**FAMILIES GATHER HERE**



Michigan District Church of the Brethren

2023 Conference

August 11-12, 2023

Camp Brethren Heights

Lois Ozuna, Moderator

Notes from the moderator ….

Dear Family of God,

Preparations have been underway for some number of months for our meeting at Camp Brethren Heights in August, as we gather together as the Michigan District Church of the Brethren.

I invite you to read through the reports, proposed 2024 budget, amended 2023 budget, and items of new business contained in this book. The reports will not be read aloud at conference, but representatives will be available to receive feedback and questions. The issues that have come before the Leadership Team this year are contained in three items of new business. Each of these items contains some background information.

The 2023 District Conference is planned to be face-to-face. We plan to offer sessions and events outside and “under the tent” as much as possible. You are encouraged to be at Camp and fellowship with each other. We will not offer a Zoom link this year.

The theme or message for this year will center around the Family of God.

It is my hope that we can grow the body of Christ one person at a time. I also am hopeful that we can grow new member from our youth, for they are our future family.

I look forward to meeting with you and sharing in fellowship.

Lois Ozuna

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**Directions to Camp Brethren Heights**

9478 Brethren Heights Rd. Rodney, MI 49342 Tel: 231-867-3618

***Please Note:*** If you are using GPS and using the address, it will take you to Brethren, or

Rodney, MI, NOT to CBH. Re-program your GPS to: **9478 Lakeview Blvd. Rodney, MI 49342** or "**Brethren Heights Youth Camp**."

**Directions:**

**From Rodney (which is where your GPS is likely to take you)**

Follow M-20 thru Rodney till you get to the Gas Station on the north side of the road, just past the Gas Station M-20 turns right towards Mecosta, DO NOT turn right. Turn left onto 120th Ave. (2.0 mi.), Turn right onto 16 Mile Rd. (1.0 mi.),16 Mile curves left and becomes 110th Ave. (1.0 mi.), Turn right onto 17 Mile Rd. (2.0 mi.), Turn right onto 90th Ave. (0.6 mi.), 90th curves left, DO NOT follow curve, head straight towards Jehnsen Lake and turn right onto Lakeview Blvd./Brethren Heights Rd. (0.2 mi.), Follow Rd. to the Camp Lodge (0.4 mi.).

**From U.S. 131**

Take Big Rapids exit 139 and head east onto M-20 (1.7 mi.), Turn left onto State Street/

BUS 131 N (0.8 mi.), Turn right onto Maple/M-20 (0.6 mi.), Turn right onto S 3rd Ave./M-

20 (0.2 mi.), Turn left onto Colburn Ave. (0.4 mi.), Colburn becomes 16 Mile Rd. (7.9 mi.),

16 Mile curves left and becomes 110th Ave. (1.0 mi.), Turn right onto 17 Mile Rd. (2.0 mi.), Turn right onto 90th Ave.(0.6 mi.), 90th curves left, DO NOT follow curve, head straight towards Jehnsen Lake and turn right onto Lakeview Blvd./Brethren Heights Rd. (0.2 mi.), Follow to the Camp Lodge (0.4 mi.)

**From South M-66**

Take left onto M-20 and follow M-20 west through Mecosta (6.5 mi.), Turn right onto 80th

Ave. (2.7 mi.), Main road curves left - DO NOT follow, turn right and continue north on 80th Ave. (1.8 mi.), Keep left at fork of 80th & Taft Rd. continue on 80th (1.2 mi.), 80th makes left and becomes Wilson Rd. (0.7 mi.), At the T, Wilson becomes 90th Ave. turn left at the T, then right on Lakeview Blvd./Camp Brethren Heights Rd. (0.2 mi.), Follow Rd. to the Camp Lodge (0.4 mi.)

**From North M-66**

Turn right onto 20 Mile Rd. in Barryton (5.8 mi.), Turn left onto 90th Ave. (3.6 mi.), 90th curves left, DO NOT follow curve, head straight towards Jehnsen Lake and turn right onto Lakeview Blvd./Brethren Heights Rd. (0.2 mi.), Follow Rd. to the Camp Lodge (0.4 mi.)

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION

Non delegate registration is $15.00 per person for the entire conference, or $10.00 per person per day and a maximum of $40.00 per family.

Delegate registration is $50.00 per delegate and covers the entire conference.

See the respective registration forms at the district website.

The actual cost for the conference is considerably more than the registration costs. We depend on offerings during worship and special gifts to make up the difference. We finance the Conference this way so that the cost is within reach of all who wish to attend. We hope you will generously support this form of “bearing one another’s burdens.”

