

WrapUp

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference 2023 ■ Cincinnati, Ohio

Viviendo el amor de Dios
Viv Lanmou Bondye A
Rayuwan Kaunar Allah
Living God's Love

Ephesians 5:1-2
Languages: Spanish, Creole, Hausa, English

Elections and appointments

Annual Conference moderator-elect:

Dava Cruise Hensley, Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren

Program and Arrangements Committee:

Gail Heisel, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits

Advisory Committee: **Lori Hurt**, Boones Mill (Va.) Church of the Brethren

Mission and Ministry Board – Area 2:

Tina Hunt, Mansfield (Ohio) Church of the Brethren; Area 3: **Deirdre Moyer**, Eden (N.C.) Church of the Brethren; *affirmed:* **Meghan Horne Mauldin**, Mill Creek Church of the Brethren, Tryon, N.C.; **Robert Jackson**, Lower Miami Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Ohio

Bethany Theological Seminary trustees – representing laity: **Mark Gingrich**, Open Circle Church of the Brethren, Burnsville, Minn.;

clergy: **Jennifer Hosler**, Washington (D.C.) City Church of the Brethren; *affirmed:* **Susan Stern Boyer**, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren

Eder Financial Board: **Dennis Kingery**, Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, Littleton, Colo.; *board/constituency-elected:* **Russ Matteson**, Pacific Southwest District, representing the Ministers' Association and Council of District Executives; **Eunice Erb Culp**, Indiana; **Audrey Myer**, Pennsylvania.

On Earth Peace Board: **Audrey Zunkel-DeCoursey**, Living Stream Church of the Brethren; *affirmed:* **Jennifer K. Scarr**, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren



Moderator Tim McElwee (center) presides over the 2023 Annual Conference, with moderator-elect Madalyn Metzger (left) and secretary David Shumate (right). Photo by Glenn Riegel

Resolution lamenting Doctrine of Discovery leads Annual Conference business agenda

Delegates approved “With Actions and in Truth: A Lament on the Doctrine of Discovery.” The doctrine is a rationale for historical colonialism by Europeans around the world, which originated in a series of Christian writings and papal decrees particularly from the 15th century. The resolution was brought by the Mission and Ministry Board. It addresses injustice in the church’s history with Indigenous people, even if indirect, and encourages Brethren to learn the history, name the wrongs, recognize ways in which we have benefitted, and take time to lament that wrong. The church is called to develop relationships with Indigenous communities and seek ways to bring healing and reparation to Native people. Delegates spent more than the scheduled time discussing the resolution, ultimately passing it by a large margin.

Silent confession and repentance: Following a decision last year by the Standing Committee of district delegates, the Conference observed a time of silence for “confession and repentance concerning our mistreatment of one another in our discussion of human sexuality.” The time began with the reading of a statement from Standing Committee, continued with several minutes of silence, and concluded with these words: “We know our God hears us and will help us move forward together, and that fruit will be born out of this time of confession, for the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”

Calling leadership: A Standing Committee request for a study committee to research the process of nominating and calling church leadership was approved. The request named the challenges around assembling the ballot that is voted at Annual Conference. Named to the committee were Eric Bishop, Erika Clary, and Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred.

Process for nominations from the floor: Delegates approved a new two-step process for nominations from the floor, brought by Standing Committee. The change requires those making nominations to first state reasons why the ballot for a particular position is inadequate. Delegates must approve their willingness to accept a new nomination based on the reason offered.

Eder articles of organization: Delegates approved restated and amended articles of organization for Eder Financial.



Photo by Donna Parcell

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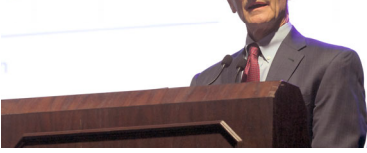
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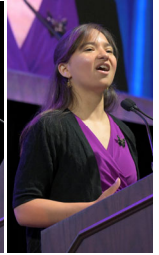
Church of the Brethren Annual Conference 2023 ■ Cincinnati

Love



Preachers (from left):
Moderator Tim McElwee,
Sheila Wise Rowe,
Deanna Brown,
Jody Romero,
and Audri Sway.

Photos by
Glenn Riegel and
Keith Hollenberg



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Ministers continuing education: Since 2002, ministers have been required to do continuing education. The Conference adopted a 2023 version of the document that clarifies guidelines, adds financial responsibility and leadership as a focus area, and pro-rates the number of continuing education units needed.

Standing Committee actions: The district delegates approved the inclusion of “Polity, Position, Policy, and Practice” in the next revision of the *Standing Committee Manual*, and approved review of the Special Response Process “A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues” to be carried out in 2024.

Interim reports: Delegates received progress reports from two Annual Conference study committees—“Standing with People of Color” and “Breaking Down Barriers: Increasing Access to Denominational Events”—and two Standing Committee subcommittees working on implementation of last year’s polity changes related to agencies.

Anniversaries: The Conference celebrated the 100th anniversary of Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and the 75th anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service.

Gun violence: On Earth Peace and a Gun Violence Prevention Action Team organized a walk and prayer vigil in downtown Cincinnati. Three TV stations aired reports on the event.



Photo by Donna Parcell

At right: Annual Conference director Rhonda Pittman Gingrich with elected members of the Program and Arrangements Committee: Nathan Hollenberg, Jacob Crouse, and Beth Jarrett.

Photo by Glenn Riegel



Photo by Keith Hollenberg



Photo by Glenn Riegel

By the numbers

1,393 total registration including 441 delegates and 952 nondelegates.

\$29,330.17 received in offerings including \$14,431.72 for Core Ministries offerings that highlighted Global Mission, Brethren Volunteer Service, and Discipleship and Leadership Formation; \$8,556.23 for Annual Conference operating expenses; \$6,342.22 for Annual Conference translation.

\$12,698.11 given for Fount House, this year’s “Witness to the Host City.”

\$12,895 raised by the silent auction with one-third of the proceeds supporting Annual Conference and two-thirds supporting Brethren Disaster Ministries.

\$3,740.80 raised by the quilt auction of the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren, benefiting the Nigeria Crisis Fund.

120 units collected by the blood drive.

5.3 percent increase approved for the Minimum Cash Salary Table for pastors.

1 project, 1 fellowship, and 1 congregation welcomed:

- *Madtown Church of the Brethren* in Madison, Wis., a project of Illinois and Wisconsin District.
- *East Dayton (Ohio) Fellowship* in Southern Ohio and Kentucky District.
- *Gordonsville (Va.) Chapel*, a congregation in Shenandoah District.

Photos by (from left) Glenn Riegel, Donna Parcell, Laura Sellers, Keith Hollenberg.

