

Elections and appointments

Annual Conference moderator-elect:

Madalyn Metzger of Goshen City (Ind.)
Church of the Brethren

Conference secretary: **David K. Shumate**,
Daleville (Va.) Church of the Brethren

Program and Arrangements Committee:

Jacob Crouse, Washington (D.C.) City
Church of the Brethren

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee: **Angela Finet**, Mountville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

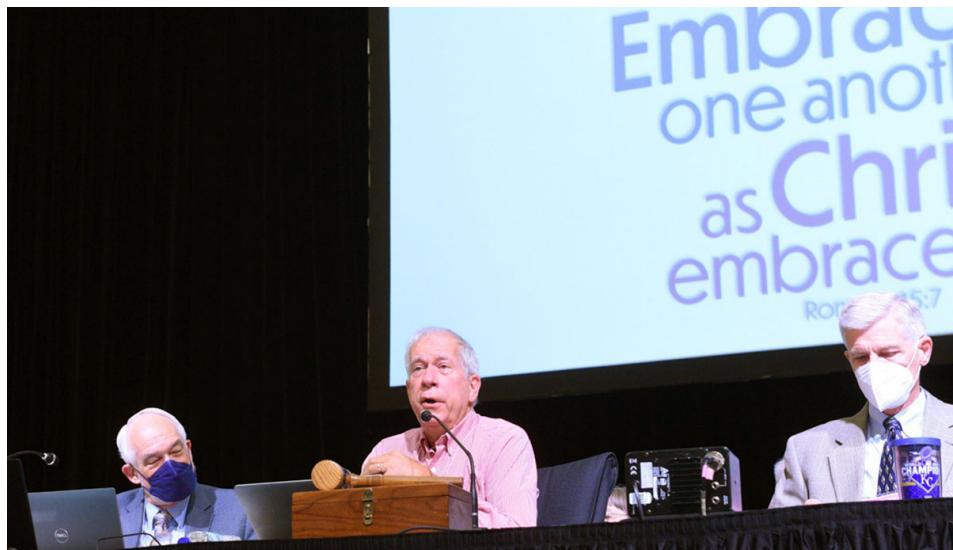
Mission and Ministry Board – Area 1: **Joel Gibbel**, York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren; Area 2: **Rosanna Eller McFadden**, Creekside Church of the Brethren, Elkhart, Ind.; affirmed: **Michaela Alphonse**, Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren

Bethany Theological Seminary Trustees – representing colleges: **Jonathan Paul Frye**, Monitor Church of the Brethren, McPherson, Kan.; representing clergy: **Laura Stone**, Manchester (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; affirmed: **Darla Kay Bowman Deardorff**, Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren, Durham, N.C.; **Michele Firebaugh**, Freeport (Ill.) Church of the Brethren

Eder Financial Board: **Kevin R. Boyer**, Plymouth (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; reported: **Donna March**, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.; **Randy Yoder**, Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa.; **Katherine Allen Haff**, Manchester (Ind.) Church of the Brethren

On Earth Peace Board: **Doug Richard**, Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren, Mifflinburg, Pa.; affirmed: **Beverly S. Eikenberry**, Manchester (Ind.) Church of the Brethren; **Jessica (Jessie) Houff**, Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren; **Tamera Shaw** of Arlington, Va.

For more news, photos, daily journals, and worship recordings see www.brethren.org/news/coverage/annual-conference-2022. Order Wrap-Up and Sermon DVDs at www.brethrenpress.com. This Wrap Up was produced by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, director of News Services, with Jan Fischer Bachman, Keith Hollenberg, Russ Otto, Donna Parcell, Frank Ramirez, Glenn Riegel, Frances Townsend.



Moderator David Sollenberger presides, with moderator-elect Tim McElwee and secretary James Beckwith.
Photo by Glenn Riegel

Delegates handle full business agenda

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference returned in-person in 2022, with an online option for nondelegates. The Conference also returned to a busy business schedule after focusing on the compelling vision in 2021.

Proposal to update polity for agencies: Delegates adopted “Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies” as proposed by the Leadership Team (the Conference officers, general secretary, district executive representative, and the Conference director ex-officio).

This item originated in 2017 in response to a recommendation from On Earth Peace—one of three Conference agencies along with Bethany Seminary and Eder Financial (formerly Brethren Benefit Trust). A lengthy discussion brought up a variety of concerns but, in the end, delegates approved the proposal with a two-thirds majority.

At its heart are new roles and responsibilities assigned to the Standing Committee of district delegates:

- creating and maintaining a covenant of agreement with each agency,
- handling requests to become agencies,
- receiving annual reports from agencies,
- developing a process for maintaining good relationships with agencies and to address concerns in agency relationships, and
- recommending to the Conference when agency status should be discontinued.