**CHILD CARE**

Child care for infants and preschoolers is available during worship and business sessions.

**WATER SAFETY**

A life guard is planned to be onsite during specified periods.

## GUESTS

We are happy to welcome visitors and guests to our conference who come from other Church of the Brethren districts, denominational staff, Annual Conference officers, and friends. Let us learn to know each other and share in love.

# Parliamentary Procedures in Brief

In order that the delegate body may participate in the parliamentary aspects of the business sessions, the following brief summary of the more common kinds of actions may be helpful:

I. When you want to bring before the Conference for its consideration a particular subject or item of business, the proper motion is: **Main Motion.**

**a. Main Motion** requires a second, is debatable, is amendable, and requires a majority vote to pass (or two-thirds vote if previously agreed on by conference action).

*Form: “I move that …” Or “I move the adoption (acceptance, approval) of their report.”*

II. When you want to modify or in some way appropriately dispose of a matter of business, you (the motions are listed in the order of their precedence with the highest ranking shown first):

1. **Move to lay on the table, or take from the table** (requires a second, not debatable, not amendable, simple majority).

*Object: To lay aside business in such a manner that its consideration may be renewed later.*

*Form: “I move that this matter be laid on the table” Or “I move to take from the table …”*

1. **Move the previous question** (requires a second, not debatable, not amendable, two-thirds required).

*Object: To stop debate on the immediately pending question.*

*Form: “I move the previous question.”*

Please note that merely calling the “question” from the floor is not the same as a motion for the previous question and does not obligate the moderator to take a vote.

1. **Move to postpone to a set time** (requires a second, debatable, amendable, simple majority). *Object: Unlike tabling, the business is considered at a later time without needing to be “taken from the table.”*

*Form: “I move that this matter be postponed to …”*

1. **Move to commit, refer, or recommit** (requires a second, debatable, amendable, simple majority) *Object: To place the business in the hands of a few for later reporting to the Conference (for major changes).*

*Form: “I move that this matter be referred to a committee to be named by … with instruction …”*

1. **Move to amend** (requires a second, debatable, amendable, simple majority).

*Object: To change or modify, to “amend” (for minor changes).*

*Forms: “I move to amend the motion by striking out …”*

*“I move to amend the motion by inserting … between … and …”*

*“I move to amend the motion by adding … after …”*

*“I move to amend the motion by striking out … and inserting …”*

*“I move to amend the motion by striking out … and substituting this (read or state the substitution).*

III. When you want to take action governing the conduct of business, you may introduce **Privileged and incidental motions -** motions that take precedence over any pending question although not related to that question (not debatable).

1. **Move to adjourn or recess**

*Object: To dismiss a meeting or to provide for an intermission.*

*Form: “I move that we adjourn (recess while… or until …).”*

1. **Raise a question of privilege**

*Object: To get the attention of the moderator at once, to ask a question, or to attend to some matter that cannot wait.*

*Form: “I rise to a question of privilege.”*

1. **Rise to a point of order**

*Object: To raise the question as to whether there has been a breach of order.*

*Form: “I rise to a point of order.”*

**CONFERENCE RULES**

For a happy Conference experience, please observe the following:

* Upon arrival, go to the registration window, register, secure lodging or camping space and meal tickets. You must be registered to be covered by conference insurance.

* District Conference is covered by a supplemental insurance plan which pays benefits for expenses not covered by one’s primary insurance plan.

* Do not move furnishings from room to room, or from building to building. If this is necessary, please contact the Conference Director.

* Help keep the conference clear of trash and litter. PITCH IN. Use available trash receptacles. When you leave, be sure your housing or camping area is cleaner than when you arrived.

* Please observe QUIET HOURS as printed in the conference schedule. We need to respect the rights of others to get their rest. Persons are expected to be in their lodging 30 minutes after the scheduled quiet hour.

* For health and safety reasons, please leave pets at home.

* Use of tobacco, alcohol, and similar drugs is prohibited.

* We are responsible for any damage done to the facility during our occupancy.

* Please report any damage to the Conference Director.

* Campfires must be built only at designated spots, and all safety precautions used.

* Insurance and fire regulations prohibit the use of any heat- generating appliances in the buildings.

* Sale of any items at District Conference needs prior approval by Programs & Arrangements Committee. Presently, groups approved are SERRV, Camp Brethren Heights, and District youth (store).

