries split in two

The Church of the Brethren’s Global Mission and Service Department has been separated into two departments: Global Mission and Service Ministries.

Roy Winter, who had been associate executive director of Global Mission and Service and Brethren Disaster Ministries, will provide oversight for Service Ministries as executive director. The following will be shifted under the new area: Brethren Disaster Ministries, Brethren Volunteer Service, Children’s Disaster Services, the Emergency Disaster Fund, Material Resources, and the Workcamp Ministry.

Carol and Norm Waggy continue as interim directors of Global Mission while applicants are interviewed for the fulltime position.

Children’s Disaster Services exceeds goal

Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) has exceeded its goal of 2,500 Individual Kits of Comfort to provide to children affected by disasters this year.

After an appeal for donations of 2,500 kits by the end of September, CDS associate director Lisa Crouch announced that donors exceeded that goal by several hundred.

CDS has deployed the kits through a partnership with the Red Cross. Recipients have included children and families affected by storms in the Gulf, flooding in Missouri, and multiple wildfires in northern California.

The Red Cross also connected CDS with Partnership with Native Americans (PWNA), which is receiving 1,000 kits. This supports children living on Native American reservations in the western US that have been badly affected by COVID-19.



Volunteers at Mount Morris (Ill.) Church of the Brethren complete Individual Kits of Comfort for Children's Disaster Services.

Jan Dierckx

Major grants start hurricane rebuilding in Carolinas, aid Beirut

Brethren Disaster Ministries has directed recent major grants from the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) to hurricane rebuilding in North Carolina and relief work following the port explosion in Beirut, Lebanon.

A grant of \$32,500 financed the start of a new Brethren Disaster Ministries rebuilding project follow-

ing Hurricane Florence, which hit North Carolina on Sept. 14, 2018. The rebuilding site is in Pamlico County, where more than 200 families have not yet completely recovered.

A grant of \$25,000 supported the work of the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD) following the massive port explosion in Beirut on Aug. 4. The

grant will help pay for housing and medical care for about 40 families whose homes were destroyed; food vouchers for about 1,000 households; non-food items for about 1,250 households; emergency hygiene kits for about 1,000 households affected by the blast and 4,000 households at risk due to the pandemic; and psychosocial support for traumatized children.

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courtesy of David Nyozimuna

Bananas arrive at THARS' Farming in God's Way Festival.

Global Food Initiative aids Brethren groups

The Global Food Initiative (GFI) has aided Brethren groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, and a former Brethren mission organization in Ecuador, among grants given since mid-year.

A GFI grant of \$7,500 supported the Seed Projects of Eglise des Freres du Congo (the Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC)—the result of a series of Transformation Tree trainings provided to the deacons of the church by World Relief. The trainings challenged participants to start small outreach projects to serve the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities.

A grant of \$7,500 supported farmer training in Burundi carried out by THARS, a Brethren-related organization. As of August, THARS reported that 552 farmers with an average of 7 people in each household, representing at least 3,864 people, are benefitting.

A grant of \$11,000 supported the agricultural work of La Fundación Brethren y Unida (FBU—the United and Brethren Foundation) in Ecuador. The grant will help purchase two heifers to increase milk production in the small dairy herd on the farm, and formation of a micro-company oriented to production of organic fruits and vegetables.

EYN Pastor's Manual translated into Kiswahili

When the global Brethren event was held last November in Nigeria, leaders from Eglise des Freres au Congo (the Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC) came across the *EYN Pastor's Manual*.

The manual was in English and not usable by most Congo pastors. The Congolese Brethren requested assistance for translating the book into the Kiswahili (Swahili) language in February when Chris Elliott and Galen Hackman traveled from the United States to the DRC.

Lewis Ponga Umbe of the Congo church translated the manual. Pastor Bwambale Sedrack of the Kiswahili-speaking Brethren in Uganda evaluated the translation and had it printed. Copies are going to pastors in Uganda and the DRC. A few will go to the Brethren in Burundi and Rwanda where, although Kiswahili is not the primary language, they are familiar enough with it for the book to be useful. Southern Pennsylvania District provided funds for translation, printing, and shipping.



courtesy of Chris Elliott

Lewis Ponga Umbe (left), who translated the *EYN Pastor's Manual* into Kiswahili, celebrates the new book with pastor Ron Lubungo of Eglise des Freres au Congo.

Personnel notes

Marty Barlow will fill the unexpired term of **John Mueller** on the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board. Mueller has resigned from the board for personal reasons. Barlow was appointed to serve through Annual Conference 2021. She is a member of Montezuma Church of the Brethren in Dayton, Va., and is district moderator for Shenandoah District. She is retired as a professional counselor.

Richard Rose has been named to the board of trustees of Bethany Seminary to serve a five-year term as an at-large member. He is department chair and program director for the Ecumenical Center for Black Church Studies at the University of La Verne, Calif. **John Flora** is serving a second five-year term as an at-large member. **Chris Bowman** is extending his service by another year, pending election at Annual Conference 2021. Under normal circumstances, these board members

would have been elected or affirmed by the 2020 Annual Conference.

Naomi Yilma has begun as associate in the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C., through Brethren Volunteer Service. She is a graduate of Manchester (Ind.) University originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich has been appointed program director for Camp Pine Lake in Northern Plains District. She is a lifelong member and ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren with extensive experience at various Brethren camps. On the denominational level, she has become known for leading the work toward a compelling vision.

Ron Wedel has been named Church Services Agent for the Mutual Aid Agency, a Church of the Brethren-related insurance agency. He will work with the agency's commercial church-related accounts.