



## BDM rebuilds in North Carolina

**A**n allocation of \$37,850 from the Emergency Disaster Fund supports the coastal North Carolina rebuilding site of Brethren Disaster Ministries. The project in Pamlico County is rebuilding and repairing homes affected by Hurricane Florence, which hit the area in September 2018.

The North Carolina site is scheduled to continue through April, when Brethren Disaster Ministries reopens a tornado rebuilding site in Dayton, Ohio.



## Youth Fellowship Exchange launches

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry has launched a Youth Fellowship Exchange to provide pandemic-safe fellowship opportunities. The program matches youth groups from different congregations through video calls including ice breakers, community building games, and options for youth advisors to create their own activities for the online gatherings. Contact [bullomnaugle@brethren.org](mailto:bullomnaugle@brethren.org).

## EYN ministers meet

**Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria** (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) held its Annual Ministers' Conference Feb. 16-19 with a smaller-than-usual number of ministers from across the denomination. The event at EYN headquarters in Kwarhi usually attracts around 1,000 pastors, but this year 220 attended, under strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols. The Disaster Relief Ministry provided face masks, sanitizer, and hand washing items. EYN vice president Anthony A. Ndamsai was the featured speaker.

## Answered prayer in Nigeria

**Prayers for EYN pastor** and evangelist Bulus Yukura were answered when he was released from Boko Haram captivity on March 3. Yukura had been kidnapped from the village of Pemi, near Chibok in northeast Nigeria, on Christmas Eve. Media in Nigeria had published a video made by his captors, threatening his execution by March 3 if ransom demands were not met.



## Faith in Action grants go to three churches

The Brethren Faith in Action Fund awarded its first three grants of 2021:

- \$5,000 to the food pantry at Living Faith Church of the Brethren in Concord, N.C.
- \$5,000 to Spring Creek Church of the Brethren in Hershey, Pa., for a new roof and gutters for its parsonage, used in partnership with Love INC of Greater Hershey.
- \$5,000 to Ambler (Pa.) Church of the Brethren for flood damage in its basement and fellowship hall, used in partnership with the Interfaith Housing Alliance.

## Rwanda pig project passes on the gift

The Global Food Initiative announced its first grants for 2021:

- \$3,500 to purchase feed for a pig project of the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda. This year the "passing the gift" phase of the project begins, in which 180 animals from a central farm established in the project's first year will be given to 90 Twa families over the next three years.
- \$1,000 to St. Peter Lutheran Church Community Garden in Southport, N.C. The garden is designed to connect the senior citizens and youth of the community while promoting fresh vegetables.

## Compelling vision Bible studies are available

**A 13-session Compelling Vision Bible Study Series** is available in English and Spanish at [brethren.org/compelling-vision](http://brethren.org/compelling-vision). A project of the Compelling Vision Working Group, the series will help church members study the compelling vision statement coming to Annual Conference this year.

## Personnel notes

**Chris Douglas**, Annual Conference director, retires from the Church of the Brethren staff on Oct. 1, after working for the denomination for more than 35 years. She began as staff for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Urban Ministry in 1985. She went on to serve as full-time director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry 1990-2009. During that time, she took on expanded responsibilities for leadership development events, increased attendance at National Youth Conference, and expanded the youth workcamp program. She mentored numerous Brethren Volunteer Service workers as they coordinated six National Youth Conferences. She became Annual Conference director on Sept. 6, 2009, and by the time of her retirement will have directed 11 Annual Conferences (the 2020 event was canceled because of the pandemic). As the first ever to be held virtually, the 2021 Conference represents a culminating challenge in Douglas' career.

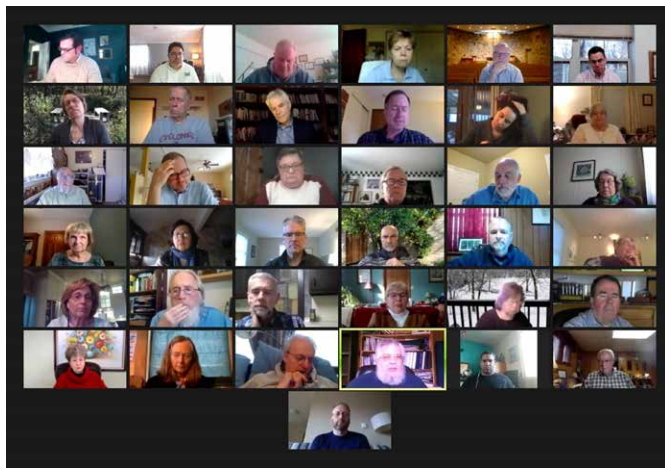
**Ruoxia Li and Eric Miller** began March 8 as co-executive directors of Global Mission, working remotely from China until able to relocate to the US. Since January 2020, they have been Global Mission and Service workers at Yangquan You'ai Hospital in Pinding, Shanxi Province. The hospital takes its name from the original hospital

founded in 1911 by Church of the Brethren missionaries in China. Li is founder and president of You'aiCare, a managed hospice and home based care service in partnership with the hospital. Miller has worked since 2012 as consulting director for International Partnerships at the hospital. He grew up in York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren while Li grew up in Shouyang, the location of another past Brethren mission post in Shanxi Province.

**Norman and Carol Spicher Waggy** have concluded a year of work as interim directors of Global Mission, starting on March 2, 2020.

**Debbie Noffsinger** began Feb. 15 in a newly restructured, salaried position of part-time Annual Conference assistant. Since 2010, she has worked on a seasonal basis as registration assistant. She is a freelance graphic designer who has created many logos and publications for church programs, and is a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill.

**Victoria Crouter** has begun as accounting associate for Brethren Benefit Trust. She holds a bachelor's degree from Trinity International University and started her career in the finance department of another Church Benefits Association organization.



## District executives meet virtually

**The Council of District Executives** started off the year with the first of two annual meetings, in a virtual format. The meeting Jan. 25-28 included worship, reports from Annual Conference agencies and the Mission and Ministry Board, and conversation with the denomination's Leadership Team.

The group also thought together about the future of district ministry and how districts can adapt and transform in order to continue providing support, encouragement, and connection to congregations.

Time was spent remembering Terry Grove, former executive of Atlantic Southeast District, who passed away suddenly in December 2020. Sonja Griffith, who retired in March as executive of Western Plains District, led the closing worship.

## Board publicizes strategic plan

**The Mission and Ministry Board** has published interpretive documents for its new strategic plan in three languages—English, Spanish, and Haitian Kreyol. "We pray that congregations and districts will be energized by understanding how the Mission and Ministry Board and Church of the Brethren staff will be guided by this plan in the years to come," said Lauren Seganos Cohen, a board member on the Strategic Planning Committee. Go to [brethren.org/strategicplan](http://brethren.org/strategicplan).

### JESUS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

*Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.*



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