Any other group wanting to sell items needs approval from Programs & Arrangements Committee no later than the spring District Board meeting.

**Michigan District Conference Schedule**

**Camp Brethren Heights**

**August 11-12, 2023**

Friday

11:00 Pre-Conference Meetings

11:00-2:00 Exhibit & Display Set-up

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Conference Office Opens

2:30 Opening Worship: Songs and Preaching by Madalyn Metzger

Ordination of Randall Westfall

3:15 Break

3:30 Announcements

3:45 Seating & Consecration of Delegates

4:00 \*\*Business Session 1

5:30 Dinner

7:00 Insight Session 1 “The Family of God”- Lois Ozuna

8:00 Campfire, Music, & Ice Cream Social

11:00 Campground Quiet

Saturday

8:00 Morning Watch: TBA

8:30 Breakfast

9:15 Insight Session 2 “Disaster Ministries” – Wendy Russell

10:15 Break

10:30 Announcements

10:45 \*\*Business Session 2

Seating of Delegates

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Insight Session 3 TBA

2:00 Break

2:15 \*\*Business Session 3

3:45 Adjourn

4:00 Closing Worship TBA

5:00 Consecration of New District Leadership and Moderator

5:30 Dinner

**Business Agenda**

**Friday Afternoon, August 11, 2023**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4:00pm | | Welcome/introductions |
|  |  | Announcements |
|  |  | Devotions |
|  |  | Consecration & Seating of delegates |
|  |  | Review rules/agreements on how we conduct ourselves in meeting (Robert's Rules & |
|  |  | Zoom) |
|  |  | Acceptance of business agenda for 2023 |
|  |  | Minutes of 2022 District Conference |
| 4:30 |  | Presentation of Ballot (ballot not closed until Saturday morning) |
| 4:40 |  | Denomination Visitors & Reports: |
|  |  | Ministry & Missions |
|  |  | Eder Financial |
|  |  | Bethany Seminary |
|  |  | Other written reports: |
|  |  | OEP |
|  |  | BDM |
|  |  | BVS |
|  |  | Manchester University |
| 5:25 |  | Standing Committee Delegate Report |
|  |  | Acceptance of reports |

**Saturday Morning, August 13, 2022**

10:30am Announcements

Devotions

Seating of delegates

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 10:45 | Close Ballot & Vote on Ballot | |
| 10:55 | District Executive Team Report | |
| 11:05 | Leadership Team Reports: | |
|  | Leadership Team Chair | |
|  | Discipleship | |
|  | Ministry | |
|  | New Church Development and Renewal | |
|  | Finance Resources Property | |
| 11: 20 | Finance Reports & 2023 Budget | |
|  | 2021 Year-end | |
|  | 2022 Year-to-date |
|  | Proposed 2023 Budget presented |
|  | Vote on 2023 budget |
| 11:30 | Camp Brethren Heights Report |
| 11:45 | Rau Farm Report |
|  | Acceptance of reports |
| 11:55 | Report election results |
|  |  |

**Saturday Afternoon**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2:15pm | Announcements |
|  | Devotions |
|  | Seating of delegates |
| 2:30 | **New Business Item #1** |
|  | **Motion:  The Leadership Team moves to amend the 2023 budget under the subcategory 5300- District Minister/Executive to reflect the unexpected change in District Executive Personnel that occurred in 2023 which resulted in a difference in pay and reimbursement totals.** |
|  |  |
| 2:45 | **New Business Item #2**  **The Leadership Team presents to the delegates a proposal from the Camp Brethren Heights Board for discussion and consideration.** |
|  |  |
| 3:00 | **New Business Item #3** |
|  | **Motion: As a result of the decision of the Sugar Ridge Congregation, the District Leadership Team recommends to the District Conference that the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren be disorganized.**  Recognition of the history of the Sugar Ridge Church |
| 3:30 | Adjourn |

New Business Item #1:

**Motion:  The Leadership Team moves to amend the 2023 budget under the subcategory 5300- District Minister/Executive to reflect the unexpected change in District Executive Personnel that occurred in 2023 which resulted in a difference in pay and reimbursement totals. The budget shall be amended as follows:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **5300-District Minister/Executive** |  | 2023 Budget approved by DC | **Amended 2023 Budget to be approved** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 5302-Salary |  | - | $17,838.73 |
| 5303-Housing |  | $10,000 |  |
| 5308-Travel/Meals |  | $4,000 | $4000.00 |
| 5320-Pension |  | - | $2854.20 |
| 5314-Dues, Prof. Development, Meetings |  | $500 | $600 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total 5300** |  | **$14,500** | **$25, 292.93** |
| **District Executive** |  |  |  |

Background:  The Budget for 2023 was approved at the 2023 District Conference by the delegation.  A few months later, Beth Sollenberger–the part time DE- gave her resignation as of December 31, 2022.  In late November, 2022, the Leadership Team hired Byrl Shaver as Beth’s replacement as a ¼ part time DE.  The proposed budget amendments reflect the package that was negotiated with Byrl and is in line with the Church of the Brethren compensation recommendations for District Executives.

