



Don Fitzkee, 2026 moderator, washes the feet of Dennis Beckner, 2027 moderator (at left). The dove of peace is brought into worship (at right). Photos: Glenn Riegel

Elections and appointments

Annual Conference moderator-elect: **Amy Gall Ritchie** of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind.

Program & Arrangements Committee: **Natasha Beaumont**, Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, Lebanon, Pa.

Pastoral Compensation & Benefits Advisory Committee: **Chad Whitzel**, Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren

Mission & Ministry Board, Area 3: **Terri Welch Luzynski**, Montezuma Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Va.; Area 5: **Gretchen Zience**, Seattle (Wash.) Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren; at large (affirmed): **Adelia A. Lucatorio**, Good Samaritan Church of the Brethren, Pa.

Bethany Seminary trustees, affirmed: **Leslie Bolser**, Richmond, Ind.; **Drew Hart**, Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren; **Keri Ladouceur**, Raleigh, N.C.; **Steve Longenecker**, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren; **Dominick Peruso**, Huntingdon, Pa.; **Jeff Sheridan**, Richmond, Ind.; **Ben Walters**, Cincinnati (Ohio) Church of the Brethren

Eder Financial board, affirmed: **Kevin Boyer**, Plymouth (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and Etna Green Church of Christ; **Eunice Culp**, West Goshen, Ind.; **Randy Yoder**, Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa.

On Earth Peace board, affirmed: **Susuyu Lassa**, Troy, N.Y.; **Anesu Makufa**, Leeds, the United Kingdom; **Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred**, Spruce Creek, Pa.



Resolutions on weapons transfers, 'Walking Together' with immigrants headline agenda

Two resolutions—"Walking Together: Immigration, Peacemaking, Conscience, and Supporting our Neighbors" and "Resolution on Weapons Transfer"—headed up the Conference agenda. Also on the agenda were elections, an Eder Financial report on its transition of services, and adjustments to ministerial leadership polity, among other business.

Weapons transfers: The delegates adopted the "Resolution on Weapons Transfer" with a solid majority vote.

The paper cites Matthew 5:44b-45, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. . . ." calling the church to "examine and respond to the impacts of the arms industry." Reaffirming the Church of the Brethren commitment to peace "as God's will and the call of Christ" it states "opposition to the US manufacturing and sale of weapons and urges the US government to halt the sale

of arms to other countries."

One section addresses the global impact of the US arms trade, noting that "the United States is currently the world's largest exporter of weapons." Another addresses the Church of the Brethren's historic opposition to war and the defense industry, noting stated opposition to particular types of weaponry including nuclear weapons and drones.

A closing section offers recommendations for action ranging from educating about the US arms trade and the biblical call to peacemaking, to divesting from the arms industry, to public advocacy.

The resolution was adopted by the Mission and Ministry Board in March 2025, but because of the heavy business agenda of the 2025 Annual Conference it was held over to 2026.

'Walking Together': The Mission and Ministry Board brought this resolution, which was adopted with a very strong majority.

It reiterates that "care for immigrants and refugees is an essential part of the Christian and Church of the Brethren ethic of service and peacemaking" and cites biblical foundations and Annual Conference statements. Undergirding statements show the denomination's long history of caring for immigrants and refugees and involvement with civil disobedience.

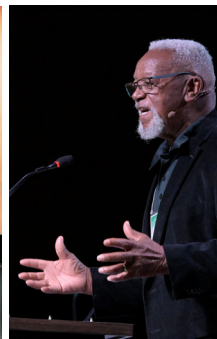
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Photos by Donna Parcell & Lauren Flora





2026 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Fort Wayne, Ind.



A keynote presentation (far left) featured Angelo Mante and youth from Alive Community Outreach. **The preachers** (from left): moderator Don Fitzkee, Beth Jarrett, James Washington, Becky Zapata, Caleb Kragt. Photos: Glenn Riegel & Keith Hollenberg

(continued from page 1)

Noting that “Church of the Brethren history and traditions include radical discipleship, conscientious objection, and participation in civil disobedience,” the resolution indicates that in addition to serving the needs of immigrants and refugees, and doing advocacy of their behalf, more may be needed.

