

Brethren endorse effort to repeal Selective Service

The Church of the Brethren has endorsed the Selective Service Repeal Act (H.R. 2509 and S. 1139)—legislation to repeal the Military Selective Service Act—introduced in Congress on April 14 with bipartisan support in the House and Senate. The endorsement was made on the recommendation of long-term partner the Center on Conscience and War (CCW), and on the basis of Annual Conference statements.

The bill offers an alternative when others are urging Congress to expand draft registration to women as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2022.

The CCW is one of a number of peace and justice and faith-based organizations that are endorsing the legislation, including the Friends Committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, Pax Christi USA, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

“Even though no one has been drafted in almost 50 years, the Selective Service System continues to do harm, as millions of men have been denied access to federal jobs, money for higher education, and in some states, driver’s licenses and admission to state universities,” said the CCW. “This bill includes language that overturns the penalties for failure to register, including bars to citizenship, while it also protects conscientious objectors.

“As the Supreme Court and Congress debate the merits of the draft in the



Children’s Disaster Services works at border

Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) in late April deployed a team to the US/Mexico border in Texas. The team provided creative play opportunities for migrant children and respite for parents before the next leg of their journey. The team served about 100 children each day.

The growing humanitarian crisis along the southern US border has led to increased urgency to help migrant families seeking asylum. In March, the US government picked up nearly 19,000 children traveling alone across the border, the largest monthly number ever recorded.

CDS is in conversation with partner organizations handling the influx of children and families from the border, discovering ways to contribute to the care of these minors, especially ages 4 to 12. CDS expects to respond to additional locations in the future.

coming months, they essentially will be faced with two choices: extend the draft—and the harm—to women or abolish it altogether. This bipartisan legislation can help shift the conversation toward the latter option: ending the draft once and for all.”

The legislation includes provision for those employed by the Selective Service System to transfer to other positions in the executive branch.

Global Brethren survey essential characteristics

The Global Church of the Brethren Communion has taken a survey of essential characteristics for a church to be considered Church of the Brethren. The survey, which closed at the end of April, was published in English, Spanish, Kreyol, and Portuguese.

The communion is an organization of the 11 registered Church of the Brethren denominations in the US, India, Nigeria, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Spain, Venezuela, and the Great Lakes region of Africa—the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Survey findings may assist decisions about theological and denominational identity, criteria for churches to join the communion, and what education is needed for church members.

National Youth Conference 2022 theme, dates, cost are announced

National Youth Conference (NYC) 2022 be held July 23-28 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo., with a focus on Colossians 2:5-7 and the theme “Foundational.” The registration fee of \$550 includes food, lodging, and programing. Youth who have completed ninth grade through one year of college at the time (or are age equivalent) and their adult advisors may attend. Online registration will open in early 2022.



Personnel notes

Fabiola Fernandez resigned from the Information Technology department of the Church of the Brethren on May 21, to accept a position with the city of Elgin, Ill. She served in the IT department since May 23, 2016, first as systems specialist at the General Offices in Elgin, and then as manager of IT.

Brethren Disaster Ministries builds homes in Ohio

Brethren Disaster Ministries is working with the Miami Valley Long Term Recovery Operations Group, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to build homes for tornado survivors in Trotwood, Ohio.

A groundbreaking took place April 14 on the first homes that are part of the Tornado Survivors Pathway to Homeownership Project (Pathways Project). The project provides qualified tornado survivors who are not currently homeowners the opportunity to become homeowners. Applicants work with the HomeOwnership Center of Greater Dayton to become mortgage-ready while volunteer teams construct or rebuild homes on properties donated by the jurisdictions.



Kim Gingrich began May 17 as interim program assistant for Brethren Disaster Ministries' rebuilding program, working out of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Since January 2014, she has been a disaster project leader, serving and living at rebuilding project sites.

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich will begin Aug. 23 as director of Annual Conference. She is an ordained minister working as adjunct faculty at the Brethren Academy and program director at Camp Pine Lake in Iowa. Gingrich has provided leadership for the denomination's compelling vision process and served on the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee, Revitalization Task Force, and 300th Anniversary Committee. She coordinated the 1990 National Youth Conference as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker, and has helped with later ones. A member of Open Circle Church of the Brethren in Burnsville, Minn., Gingrich has been a trustee for Bethany Theological Seminary, moderator of Northern Plains District, and a writer of devotionals and curriculum for Brethren Press.

Jennifer Houser begins Aug. 2 as director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. She is a licensed minister currently serving as part-time pastor at Crest Manor Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind., and a reference associate at Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library. She is a graduate of Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and holds a master of divinity from Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C., where she worked as archival assistant.

Zechariah Houser begins Aug. 9 as coordinator of short-term service for Brethren Volunteer Service, working from the General Offices. He is a licensed minister and part-time pastor at Crest Manor Church of the Brethren. He is a graduate of Messiah College and



#SleevesUpBrethren2021

A virtual blood drive is being held alongside the virtual Annual Conference the year. Brethren are encouraged to give blood in their own areas, between June 15 and July 15. Pledge by going to www.brethren.org/virtualblooddrive2021 or contact bdm@brethren.org or 800-451-4407 ext. 1.

holds a master of divinity from Duke Divinity School.

Lee Marsh began May 17 as Buildings and Grounds assistant at the General Offices. He previously was a truck driver at Nu-Way Transportation and warehouse manager/driver at Goodman Distribution Inc.

William W. (Bill) Wenger has resigned as Western Pennsylvania District executive minister, as of Oct. 31. He started as an interim in January 2017. During his tenure, he oversaw changes in district ministries including sale of the district retirement community and stewarding of the financial resources of Camp Harmony.

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