Mission and Ministry Board sets budget

The Mission and Ministry Board, led by chair Carl Fike and assisted by chair-elect Colin Scott and general secretary David Steele, approved a budget parameter for Core Ministries of $5,217,000 for 2023 at a pre-Annual Conference meeting in Omaha, Neb. The proposal is for a break-even budget.

In financial reporting, the board learned that the total asset balance as of May represents a $4.7 million decrease from the beginning of the year. The investment balance has decreased $5 million, including market performance and draws. However, giving to denominational ministries is up significantly over last year, representing the highest giving total since May 2010.

In response to high inflation, the board approved a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment for employee compensation, taking effect immediately. Another 3 percent increase begins in January.

A position for an executive director overseeing Discipleship Ministries and the Office of Ministry was approved, including financial implementation through use of unrestricted reserves from the Bequest Quasi-endowment.

General secretary David Steele thanked Discipleship Ministries staff Josh Brockway and Stan Dueck for serving as co-coordinators since an executive director was last in place.

The board adopted new initiatives recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee, including a “foreground vision” titled “Putting Away Our Swords (Kingian Non-Violence Training)” for board members and director-level staff to be trained in Kingian nonviolence.

International guests were welcomed from three countries: Ariel Rosario, church president, and Anastacia Bueno from the Dominican Republic; Santos Terrero, church president, and Maribel Roa and Welinthon Perez from Spain; and Etienne Nsanzimama, church president, and Theoneste Sentabire from Rwanda.

Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren was recognized as a new member of the Open Roof Fellowship.

The board called an Executive Committee for 2022-2023: Lauren Seganos Cohen, Kathy Mack, and J. Roger Schrock, to serve with chair Carl Fike and chair-elect Colin Scott.
Church ministries respond to extreme flood events

After devastating flooding hit areas of Missouri, eastern Kentucky, and other states, staff of Brethren Disaster Ministries were busy monitoring the situation and identifying needs. Conference calls and meetings were held with FEMA, Kentucky Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), and district leadership in Missouri and Arkansas and Southern Ohio and Kentucky districts.

District staff were in touch with Church of the Brethren congregations in affected areas of Kentucky. As of early August, the buildings of the Flat Creek and Mud Lick congregations were not affected.

By mid-August, Material Resources had sent three shipments of relief goods to Kentucky on behalf of Church World Service including cleanup buckets, hygiene kits and toothpaste, school kits, and blankets.

Children’s Disaster Services also responded at the request of the national Red Cross. A first team of volunteers began serving in Kentucky on Aug. 6. Another team responded in St. Louis.

Online donations to assist those affected by flooding can be made at www.brethren.org/give-kentucky-flooding.

In addition, CDS had volunteers serving families seeking asylum in the Washington, D.C., area, who had been bused from Texas and dropped off in the nation’s capital with few provisions. Families were receiving support from churches and mutual aid groups. Local and regional Church of the Brethren congregations were assisting in a variety of ways.

Gretchen Zience provides volunteer administrative support as liaison to the district administrative assistant.

Andrew Hamilton began July 23 executive minister for Southeastern District. He holds degrees from John Brown University in Arkansas; Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary; the University of St Andrews, Scotland; and Evangelical Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. He has pastored churches in Northern Ohio and Atlantic Northeast Districts, and has served on the Mission and Ministry Board.

Zechariah Houser resigned Aug. 12 as coordinator of short-term service, after having worked with FaithX and BVS recruitment for about a year.

Martha “Martie” Hummer on Aug. 20 joined the Brethren Disaster Ministries project leadership team as a BVSer, serving at the Waverly, Tenn., rebuilding site.

Beth Martin of Beaver Falls, Pa., began Aug. 15 as marketing director for Eder Financial (formerly Brethren Benefit Trust). She holds a bachelor’s in English and writing from Slippery Rock University and in 2023 will complete a master’s in marketing communications at St. Bonaventure University.

Annabeth (AB) Roeschley has begun as executive director of the Brethren Mennonite Council (BMC). Roeschley brings years of advocacy experience in the Mennonite Church, and succeeds former executive director Carol Wise who is now interim pastor at La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.

Allison Snyder in early July completed two years as intern for the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. Ashley Scarr, of San Diego (Calif.) First Church of the Brethren, began June 27 as the 2022-2023 intern.

Julie Watson resigned June 17 as administrative secretary for Northern Ohio District, due to health concerns. She worked for the district for more than eight years.