New Business Item #2**:**

**The Leadership Team presents to the delegates a proposal from the Camp Brethren Heights Board for discussion and consideration.**

Camp Brethren Heights Board of Directors (“CBH Board”) Proposal to the Michigan District Conference of the Church of the Brethren (“MICOB”) :

The CBH Board humbly requests additional support from the MICOB in order to maintain the properties used by the camp. These properties are owned by the MICOB; however, CBH Board has maintained and improved them to the best of their ability given budget constraints. At this time the CBH board finds it necessary to request additional funding from the property owner in order to complete the following needed improvements:  Reroofing of the girls’ cabins – this project is estimated to cost $4,600 in materials and will be completed using volunteer labor.  Replacing steps from lower to upper parking lots – this project will also be completed using volunteer labor and materials will cost approximately $600.  Repairing the concrete foundation and floor of boys’ cabin #1 – this project is necessary to provide safe housing for campers and will cost approximately $1,400.  Replacing deteriorating split rail fencing – this is also a safety issue that should be addressed soon. Volunteers will provide labor and the estimated materials cost is $700.  Converting a lodge “fireplace room” bathroom to be handicap accessible – this will add value to the property by increasing the number of Brethren and other groups that are able to use the property as well as enhancing the market value of the property. Again, utilizing volunteer labor, the estimated cost of this project is $3,000.  Total request for property maintenance projects: $10,300. Members of the CBH board view these projects as an investment by the MICOB to enhance their property’s value. Doing so will also show support for continuing the impactful programming provided for three generations by Camp Brethren Heights. The CBH Board also requests funding of up to $6,000 to assist in the transition to a new Camp Director. This process is likely to require additional funds such as overlapping compensation and lodging as well as travel expenses for potential candidates. Funding would be requested as reimbursement of expenses incurred and will not be utilized unless it is necessary in order to secure a positive outcome. The CBH Board members believe this funding is also an important investment that the MICOB can make to ensure the best possible care of its property. Summary: The total amount requested by the CBH Board is a minimum of $10,300 and up to $16,300, depending on the additional costs incurred during the transition to a new Camp Director. We believe that this would be a fruitful investment providing great value to the MICOB, especially when considering the leverage provided by use of volunteer labor. Thank you for considering this request. Respectfully submitted by the CBH Board Proposal unanimously adopted at its board meeting held May 6, 2023

New Business Item #3:

**Motion: As a result of the decision of the Sugar Ridge Congregation, the District Leadership Team recommends to the District Conference that the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren be disorganized.**

Background:  At meetings held over the past year, the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren voted unanimously to withdraw from the Michigan District and from the denomination.  Representatives of the Executive Team met first with the Sugar Ridge Church Board to discuss the process of withdrawal at the request of the church.  Members of the Executive Team were also there on April 11, 2023 to witness and oversee the congregational vote to withdraw which passed unanimously.  In lieu of the District taking ownership of the property and assets, the congregation was given an option to keep their building and assets for the cost of a monetary donation to the Michigan District or to a mission they support.  Sugar Ridge COB will be making a donation to a ministry of their choice. Work is ongoing regarding the transfer of historical records etc. which do belong to the Church of the Brethren.

**DISTRICT**

**REPORTS**

**Michigan District Conference Business Session Minutes August 12-13, 2022**

Conducted both in person at Camp Brethren Heights and on Zoom.

Friday afternoon, August 12, 2022

Gary Copenhaver, Moderator, presided over the meeting with Wanda Joseph serving as both parliamentarian and Zoom support.

Welcome and Announcements

Gary encouraged the delegates on Zoom to place an \* before their name to indicate they are a delegate and to add their church name.

Seating the delegates

Roll was called by Becky Copenhaver. 16 delegates were in attendance, including those on Zoom.

Devotions

Gary led devotions about "Who is our neighbor?" followed by the Lord's prayer. He also led consecration service for the delegates.

