

Church of the Brethren
Mission and Ministry Board
General Offices, Elgin, Illinois
October 17-19, 2025

Mission and Ministry Board – Minutes

Friday, October 17

Members present: Kathy Mack (chair), Josiah Ludwick (chair-elect), Michaela Alphonse, Erik Brummett, Daniel Butler, Edward Cesar-Fincher, Barbara Daté, Joel Gibbel, Tina Hunt, Robert Jackson, Sarah Mason, Rosanna Eller McFadden, Deirdre Moyer, Karen Shively Neff, Colby Patton, Eric Ramirez, and Joanna Wave Willoughby

Ex officios present: Don Fitzkee (Moderator), Dennis Beckner (Moderator-elect), David Shumate (Annual Conference secretary), Lynnae Rodeffer (Eder Financial vice president) Matt Guynn (OEP co-executive director), and Pete Kontra (Council of District Executives representative)

Ex officios present online: Jeff Carter (Bethany president)

General Secretary: David Steele

Recorder: Shannon McNeil Smith

Kathy Mack welcomed the Mission and Ministry Board and guests. Everyone shared a story about their baptism. Kathy welcomed the new members of the Board – Sarah Mason, Eric Ramirez, and Dennis Beckner (ex officio).

**Welcome and
Introductions**

Tina Hunt led the Mission and Ministry Board in song.

Gathering Song

Roy Winter and David Steele led a recognition for the Material Resources staff. Roy discussed the history of the Material Resources Program. Roy introduced the staff present on zoom and those who had recently departed – Richard Best, Sam Carter, Melissa Fritz, Brenda Giles, Scott Senseney, Glenna Thompson, and Loretta Wolf. They have served for a combined 183 years.

**Material Resources
Recognition**

Kathy gave a quick overview of the consensus model of decision making and reminded the MMB members about signing or reviewing their mission statements. She introduced the governance monitors and Rosanna McFadden invited the Mission and Ministry Board to show affirmation for each other using affirmation slips during the meeting.

Consent Agenda

Kathy introduced the consent agenda and the minutes needed to approve.

- Approve meeting agenda
- Approve MMB minutes
 - June 23, 2025, closed meeting virtual

- July 2, 2025, meeting
- July 18, 2025, resolution for estate distribution

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the consent agenda.

Action Taken

Erik Brummett offered an opening prayer.

Opening Prayer

David Steele provided the General Secretary's report.

General Secretary's Report

David recognized staff for their extra work due to the December 11, 2024, intrusion. Staff recognized were Finance (Ed Woolf, Pat Marsh, Lynn Phelan, Nancy Watts, Barb Watt) and IT (Francie, Lauren, Darlene, Josh Rowan) teams along with Traci Rabenstein.

Request to have a laying on of hands for staff and David Steele prayed.

David also recognized Stan Dueck's years of service. Stan hired as Director of Discipleship Ministries for Atlantic Southeast District.

In August, the Admin Team (Nate Polzin, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Roy Winter, Sharon Norton, Shawn Flory Replogle, Traci Rabenstein, and Wendy McFadden) gathered at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren to refine the language around the ministry priorities and finalize details for a staff retreat in September. A portion of the staff met in September, and the main priorities were to nurture relationships and create dialogue while also looking at the ministry priorities. During David's report on the ministry priorities and budget all staff invited to join (virtually or in the building). Sara Cook led a virtual session on resilience and Jeff Carter led a session on the future of the church. The Admin Team is distilling the information from the retreat and will bring back ideas/recommendations.

Preceding the October 2025 MMB meeting, there was a gathering of denominational leadership for an event called Setting the Table. The group collaborated with a consultant (Lon Swartzentruber). The planning committee included: Jeff Carter, Nevin Dulabaum, Matt Guynn, David Steele, and Beth Sollenberger. The primary purpose was to nurture relationships and begin to look at challenges they face in the church and work toward structural changes.

David will be traveling with Roy Winter to NYC for a Church World Service (CWS) gathering – receiving recognition for the shared partnership.

David closed with a note of appreciation to the staff for their dedication and service.

Founa Badet presented a report on Immigration Support and provided an update on Intercultural Ministries.

