

General secretary issues pastoral statement for Haiti

Church of the Brethren general secretary David Steele issued a pastoral statement for Haiti in early March, at a time when the island nation was under a state of emergency and experiencing widespread violence. The statement was shared in three languages: English, Haitian Kreyol, and French.

Directed to l'Eglise des Freres d'Haiti (the Church of the Brethren in Haiti), Haitian Church of the Brethren congregations in the US, extended family, and the Haitian diaspora community, the statement said, in part, "Please receive with this letter the care and love of the whole of the Church of the Brethren. Our denomination continues to stand with you and the Haitian people now as we have during previous times of trial and trouble, through storms and earthquakes, economic and political turmoil."

DR church to aid displaced Haitians

Brethren Disaster Ministries and Iglesia de los Hermanos (the Church of the Brethren) in the Dominican Republic (DR) are working together on an effort to aid displaced Haitians.

A grant of \$5,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund is providing emergency food to Haitian citizens fleeing across the border to the Dominican Republic and away from the violence in Haiti. Haiti and the DR share the same Caribbean island.

The DR church reports that thousands of Haitians have been fleeing into the DR due to the violence, killing of family members, lack of food, and homes being taken by the gangs in Haiti. In spite of a DR government position against the displaced Haitians, the church is providing some humanitarian aid.

BFIA grants issued to churches, camp

Brethren Faith in Action grants were given to the following local ministries:

- \$5,000 to a "Brethren Building Beloved Community" project of congregations in Indiana and Ohio.
- \$5,000 to a "Love Your Neighbors" outreach of Jesus Lounge Ministry in Atlantic Southeast District.
- \$5,000 to a coffeehouse outreach at GraceWay International Community Church in the Baltimore area.
- \$5,000 to a gun buy back program supported by Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren, East Lansing, Mich.
- \$5,000 to Myerstown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren's upgrade

of technology for community outreach.

- \$5,000 to the Blessing Box project at Williamson Road Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.
- \$5,000 to multiple community outreach projects of Circle of Peace Church of the Brethren, Peoria, Ariz.
- \$4,304.82 to community outreach projects of Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren.
- \$2,500 to a community meal at Camp Pine Lake in Iowa.
- \$1,600.80 to a family movie night program at Lanark (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.
- \$1,000 to a ministry for children and families at Roaring Spring (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.
- \$480.24 to Day of Caring projects of Eel River Community Church of the Brethren, Silver Lake, Ind.



Charly Brumbaugh-Cayford

Office of Ministry director Nancy Sollenberger Heishman led orientation for nine trainers who will lead required ethics training for ministers to renew their credentials. In addition to the current curriculum written by Jim Benedict, a new set of addendum materials will be introduced on clergy ethics and artificial intelligence, guidelines for the use of social media, and a multidimensional approach to intercultural ethics. The trainers (from left): Heishman; Dave Kerkove, pastor of South Waterloo (Iowa) Church of the Brethren; Joe Detrick, interim executive for Mid-Atlantic District; Gail Erisman Valeta, pastor of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, Denver, Colo.; Nathan Hollenberg, pastor of Linville Creek Church of the Brethren, Broadway, Va.; Ilexene Alphonse, pastor of Miami (Fla.) Haitian Church of the Brethren; Cathy Huffman, director of Ministry Formation for Virilina District; Janet Ober Lambert, director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership; Del Keeney, retired pastor from Mechanicsburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren; and Ramón Torres, retired pastor of Puerta del Cielo Church of the Brethren, Reading, Pa.

Shine Everywhere is introduced

The Shine curriculum of Brethren Press and MennoMedia is introducing a new initiative called Shine Everywhere, to provide new avenues of communication between those who create Shine curriculum and the congregations and families who use it.

“Shine Everywhere allows us to give focused time and attention to discovering and practicing the ‘everywhere’ habits that grow faith in children,” said project facilitator Shana Peachey Boshart. “We look forward to deepening our relationships with congregations and families, listening for what is working to grow faith, and providing helpful resources for churches, families, and children.”

A grant of \$1.25 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. supports development of Shine Everywhere. The grant is part of Lilly Endowment’s Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative, which aims to help parents and caregivers share their faith and values with their children.



Marietta Witkovsky-Eder

Older adult FaithX participants spent a week at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla., completing a variety of volunteer projects under the guidance of camp director Mike Neff. Worship was full of conversation and singing led by devotion leader Carol Elmore. The week also included time for fellowship and recreation. A day trip took the group to Silver Springs State Park for a boat ride to view birds, manatees, and other wildlife.

Personnel

Jennifer Hosler began April 22 as part-time manager of the Global Food Initiative (GFI), in the Global Mission office. She will work as a remote employee from Washington, D.C., where she is part of the pastoral team at Washington City Church of the Brethren. Hosler has served on the GFI advisory board and is a current trustee for Bethany Theological Seminary. Her previous work on the denominational staff included several years as a mission worker in Nigeria, and service as a consultant for the project “Stories from the Cities.” Her work and consulting on community development projects has included a program in Haiti.

Her language skills include Hausa, Spanish, French, and biblical Hebrew.

Tracy Repmann has left the position of assistant director of Financial Operations at Eder Financial. **Su Holbus** has been hired to the position, as of March 13. She is a registered CPA who most recently was a senior financial analyst with Corporate America Family Credit Union.

Beth Sollenberger began April 1 as quarter-time interim director of administration for Atlantic Southeast District, working from her home in Goshen, Ind., as well as periodically onsite. Prior to her retirement in 2021, Sollenberger was executive

minister for South Central Indiana District for nearly 11 years. She also served for several years in Michigan District in interim leadership roles.

Douglas Veal starts June 25 as executive minister for Mid-Atlantic District. He has been pastoring Wabash (Ind.) Church of the Brethren in South Central Indiana District and also has served pastorates in Southern Ohio and Kentucky District and in Virlina District. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Bridgewater (Va.) College and a master of divinity from Bethany Seminary, and has done Clinical Pastoral Education training through Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Veal has been an instructor

for Virlina’s Christian Growth Institute and the Brethren Leadership Institute of South Central Indiana District. He chaired Virlina’s New Church Development Committee for several years and has been a member of the denomination’s New and Renew Advisory Team for 10 years.

The new **Death Row Support Project (DRSP) Team** started their work in January, following the retirement of founder and former director Rachel Gross: **Rachel Caidor** of Chicago, Ill.; **Tara Collum** of Toronto, Ontario, Canada; **Heidi Gross** of Chicago; **Dina Milito** of Sunnyvale, Calif.; and **Tim Reed** of North Manchester, Ind.



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