The resolution states, “In cases where government policies are unjust or conflict with biblical teachings, the Church of the Brethren has supported individuals to follow their conscience and in some cases, has encouraged open, nonviolent civil disobedience to such laws.”

A list of calls to action is included for individuals, congregations, districts, and the denomination. In addition, a landing page of resources to help individuals, small groups, and congregations study the resolution and concerns surrounding it is at the webpage www.brethren.org/walking-together.

Eder Financial transition: Eder Financial presented the decision and the process for moving employee retirement and organizational investing services to Everence Financial.

The move will take some months but will leave Eder with only ancillary insurance services and benevolence programs. Most of the Eder staff will lose their jobs. But because Everence is a much larger organization, pensions and investments will be well cared for, the delegates were

assured. When the Eder board and leadership realized that the demographics of the church made long-term operations precarious, they began looking for new partners and Everence was a good fit.

Everence, previously named Menno-nite Mutual Aid, has grown to serve more than 84,000 clients from many historic peace church denominations and others, and is no longer an agency of the Mennonite Church. For years, the Church of the Brethren Pastor’s Housing Fund has been administered by Praxis, a part of Everence. Consistent with shared Anabaptist roots, Everence follows similar investing values as Eder.

The transition should be completed by April 2027. The Eder board has stated its intention to bring a plan for Eder to continue as an Annual Conference agency, and the Standing Committee of district delegates has named a subcommittee to help work on a new agency covenant.

The Eder staff were recognized as the Conference acknowledged that this marks the end of an era for Eder and its predecessor organizations, which have served the Church of the Brethren for 83 years.

Adjustments to ministry leadership polity: Two adjustments to a 2014 Ministry Leadership paper were approved with the two-thirds majority required for polity. One pertains to licensed and the other to commissioned ministers.

One adjustment defines licensing as a

“provisional credential.” This is important because many states require ministers to be “credentialed” to be able to perform weddings. The change also grants more flexibility for the length of licensing being extended beyond 10 years.

The second adjustment simplifies the process for a commissioned minister to seek ordination. In Church of the Brethren polity, a commissioned minister is credentialed to serve in a particular congregation or geographical location. An ordained minister may serve any church across the denomination.

Review and Evaluation Committee: The Church of the Brethren has undertaken a periodic review every decade to evaluate the denomination’s organizational structures and procedures, with a committee assigned to bring recommendations to Annual Conference for possible changes. This decade’s Review and Evaluation Committee, elected in 2025, presented its first interim report.

The committee is seeking feedback from various groups in the church. Districts may contact the committee to set up meetings. Individuals may email reviewandevaluation@brethren.org.

For more: www.brethren.org/news/coverage/ac2026. The Press Team: Jan Fischer Bachman, Lauren Flora, Keith Hollenberg, Daniel Murrell II, Russ Otto, Donna Parcell, Frank Ramirez, Alane Riegel, Glenn Riegel, Frances Townsend, Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford editor.

By the numbers

1,675 people registered including 389 delegates and 1,133 nondelegates onsite plus 153 virtual attendees

1 fellowship was welcomed:

- **Iglesia Cristiana Elohim** in Las Vegas, Nev., Pacific Southwest District

1 new church project was welcomed:

- **The Sanctuary** in rural Indiana, Northern Indiana District

\$54,458.29 total offerings:

- **\$13,605.63** for the **Witness to the Host City** to benefit Alive Community Outreach, with an additional **4 pallets** of material goods donated

- **\$24,334.64** for **Annual Conference** including \$14,268.05 in support of Annual Conference operations and \$10,066.59 for children and youth programming

- **\$16,518.02** for the **Core Ministries of the**

Church of the Brethren including \$9,409.70 received in an offering focused on Global Mission and \$7,108.32 in an offering focused on Discipleship and Leadership Formation

\$14,759 raised by the Silent Auction to undergird the operating budget of Annual Conference

110 units collected by the Blood Drive

4.2 percent increase in cost of living adjustment to minimum cash salary table for pastors