Immigration Support and Intercultural Ministries Update

Intercultural Ministries Update

- Had to postpone the Intercultural Jubilee due to concerns the potential participants had about traveling.
- Working on building relationships and standing with people of color.
- There is gratitude for how the translation process is going.
- Founa is encouraging Board members to be frontliners and advocates for the work of Intercultural Ministries.

Discussion:

What will happen to the funding that had been set aside for the event? Has it been set aside and roll over into the next year?

What are you most excited about for next year? National Youth Conference, Founa assigned to be the intercultural coordinator for the event.

Immigration Support Update

- Staff referred by their initials for their safety. Every other Tuesday there is a book club. Staff meet with pastors who are facing immigration issues in their churches – as there are churches who have members that are afraid to attend. Have supported 27 Brethren so far. Thankful to those who have supported this shared ministry, specifically mentioning the BDM grant of \$25,000.

Matt Guynn joined and talked about the fifteen congregants detained up to October 2025, ten deported, and two released and asked the Board members to read off the initials. He called us to pray for these individuals.

Discussion:

Legal and mutual aid fund – donations going to Atlantic Southeast District to disperse. Send funds to the Atlantic Southeast District.

Shawn Flory Replogle brought his gratitude for the finance and IT teams along with Darlene.

Lybrook Ministries Update

He followed up with a brief history of the Lybrook ministries and an update on the Lybrook property. Lybrook Community Ministries Board officially voted to disband in 2025 and the Church of the Brethren is the owner of the property, responsible for the assets and liabilities of the property. The care takers not only care for the property but assist with the ministries (active water ministry).

In the middle of November Shawn will be traveling to Lybrook to meet with the caretakers and discuss the potential future ministries. The next step will be to communicate with past donors to see if they are interested in donating to the cost of Lybrook. Currently budgeting \$22,000 for expenses related to Lybrook.

The open session adjourned at 4:00PM (central time) with a break and the Mission and Ministry Board met in closed session at 4:10PM.

Adjournment

Church of the Brethren
Mission and Ministry Board
General Offices, Elgin, Illinois
October 17-19, 2025

Mission and Ministry Board – Minutes

Saturday, October 18

Members present: Kathy Mack (chair), Josiah Ludwick (chair-elect), Michaela Alphonse, Erik Brummett, Daniel Butler, Edward Cesar-Fincher, Barbara Daté, Joel Gibbel, Tina Hunt, Robert Jackson, Sarah Mason, Rosanna Eller McFadden, Deirdre Moyer, Karen Shively Neff, Colby Patton, Eric Ramirez, and Joanna Wave Willoughby

Ex officios present: Don Fitzkee (Moderator), Dennis Beckner (Moderator-elect), David Shumate (Annual Conference secretary), Lynnae Rodeffer (Eder Financial vice president) Matt Guynn (OEP co-executive director), Pete Kontra (Council of District Executives representative)

Ex officios present online: Jeff Carter (Bethany president)

General Secretary: David Steele

Recorder: Shannon McNeil Smith

Tina Hunt opened the meeting with a gathering song.

Gathering Song

Kathy Mack welcomed the Mission and Ministry Board and guests. Sharon Norton introduced the international guests: Markus Gamache (EYN Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and Roger Moreno (Venezuela Church of the Brethren) and they shared greetings.

Welcome and Introductions

Kathy continued with a few housekeeping notes and reminders from Friday.

Karen Neff brought a devotion centered around anxiety and increasing our faith. She read Matthew 6:25-34 and part of Luke 17. If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move the mulberry bush – even the tiniest bit of authentic faith is more powerful than we can imagine.

Opening Worship

Kathy provided a report from the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee met Friday morning ahead of the fall meeting. A portion of this meeting included: General Secretary updates, Human Resources updates, approval of the 2026 Housing Allowance. Met with Ed Woolf and Pat Marsh to walk through the 2026 budget parameter.

