Grants



courtesy of BDM

Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers at work in North Carolina following Hurricane Helene.

Emergency Disaster Fund:

- **$132,000** to Brethren Disaster Ministries supports Hurricane Helene recovery in North Carolina, including rebuilding in Yancey, Buncombe, and Ashe counties. Partnerships with Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders and the Western Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church support a 50-home affordable housing initiative in Black Mountain and rebuilding in Ashe County, respectively.
- **$200,000** to Eglise des Freres au Congo (Church of the Brethren in the Democratic Republic of Congo) supports five months of emergency aid for about 12,400 people displaced by war in eastern DRC and living in refugee camps in Burundi.
- **$75,000** to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) supports women in Ukraine's Odessa and Mykolaiv regions through business training and planning, career guidance, and grants for businesses and vocational training.
- **$55,000** to the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela (ASIGLEH) supports aid following the June 24 double earthquake while long-term plans and budgets are developed. It follows a **$5,000** grant for emergency food and water.
- **$50,000** to IOCC supports 300 children in Gaza with psychosocial care, recreation, and nutrition to help them cope with the trauma of war.
- **$20,000** to the Western Maryland Long-Term Recovery Committee supported repairs to 70–80 homes and construction of 2–4 homes following May 2025 flash flooding. Mid-Atlantic District provided half the funds.
- **$20,000** to the Shepherd Society of Bethlehem Bible College provides food and medical assistance to vulnerable families in Gaza and the West Bank, with an emphasis on children.
- **$15,000** to Child Life Disaster Relief supports responder training and deployment to assist children affected by disasters. Children's Disaster Service, a program of Brethren Disaster Ministries, is a partner.
- **$13,500** supports back surgery for a leader of l'Eglise des Freres au Congo injured in an auto accident while providing refugee relief in Burundi.
- **$10,000** to the Anabaptist Peace Center in Jos, Nigeria, supports storm repairs and programs for families affected by violence. The independent center includes Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria members among its supporters and those it serves.
- **$8,800** to Iglesia Cristiana Viviendo en Amor y Fe (VAF) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, provides cash for vulnerable families to purchase water during drought. The church belongs to the Global Church of the Brethren Communion.
- **$5,000** to ASIGLEH provided building materials, food, water, and blankets to families affected by flooding and landslides following a June 2025 tropical wave.
- **$5,000** to ASIGLEH supported recovery from Hurricane Melissa in Cuba, helping local church leaders provide food, household supplies, and bedding to affected families.

Global Food Initiative:

- **$2,500** to Lighthouse Community Church of the Brethren in Sebring, Fla., supports a food pantry and Wednesday Night Meals serving about 100 people weekly.
- **$2,500** to Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren's Plot of Hope Farm supports its expansion from a small garden to a 4.5-acre urban farm on church property.
- **$2,500** to Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren's Mountaineers' Table Ministry provides food to 112 families weekly.
- **$2,500** to Alpha and Omega Community Center's Food Bank Ministry in Lancaster, Pa., supports about 500–600 people monthly.
- **Up to $15,000** supported Brethren leaders from Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda attending ECHO's East Africa Sustainable Agriculture and Appropriate Technology Symposium in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in late June.

Steele announces plans to conclude service in 2028

David A. Steele will conclude his service as General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren on Aug. 31, 2028, completing 12 years in the role. He looks forward to time with family and serving church and community in other ways.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

"The strength of the church isn't found in any one person or position, but in the people and congregations who live out their faith every day," Steele said. "Their commitment to serving others and building community gives me great hope for the future of our church."

The Mission and Ministry Board will lead the search for his successor.

"I am deeply grateful for David's many years of service to the Church of the Brethren and the wider church," said Kathy Mack, board chair.

Steele will continue serving through the end of his term. The advance announcement provides time for a prayerful search and preparation for his successor. Updates will be shared at www.brethren.org.

Bethany Seminary leaves federal student loan program

Bethany Theological Seminary's trustees approved leaving the federal student loan program at their Sept. 18–20 meeting, following five semesters without student borrowing through the program. A new scholarship also covers full tuition for Church of the Brethren students.

The seminary recently completed its "Flourish" campaign, raising $13.7 million in cash gifts and estate commitments from more than 1,200 donors to support students, faculty innovation, and operations.

Personnel

Joel Brouwer is interim president and CEO of Brethren Hillcrest Homes in La Verne, Calif., succeeding **Matthew Neeley**, who resigned after more than 20 years of service. Brouwer joined Hillcrest in 2023 and brings more than 25 years of financial and strategic leadership experience.

Britnee Linton began Feb. 15 as a Mid-Atlantic District Regional Ministry associate, joining **Charlotte Bear** and **Rusty Curling**. She previously served as co-pastor of Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren and program director at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry Center.

Dan Radcliff, Jeremiah Thompson, and **Ann Vang** resigned from Eder Financial to join Everence Financial. **Radcliff**, program director for Organizational Investing, Deferred Gifts, and Client Services, resigned Oct. 30; **Thompson**, program director of Health and Life Benefits, Aug. 28; and **Vang,** operations coordinator, Products and Services, Sept. 11.

Elizabeth A. Rider will retire June 30, 2027, as president of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College after nearly 40 years of service. She joined the college in 1988 as a psychology professor and became its 16th president in 2022.

Jerry Ruff will step down Dec. 1 as chair of the Shenandoah District Disaster Response Team Committee after more than 25 years leading district disaster response.

Jonathan Whitsel begins Jan. 1, 2027, as Middle Pennsylvania District executive minister. Pastor of Sugar Run Church of the Brethren in Shirleysburg, Pa., since April 2024, he brings 31 years of experience as a self-employed logger and seven years on the Camp Blue Diamond board.

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