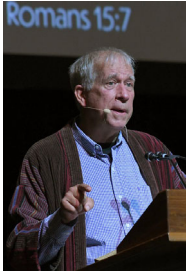
Standing Committee is expected to create the covenants and processes in the next two years, with finalized polity to take effect after the 2024 Annual Conference.

Query sets in motion study/action process: Delegates accepted the concerns of a query from Southern Ohio and Kentucky District asking how the church “can stand with People of Color to offer sanctuary from violence and dismantle systems of oppression and racial inequity in our congregations, neighborhoods, and throughout the nation?” The following response was adopted along with implementation through a two-year study/action process led by the district and On Earth Peace.

(continued on p. 2)



Irvin Heishman, co-chair of the board of On Earth Peace, speaks from the floor during business.
Photo by Keith Hollenberg



Glimpses of worship and Bible study: (from left) preachers David Sollenberger, Leonor Ochoa, Anna Lisa Gross, Nathan Rittenhouse, Belita Mitchell, and Bible study leaders Denise Kettering Lane and Stephen Breck Reid. Photos by Glenn Riegel and Keith Hollenberg

By the numbers

1,315 total registration including 425 delegates, 748 nondelegates attending in person, 142 nondelegates attending virtually.

\$39,295-plus received in offerings, including offerings received onsite, online, and since the close of the Conference. This includes \$6,598.55 to support Annual Conference; \$8,609.46 for the Church of the Brethren's Core Ministries; \$7,467.48 for ministerial training for international Church of the Brethren leaders; \$3,907.41 for transportation for international guests attending Annual Conference; and \$12,712.71 for Girls, Inc. of Omaha, this year's "Witness to the Host City." (*Numbers as of July 19.*)

8.2 percent increase approved for the Minimum Cash Salary Table for pastors, responding to the current rate of inflation.

105 pints of blood collected, including 9 "double reds."

12 projects, fellowships, and congregations were welcomed:

From Atlantic Southeast District, all in Florida: Eglise des Freres Haitian, West Palm Beach; Gospel Assembly of LeHigh Acres; Haitian Church of the Brethren, Naples; Haitian Church of the Brethren, Orlando; Iglesia des los Hermanos Nuevo Comienzo, Kissimmee; Jesus Lounge Ministry, Del Ray Beach; Lorida (Fla.) Iglesia des los Hermanos; Ministerio Jehova Es mi Pastor, Fort Pierce; Tabernacle the Restoration, Lauderdale Lakes; Unify Christian Church of the Brethren, North Miami.

From Atlantic Northeast District: Ebenezer Church of the Brethren, Lampeter, Pa.; Un Nuevo Renacer, Mountville, Pa.

(continued from p. 1) **Statement in response to Query: People of Color:** "We recognize the struggles faced by many of our sisters and brothers of color and believe the church should be agents of change. We encourage congregations, districts, agencies, and other denominational entities to continue to follow the teachings of Jesus by living out the great commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. We understand the great diversity that the word neighbor implies. So we encourage congregations to study the teachings of Jesus and how they apply to our relationships with all people of color, to express solidarity with all people of color, offer sanctuary from all forms of violence, and identify and dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions, and then begin to live out those findings by being Jesus in the neighborhood."

New documents guide pastors' salaries and benefits: A new "Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement and Revised Guidelines for Pastors' Salaries and Benefits" and a "Revised Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors" were adopted as presented by the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee. The committee has worked since 2018 to review compensation practices and create a fairer and easier framework for calculating pastors' pay and benefits, especially at a time when 77 percent of Church of the Brethren pastors are less than full time or less than fully compensated. With help from Eder Financial, the committee also developed a compensation calculator as an online tool for congregations and pastors.

Committee to study accessibility: The Conference adopted "Query: Breaking Down Barriers—Increasing Access to Denominational Events" and elected a three-person study committee: Jeanne Davies, Brandon Grady, and Daniel Poole.

Amendments to "Ethics in Ministry Relations" polity: Amended was a section about appeals that involve termination of a ministerial license or ordination by a district. Amendments were proposed by Standing Committee, in order to facilitate the process.

Revisions to the bylaws: The revisions were adopted. Brought by the Mission and Ministry Board, they make a variety of nonsubstantial changes.

Standing Committee actions: Nominating Committee recommendations were approved for a new process for nominations from the floor, to become an item of business for 2023, and a request for a study committee on calling denominational leadership.

Four wide-ranging recommendations from a task team holding conversations with On Earth Peace were approved. They call for action to address expectations and processes regarding agencies, how Conference decisions and statements are received and implemented, a review of the structure of the Church of the Brethren to address "deep dysfunction," and a time for confession and repentance of how "theological differences around human sexuality have too often been manifested in bullying, violence, and a general sense of dismissal toward one another and specifically toward our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters," citing James 5:16.

Glimpses of (from left) worship center, musicians, convention center, junior high service project, exhibit hall. Photos by Keith Hollenberg, Donna Parcell, and Frances Townsend