Executive Committee Report

Treasurer Ed Woolf provided a prerecorded financial update for view in advance of the meeting. 2024 yearend highlights included:

- At \$43 million, total net assets increased \$440,000 from 2023. The slight increase in net assets was primarily due to market gains.
- Investments totaled \$36.2 million in 2024. The net performance of the Church of the Brethren portfolio was 7.9% and the account balance gained approximately \$200,000 from 2023.
- Congregational giving to Core Ministries totaled \$1.47 million and was down \$35,000 from 2023. At \$686,000, individual giving to Core Ministries was up \$34,000 from 2023. In total, Core Ministries' giving was \$2.15 million. Core Ministries finished \$45,000 behind budget.
- Total combined giving to all ministry areas was \$5.5 million. This is \$900,000 lower than 2023 and is primarily due to the decrease in bequest giving. Donor numbers were up from 2023, and this helped stabilize giving.
- Core Ministries finished 2024 with a (\$35,000) deficit. On the income side, giving was \$151,000 behind budget, investment transfers ended up \$86,000 over budget. \$200,000 in designated funds to help offset a portion of the income shortfall. Although expenses finished \$156,000 under budget, they were \$225,000 higher than 2023. From 2022 to 2024, expenses increased \$499,000 while income increased \$305,000. The income gap from 2020 to 2022 has closed, and as a result, expenses outpaced income by \$35,000 in 2024 – lowering the Core Ministries' net asset balance to \$2.1 million.
- Material Resources finished the year with a (\$13,000) loss. Contributing factors included fewer donations, lower processing income, and an increase in packing supplies expense. The loss increased the net deficit balance to (\$270,000).
- The Conference Office sustained a (\$35,000) loss in 2024 – primarily due to lower than anticipated attendance and increasing expenses related to travel and audio-visual services. The loss reduced the net surplus balance to \$399,000.
- Emergency Disaster Fund donations totaled \$1.8 million with \$1.7 million in grants and program expenses.
- Global Food Initiative Fund received \$259,000 in donations and had \$127,000 in expenses and grants.
- The organization's total operations experienced a net loss of (\$83,000) in 2024 – lowering the net asset balance to \$1.8 million.
- Ed expressed his appreciation to the finance staff for all the extra time and work they put into rebuilding the 2024 financials and donor database. He also expressed his gratitude for the organization's patience and understanding as finance staff continue their work to catch up on the 2025 financials.

Treasurer Ed Woolf provided a prerecorded financial update to view in advance of the meeting. 2025 year-to-date highlights as of May included:

- The yearend 2024 audit was recently completed, and the Church of the Brethren once again received a "clean, unmodified" opinion from the auditors. There were no audit adjustments and no material weaknesses

reported with our internal controls or financial reporting. Special appreciation to Pat Marsh and the entire finance team for all their extra time and work completing this year's audit.

- At \$43.5 million, total net assets increased \$450,000 from the beginning of the year. This is a healthy position, including 60% of assets held without restriction and approximately 3 years of expendable reserves.
- Investments totaled \$35.8 million, a decrease of \$390,000 from the beginning of the year. This balance includes deposits, withdrawals, fees, and market performance.
- Congregational giving to Core Ministries totaled \$542,000. This is \$43,000 down from last year and \$27,000 behind budget.
- At \$213,000, individual giving to Core Ministries is down \$52,000 from last year, but \$9,000 ahead of budget.
- Combined giving to Core Ministries totaled \$755,000 – down \$95,000 from last year and \$18,000 behind budget.
- Combined giving to Restricted Funds totaled \$738,000. This is up \$107,000 from last year – mostly due to an increase in giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund.
- Unrestricted bequests totaled \$227,000 and are down \$188,000 from last year. However, in August we received a very generous bequest in the amount of \$600,000 not shown in the bequest totals.
- Combined giving to all programs totaled \$1.7 million. This is \$175,000 behind last year's total.
- Core Ministries has a deficit of (\$146,000) and is tracking (\$31,000) behind budget. From 2023 to 2025, expenses have increased \$209,000 while income has remained flat. The loss lowers the Core Ministries' net asset balance to \$1.97 million.
- Material Resources has a deficit of (\$3,000) as of May. Although this is \$32,000 above the projected budget, anticipate that income will begin to decrease as Material Resources prepares to close its operations at the end of this year.
- The Conference Office is showing a \$162,000 surplus. The Conference Office has a significant surplus as of May because registration income is in hand, but expenses remain unpaid.
- Emergency Disaster Fund donations totaled \$514,000 with year-to-date project expenses of \$730,000.
- Global Food Initiative donations totaled \$108,000, with grant expenses totaling \$28,000.

Rosanna McFadden provided a report from the Finance and Sustainability Committee. Merger of “Audit and Investment” and “Sustainability” Committees.

**Finance and
Sustainability
Committee Report**

The meeting included the following reports: 2024 audit, Eder staff on investments, and Mission Advancement staff on upcoming work.

