

Chris Brumbaugh-Cayford

Chris Brumbaugh-Cayford



Junior highs gather at Juniata

For the first time since 2019, National Junior High Conference met at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., with 11 districts represented among the 164 participants. The event is sponsored by Youth and Young Adult Ministries, led by director Becky Ullom Naugle.

Worship invited participants to ask, “What does God want from me?” Ecumenical guests Hyacinth Stevens and Damien Feyjoo focused on celebrating the joy of our faith and understanding the depth of mercy God offers. Amber Harris,

ordained in the Church of the Brethren and executive director of SPARK (Share Peace and Rekindle Kindness Inc.), encouraged participants to hope and act courageously while watching for the Holy Spirit’s movement.

The group also traveled to the college’s field station, an environmental research and education center at Raystown Lake. Learning stations included “greening your church,” planting a pollinator garden, and considering our place in God’s creation.



Jeff Boshart/GFI

Meetings address divide in DR

From June 9 to 11, as part of ongoing work to encourage unity and reconciliation in Iglesia de los Hermanos Republica Dominicana (Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic), retired pastor Alix Sable of Lancaster, Pa., and Global Food Initiative manager Jeff Boshart met with church leaders.

Meetings were held with the board of the DR church and with leadership of Comunidad de Fe (Community of Faith) made up of Kreyol-speaking congregations of Haitians living in the

DR and Dominicans of Haitian descent. The two groups separated nearly five years ago, during an annual conference when a proposal seeking equal representation in board positions from the two sides of the church failed to be ratified.

A draft plan calling for two separate districts was developed by Dominican American pastors who are members of Global Mission’s country advisory team for the DR. Church leaders in the DR requested more time to discuss the plan.



Post this page You are welcome to photocopy these news pages. For more Newsline stories, go to www.brethren.org/news

Church leaders respond to reporting of abuse by former employee

Church of the Brethren leaders have received new reporting about sexual abuse by a former member of the denominational staff, which occurred in a work setting several decades ago. The book *Her Words, My Voice* by Heidi Ramer has brought new attention to the events. Victim and alleged perpetrator were adults at the time, and both are now deceased. Action was taken by church leaders at the time.

The General Secretary's office and the denomination's Mission

and Ministry Board have been part of the response. A meeting was held with family of the abused person. More actions related to past practices and current policies and procedures are expected, in order to ensure a safe workplace and to improve organizational responses. Currently, a process for responding to sexual abuse allegations is incorporated in the *Employee Handbook* and denominational staff are required to complete an annual training for prevention of abuse and workplace misconduct.



Albin Hillier/WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) celebrated its 75th anniversary on June 25 during meetings of its Central Committee. The Church of the Brethren is a founding member. Among significant actions taken by the committee were adoption of bylaws for a new Commission on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, appointment of 17 youth advisors to strengthen the voice of young people in the WCC, and approval of a Strategic Plan 2023-2030 with "Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity" as the theme. Numerous statements addressed global concerns ranging from endorsement of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to ecumenical solidarity with Africa and people of African descent to artificial intelligence.

Personnel

Sam Carter began July 17 as sorter and packer of medical supplies for Material Resources at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

Shelly K. Haas of Roanoke (Va.) Oak Grove Church of the Brethren began July 15 as part-time financial services coordinator for Virlina District.

Hannah Jarrett began June 5 as director of Camp Bethel in Fincastle, Va. She succeeds **Barry LeNoir**, who retired June 30. Over the years, Jarrett has worked for the camp as a counselor-in-training, senior counselor, summer program coordinator, and administrative assistant. Camp Bethel also hired

Elizabeth Brancati as guest services coordinator and **Becca Duncan** as food services coordinator.

Michael B. Leiter, a Church of the Brethren mem-

ber from Frederick, Md., started May 15 as client services manager for Eder Financial. He holds a bachelor's in business administration from Messiah University, Grantham, Pa., and a master of business administration from Hood College in Frederick.

Pardis Mahdavi has been named the 19th president of the University of La Verne, Calif. She brings more than 20 years of scholarship, experience, and leadership in higher education, most recently serving as provost and executive vice president at the University of Montana. Mahdavi succeeds **Devorah Lieberman**, who has retired after serving as ULV president since 2011.

Carolyn Neher of York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill., began June 5 as associate director of Children's Disaster Services. A CDS volunteer

since 2014, Neher has deployed to six disasters, is trained as a project manager and critical response childcare volunteer, and is a volunteer trainer. She holds a bachelor's in psychology from McPherson (Kan.) College and a master of education in early childhood leadership and advocacy from National Louis University.

Stanley Noffsinger retired May 31 as chief executive officer of Timbercrest Senior Living Communities in North Manchester, Ind. He began at Timbercrest in February 2019 as long-term interim executive. Noffsinger is a former general secretary of the Church of the Brethren. **Christine Huiras**, most recently chief operating officer at Timbercrest, has been named executive director.

Traci Rabenstein, director of Mission Advancement for

the Church of the Brethren, was promoted to executive director of the department.

H. Kendall Rogers has retired as professor of historical studies at Bethany Theological Seminary, completing his final courses this spring. He taught at Manchester College (now Manchester University) in North Manchester, Ind., for 30 years, then joined the Bethany faculty in 2008. He has been ordained in the Church of the Brethren to the ministry of teaching since 1984.

Riley Rowan began June 12 as business development director for Eder Financial. He holds a double major in marketing and management from Judson University in Elgin, Ill.

Winni (Sara) Wanionek resigned May 31 as sorter and packer of medical supplies for Material Resources.