Forvis on a 1-year agreement for the 2025 audit.

Investment strategy mix considerations include time horizon, purpose, risk tolerance, and spending. Investment Summary:

- \$36.2 million balance as of December 31, 2024.
- \$37.3 million balance as of September 30, 2025.

Germantown Campaign is underway and there will be a matching gift campaign in 2026 of \$100,000 for Core Ministries – two \$50,000 gifts for matching campaign.

Challenges: Income and expenses problem, perception that the organization is out of touch with congregations, incomplete understanding of denominational ministries, denominational staff stretched to be in-person at District Conferences.

Rosanna mentioned that the Mission and Ministry Board members are ambassadors.

- Hear concerns and kudos from congregations and districts.
- Mentioned the resources on SharePoint.
- Goal is to have 100% Board support of the ministries of the Church of the Brethren.

Kathy provided background about how the conversation began in March 2025 during the conversation related to the Resolution on Weapons Transfer.

**Statement –
Renewing the Call to
Prevent Gun
Violence**

Statement from 2018 MMB – Lukewarm no more reviewed considering the Mission and Ministry Board’s conversation and concern the recommendation is to add a section which renews the call to prevent gun violence with a new opening paragraph.

The Executive Committee recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board adopt the statement “Renewing the Call to Prevent Gun Violence” – with its adoption the statement will also reaffirm the 2018 statement “Lukewarm no More.”

Discussion:

There was concern from a member that the statement does not go far enough and that there is no action behind it.

- What would need to be done – member indicated saying something more forceful in the statement, doing something about the 2nd amendment in the United States, and working towards reducing gun violence.
- The statement was crafted with the capacity of staff and the Annual Conference business capacity. If there is an interest in taking on a more robust statement, there would need to be consideration about what can be moved around.
- On Earth Peace working with the gun violence prevention team and developing ambassadors and people are engaged in diverse ways. The reality is that people have guns so they also teach gun safety.
- A call for the Strategic Planning Committee to possibly look at ways to incorporate this concern within a future foreground vision initiative.

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and adopted the statement “Renewing the Call to Prevent Gun Violence” – with its adoption the statement will also reaffirm the 2018 statement “Lukewarm no More.”

Action Taken

Barbara and Edward brought the group back together in prayer in both English and Spanish.

Prayer

Jeanne Davies from Anabaptist Disabilities Network brought a presentation “A Place for Everybody” for the Board Development time.

Board Growth – A Place for Everybody

What disables us?

- Where did you get your ideas about disability? Board members shared.
- Many forms of disability – physical, mental, and behavioral.

World Health Organization Definition: Disability is neither purely a biological nor a social construct but the result of interactions between health conditions and environmental and personal factors.

American with Disabilities Act passed in 1990 but churches were exempt – really the church should be leading the way to access.

What kinds of things are disabling? Access, environment, conditioning, stigma

When might a referral be helpful? When something is beyond our capacity

What does it mean to belong? Belonging is more than inclusion.

Different models of disability

- Medical: locate the issue within the body (medication or device)
- Social: locate in the environment (how social structures are set up to limit access or exclude)
- Relational: small social networks

Capacity to reason, create, respond, love – but there is a problem with basing our humanity on our own capacity – are they less than human.

Language uses and other items within congregation for consideration:

- Mobility aids
- Accessibility in the building
- Accessibility for worship materials
- Accessibility for social media/website (image descriptions read off using a device)
- Hidden disabilities, aging, neurodivergence, mental illness, dementia

Baptism is a rite of belonging.

- What do you need to know to be baptized?

All In: Immersive Worship for Everybody – a five-year collaborative project with congregations funded by the Lilly Foundation Keli Boyer – Project Director

Robert Jackson led in prayer for the meal.

Prayer for the Meal

Tina Hunt brought the group back together in song and prayer.

**Gathering Song and
Prayer
Board Member
Sharing – National
Junior High
Conference**

Edward Cesar-Fincher shared about his time at National Junior High Conference – the Board Development Committee sent Edward to participate as an ambassador of the Board. He expressed appreciation to Becky Ullom-Naugle and the Youth and Young Adult staff.

**Annual Conference
Moderator’s Report**

Don Fitzkee provided the Annual Conference Moderator’s report. 2026 Annual Conference will be June 28-July 2 in Ft Wayne, In. The theme is *Imagine* based on Acts 2:17-18. He gave words of appreciation to Rhonda Pittman Gingrich and Debbie Noffsinger for their work. Anticipating a smaller number of business items. Plan to replace one of the morning business sessions with inspiration time. Don spent time discussing his recent travels and meetings, he will be going on an international trip with Sharon.

Treasurer Ed Woolf provided a prerecorded 2026 Budget Parameter to view in advance of the meeting.

**2026 Budget
Parameter Review –
Q & A**

- Budgeting \$1.41 million in congregational giving and \$687,000 in individual giving - representing a combined increase of \$3,000 compared to 2025. Both estimates are based on 10-year actual giving trends – (3.6%) decrease for congregations and 2.7% increase for individuals.
- Annual Conference offerings in support of Core Ministries budgeted at \$12,000, like in the last few years. The 2025 Annual Conference held two offerings supporting Core Ministries’ programs. The 2026 budget parameter assumes the same for 2026 Annual Conference.
- Budgeting \$160,000 for service fees and other income. This is an increase of \$10,000 from the current budget and is closer to the \$178,000 average received over the last five years. This line item contains the service fee rebate from Eder Financial, bank fees and interest, misc. income and dividends, internal transfers, and annuity liability transfer.
- The Savings Fund transfer budgeted at \$585,000 – \$7,000 lower than 2025. This is based on a 5% draw from the five-year average of the Savings Fund balance. Proposing no change in the percentage draw from the 2025 budget.
- Budgeting \$1.45 million from the Bequest Quasi-Endowment Fund transfer – an increase of \$191,000 from 2025. This is based on a 20% draw from the five-year average of the Bequest Quasi-Endowment Fund balance. Recommending a 1% increase in the draw percentage (from 19% to 20%) to help offset a portion of the internal income that is going away with the closure of the Material Resources program. Intending for this increase as a one-time stop gap measure with the draw returning to 19% in 2027.
- The Endowment Fund transfer budgeted at \$407,000 – a decrease of \$12,000 from 2025. This is based on a 5% draw from the five-year average of the Endowment Fund balance. Proposing no change in the percentage draw from 2025 budget.
- Budgeting \$222,000 from the BSC Quasi-Endowment Fund transfer for next year - \$43,000 lower than 2025 budget. This is based on a 7% draw

from the five-year average balance of the BSC Quasi-Endowment Fund. The draw increased to 8% for 2025 budget to account for expenses related to translation expenses. For 2026, recommending the draw lowered to 7%.

- Income from the Gahagen Trust budgeted at \$148,000. This is the same amount budgeted for 2025. The trustee has not communicated any changes to the distribution amount, and the distribution total has not changed recently.
- Budgeting \$218,000 from the Ministry Enablement Contribution – \$6,000 lower than 2025 budget. This is based on a five-year average of contributions to the Emergency Disaster Fund, Global Food Initiative Fund, and other restricted funds.
- Budgeting to spend \$150,000 from Designated Funds for next year. This is an increase of \$25,000 from 2025 budget. In 2020 and 2021, the organization was blessed with surpluses and transferred \$400,000 to designated funds for future budget shortfalls. In addition, had \$121,000 in designated funds available from the Church Loan Funds and \$140,000 from Everence insurance funds. Over the last 2 years, the organization has used \$386,000 in designated funds and are currently budgeting to use \$125,000 in designated funds to meet 2025 budget. A reminder that if a portion of the designated funds transfer are unused at the end of this year, they would be available for use next year. However, if all budgeted designated funds are used in 2025 and 2026, alternative income sources to fill any future budget shortfalls will need to be found.
- Combining all budgeted income, recommending an income parameter of \$5.45 million to support Core Ministries in 2026 – representing a \$162,000 increase from the 2025 budget.
- The 2026 budget parameter for expenses will start with the 2025 organizational base of \$5.3 million and adjusted from there.
- Budgeting an increase in expenses of \$210,000. There is a projected reduction of \$177,000 in Core Ministries' income representing internal transfers received from the Material Resources program, which concludes at the end of this year. This amount includes rent paid to New Windsor Buildings & Grounds, as well as service fees paid to Information Technology, Finance, and Elgin Buildings and Grounds. There is also a projected \$33,000 increase in expense to the Elgin Buildings & Grounds budget related to the Lybrook, New Mexico, property. Expenses related to this property include insurance, utilities, and a volunteer stipend.
- For 2026, budgeting a 1% increase in salaries and benefits at a cost of \$33,000 – which is \$46,000 lower than this year. Also continuing with the employer contributions to employees' health savings accounts next year.
- There will be no medical insurance cost increase for 2026 as the rate will remain the same as this year.
- Projected expenses of \$5.55 million would create a (\$102,000) deficit budget for 2026.
- A deficit budget would mean the Core Ministries' net asset balance would absorb the loss and have a balance of \$1.99 million in 2026. Keep in mind this assumes actual results match the budget for this year. If 2025's results are different than budgeted, the 2026 net asset balance will be impacted.

At \$1.99 million, we would still be well above the \$1.5 million balance directed by our financial policies and auditors.

- Once approved by the Board, the next step will be for staff to work on their individual department budgets to bring a proposal to the Board meeting in November for approval.

Discussion:

Confirmed that even using the \$150,000 for 2026 there is still a \$102,000 deficit.

Joanna provided the Strategic Planning Committee report.

**Strategic Planning
Committee Report**

Every time strategic plan meets for the next 2 years, they will have a member of the Admin Team join them for part of their meeting.

They are open to additional mid-ground visions.

Asking: How are the Board and organization doing with the Strategic Plan? How are we seeking the peace of Christ? How are we breaking down barriers? How are we sharing God's resources?

Matt Guynn brought the report from On Earth Peace (OEP). In 2024 OEP conducted ninety-four events several included Standing with People of Color study/action process, Deportation Defense Response Team, Political Violence and Authoritarianism, Gun Violence Prevention Action Team – BeSMART, Agape magazine for youth and kids.

**On Earth Peace
Report**

Effort to train one thousand Brethren in Kingian nonviolence continues – recent district trainings include Southeastern, Pacific Northwest, and Illinois Wisconsin.

There was small group time hearing from each of the following staff: Sharon – Global Missions, Nate Polzin – Discipleship and Leadership Formation, and Roy Winter – Brethren Disaster Ministries.

**Ministry Sharing in
Small Groups**

Edward Cesar-Fincher brought the group back together with prayer.

Gathering Prayer

Deirdre Moyer shared about her time at National Older Adult Conference – the Board Development Committee sent Dee to participate as an ambassador of the Board. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend and really enjoyed the conference.

**Board Member
Sharing – National
Older Adult
Conference**

Roy Winter reminded the group about the forming areas of Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM). BDM is reassessing and reimagining the future. They are applying for a Lilly Foundation Grant Opportunity for up to \$500,000. While reviewing all programs, the grant is for just domestic response. There is a short timeline due to the grant process. Staff have begun with an internal review process (within the church), looking to do an external review process, and will collaborate with a consultant.

**Brethren Disaster
Ministries –
Imagining the Future**

Table Talk Discussion based on questions below:

- Discuss and identify barriers that limit volunteers and congregations from engaging with the BDM programs. How can BDM engage more volunteers and congregations?
- Consider the connection between serving as a volunteer and faith formation/growth. How can BDM programs enhance and expand discipleship formation? Leadership development?
- Suggest ideas for expanding and improving BDM's engagement with multicultural congregations and volunteers. What barriers to mitigate? What changes in structure or process would expand engagement?
- Discuss ideas for enhancing BDM programs, one or all areas. Consider new initiatives and areas to expand or reduce focus.
- How might BDM programs engage potential volunteers and supporters who are unaffiliated with a church? Are there tools or resources BDM could create to help congregations reach these individuals in their community?

Kayla provided a report from the Revelations 7:9 Committee. She gave a background on the purposes and name as a reminder for the members as it is a new committee.

Revelations 7:9 Committee Report

Beginning tasks:

Identify and address specific situations where individuals or processes are harmed because of race, nationality, socioeconomic status, and beyond which began their work on "Barriers and Assumptions" – Advertised qualifications for Mission and Ministry Board members. There is an advertised qualifications statement, and the committee has agreed that they need to unpack the description to understand what it really means. Then there are assumptions made about what members have access to ahead of meetings.

- Assume that everyone has a cellphone with internet capabilities.
- Assume that everyone has internet access or computer at home.
- Assume that everyone is computer literate.
- Assume that everyone has a credit card and can incur expenses until reimbursed.
- Assume that everyone can take time off work to attend meetings.
- Assume everyone understands the lingo or acronyms.
- Are we open to people expressing need for accommodation?

Another task is related to the organization and reporting to the Board the racial identities of incoming and outgoing employees and their roles within the organization which began the work of the Staff Report. This work will be with the General Secretary's Office and the Human Resource Office.

Recommendations

- Checklist/interview assessing new member needs with Board Development. More in depth than the matrix survey.
- Bring back a common space for fellowship and relationship building.
- Bring ideas for Foreground vision projects aligned with committee goals.

- Provide a more explicit description of expectations for Mission and Ministry Board members and share it.
- Define responsibilities of being an MMB ambassador.

Discussion:

What action would it take to modify the description? Part of the description could come from the polity manual. The description worked at to slightly modify and then recommend a change of policy.

OEP just formed their anti-racist team and there could be an effective way of creating partnership and exchange thoughts to be mutually supportive.

Josiah provided a report from the Board Development Committee.

**Board Development
Committee Report**

The Board Development committee oversees enrichment time at the meetings, Board member experiences, and recommends an at-large member. The last meeting also looked over the Board matrix to help with the calling of members in the future.

Working on mid-term reviews and in the process of changing when those mid-term reviews will occur.

Reminder that there is a call for nominations from the Board Development Committee. Also discussed the nomination process for areas on the ballot.

The open session adjourned at 4:26PM (central time) with a break and the Mission and Ministry Board met in closed session at 4:30PM.

Adjournment

Prayer for the Meal

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Sunday, October 19

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Ex officios present: Don Fitzkee (Moderator), Dennis Beckner (Moderator-elect), David Shumate (Annual Conference secretary), Lynnae Rodeffer (Eder Financial vice president), Pete Kontra (Council of District Executives representative)

Ex officios present online: Jeff Carter (Bethany president)

Ex officios absent: Matt Guynn (OEP co-executive director)

General Secretary: David Steele

Recorder: Shannon McNeil Smith

Joanna Willoughby led worship.

Worship

Mission and Ministry Board met in closed session.

Closed Session

Dennis Beckner provided the opening prayer.

Opening Prayer

Kathy Mack reported from closed sessions.

**Report from Mission and
Ministry Board Closed
Session**

Continued discussion around Her Words, My Voice, and the issues it brought forward.

Called the 2026 at-large nomination (affirmed at the 2026 Annual Conference).

The discernment process for the General Secretary contract: The Mission and Ministry Board has called David Steele to a 2-year contract to conclude at the end of August 2028.

Intentionally focus on the ministry priorities and the state of the finances of the organization.

Kathy led discussions on the 2026 budget parameter. There was no additional discussion concerning the 2026 budget parameter. Staff will work on departmental budgets and bring a budget proposal to the Board during a virtual meeting in November.

Kathy brought the recommendation from the Executive Committee

***The Executive Committee recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board approve the 2026 income budget parameter for Core Ministries:
2026 Budget Parameter***

Income \$5,543,000

Expense \$5,555,000

Net Income/(Expense) \$ (102,000)

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the 2026 income budget parameter for Core Ministries.

Action Taken

Lynnae Rodeffer presented the Eder Financial Report:

Eder Financial Report

There are no rate increases for the medical insurance rate in 2026 for the Church of the Brethren employees.

The IRS has officially approved the Eder retirement – there will be new adoption agreements for each of the entities.

Organizational investments are now EVI compliant. But there will be something coming out that will allow for treasury free investing and names of the funds will be changing.

Annuity pool reached fully funded status and sold. Eder received \$20 million from sale of the annuity pool. The \$20 million is going back to annuitants in the form of retirement funds.

Kathy presented the background on Annual Conference Assignment – Breaking Down Barriers:

**Annual Conference
Assignment – Breaking
Down Barriers
(Exhibit #8)**

The Executive Committee recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board authorize the Executive Committee to appoint a committee to formulate a response to the breaking down barriers assigned for future Board action.

Rosanna McFadden, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, and Founa Badet (as consultant) will serve on the committee. Working to call individuals with previous Annual Conference committee experience.

Discussion:

Concern shared that there are many thoughts about how Annual Conference should operate.

- Multiple recommendations in the paper and this committee will need to have conversation with Review and Evaluation because each group has their own assignment.
- Committees will need to communicate with each other so that there is no overlap in work.

Can this work become a Foreground Vision Initiative? Keep in mind any recommendation from the assignment from this Board goes to AC to discern.

Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and affirmed the authorization of the Executive Committee to appoint a committee to formulate a response to the breaking down barriers assigned for future Board action.

Action Taken

Joel Gibbel provided a report from the Facilities Stewardship Committee. One of the largest tasks is to look at how each facility/property lives into the ministry priorities.

**Facilities Stewardship
Committee Report**

Lybrook no longer overseen by their own board; therefore, all expenses moved to the Church of the Brethren. There is no straightforward way to sell the property or to hand back over to the Indigenous population. There needs to be more work into how to move forward. Shawn will be visiting later this fall.

Material Resource program will conclude at the end of 2025. The space will be vacant and available for leasing. There will be revenue loss with the closing of Material Resources.

The capital campaign for Germantown will begin soon, this amount is only for property expenses. The hope is to raise \$300,000.

Potential buyer of acreage at General Offices has backed out.

No update on the farmland in North Dakota. There is a right of first refusal held at the Northern Plains District level, which means that the Mission and Ministry Board cannot just decide to sell it one day without approval from the district.

Joanna Willoughby provided an update on the Brethren Faith in Action Fund (BFIA):
\$98,000 available to grant for 2025 as of October 2025 thirteen (13) grant recipients, leaving \$38,000 for grants in 2025.

**Brethren Faith in Action
Fund Report**

Whatever amount not granted will roll back into the original fund for future years but not added onto next year's amount.

David Steele and Don Fitzkee gave background on the Atlantic Southeast District Query Request.

**Atlantic Southeast District
Query – Request**

Kathy read out from the request: “Therefore how should our Christian Church of the Brethren respond as individuals, fellowships, projects, congregations, districts, and denominational staff, when the United States Government imposes laws/policies that are unjust and contrary to Holy Scripture, the Ten Commandments, the ministry and teaching of Jesus Christ, and our historic peace witness? What statements should we make? What actions should we take?”

Kayla shared that this question originated after the 2025 Annual Conference when someone asked, “Are you asking us to break the law?” and the Miami First congregation asking for guidance.

The Executive Committee recommends that the Mission and Ministry Board approve the creation of a committee comprised of staff members appointed by David Steele and one Board member designated by the Executive Committee to develop a statement in response to the ASE query for action at the March 2026 Board meeting and the 2026 Annual Conference.

Nathan Hosler, Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Founa Badet, and Edward Cesar-Fincher serve on the committee.

Discussion:

Kayla was asked if she felt that this response honors the request – she agreed.

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approves the creation of a committee comprised of staff members appointed by David Steele and one Board member designated by the Executive Committee to develop a statement in response to the ASE query for action at the March 2026 Board meeting and the 2026 Annual Conference.

Action Taken

Kathy Mack presented upcoming MMB meeting dates:
November 24, 2025, 8:00PM(Eastern) – Budget Meeting: Virtual
March 13-16, 2026 – Spring Meeting: Modesto, CA

Upcoming MMB Meeting Dates

Kathy Mack presented the proposed 2030 Mission and Ministry Board spring and fall meeting dates:
March 8-11, 2030
October 17-20, 2030

Approve 2030 MMB Meeting Dates

The Mission and Ministry Board had consensus and approved the 2030 meeting dates.

Affirmation

Rosanna McFadden provided the report from the Governance Monitors (along with Erik Brummett).

Governance Monitors' Report

Expressed appreciation for those who put together the agenda and to Board members for their sharing during the Board meeting.

To be aware of in the future – mics, language barriers.

Add more time for the General Secretary report and any follow up questions.

Did not feel that there was any overstep of the Board.

Multiple affirmations from the Board – the goal is for all Board members to write something.

Kathy provided instructions for the Mission and Ministry Board meeting evaluation and gave a few housekeeping reminders.

MMB Meeting Evaluation

Don prayed for the meal.

Prayer for the Meal

Kathy Mack thanked the Board for their commitment and contributions to their work and the meeting adjourned at 11:40AM (central time).

Adjournment

Recorded by Shannon McNeil Smith
Approved and respectfully submitted by:

David K. Shumate
Secretary

Date