Review Rules/Agreements

Reference made to Robert's Rules and Zoom etiquette on page 5-7 in the conference booklet

Acceptance of Business Agenda for 2022 on pages 11-12

Motion to approve: Frank Polzin

Second motion: Lois Ozuna

Motion passed

Minutes of the 2021 District Conference on pages 15-21

There was one correction to the minutes. RJ Wise was a Woodgrove delegate, not AJ Wise.

Motion to approve the minutes with the correction: Mary Lorah-Hammond

Second motion: Frank Polzin Motion passed

Presentation of the ballot

There are several positions still open on the ballot: Moderator, Moderator-elect, and 3 people needed for the Gifts and Discernment committee.

Dawne Vowler is willing to serve on the New Church Renewal and Development team for 1 additional year.

Frances Townsend is willing to serve another 3-year term as secretary for the Leadership Team.

Stephanie Moats is willing to serve another I-year term as Treasurer.

The ballot will remain open until Saturday morning for additional nominations.

Denominational Guests

Reports (from the conference booklet) and comments were received from:

Tim McElwee — 2023 Annual Conference Moderator

Traci Rabenstein — Director of Mission and Advancement

(the video shown is available to congregations on the COB website)

Ed Shannon — Eder Financial (formerly Brethren Benefit Trust)

We also welcome Nancy Sollenberger-Heishman and look forward to her presentation on Part Time Pastor — Full Time Church.

Other written reports in the conference booklet included:

On Earth Peace, Bethany Seminary, BDM, BVS, and Manchester University

Motion to accept all reports: Frank Polzin

Second motion: Ineke Way Motion passed

Standing Committee Delegate

Mary Lorah-Hammond reported about her first experience on Standing Committee and the process involved in getting reports and financial statements ready for the business sessions at annual conference. Her report is included as an addendum in the minutes. There is also a DVD available from conference for purchase. Motion to accept her report: Frank Polzin

Second motion: Tim Joseph

Motion passed

Saturday Morning, August 13, 2022

Gary Copenhaver, Moderator, presided over the meeting with Wanda Joseph serving as both parliamentarian and Zoom support.

The business session opened at 10:15 with announcements and an example of "Jesus in the Neighborhood" by Barbara Curtis from Spirit of Peace in Lansing.

The roll was called for the seating of the delegates. There were 19 delegates in person or on Zoom.

2023 Ballot

There were three names added to the ballot:

Moderator — Lois Ozuna

Moderator-elect — Frank Polzin

Gifts and Discernment — Wanda Joseph The nominations were closed.

Motion to adopt the slate as presented: Mary Lorah-Hammond

Second motion: Janet Stroup

Motion passed

There are 2 remaining vacancies left to fill for the Gifts and Discernment committee. The Leadership team will work to fill those positions.

2022 District Conference Ballot

District Conference Officers:

Moderator (Term 1 year) Lois Ozuna

Moderator Elect (Term 1 year Mod Elect; 1 year Mod) Frank Polzin

District Leadership Team:

New Church Dev & Renewal Team Leader (2023) Dawne Vowler (1 year)

Secretary (2023-2025) 3-year term Frances Townsend

Treasurer (2023) I-year term Stephanie Moats

Gifts & Discernment Committee (vote for 3):

3-year term

District Executive Team Report Wanda Joseph

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Interim District Executive Beth Sollenberger presented her report (page 22)

She recognized those pastors in the district marking 5 year increments in ministry. They included:

Nate Polzin 15 years

Ike Porter 20 years

Mary Gault and Brian Ruth 25 years Don Flint 60 years.

Reports from Executive Team members Dan Rossman (Congregation and Pastor support), and Frank Polzin (District Liaison to Camp Brethren Heights Board were made. (page 34)

Leadership Team Reports

Wendy Russell presented the Leadership Team Chair report. (page 23)

The Discipleship team report was led by Sherry Pries (page 24). She re-capped the Kingian nonviolence training offered in the district this past spring. Don Leaf read a report from peace coordinator Paul Brun Del Re. It was a follow up from OEP and Plant Justice- Grow Peace.

The Ministry team report was included in the District Executive report given earlier by Beth Sollenberger.

New Church Development and Renewal team report by Dawne Vowler was submitted by a hand-out and will be included with these minutes.

The Finance Resources & Property team report on page 25 and was presented by Frank Polzin.

Gary expressed appreciation for all the work being done in our district, and all the volunteers that make that happen.

Motion to accept all the reports: Frank Polzin

Second motion: Ineke Way

Finance Reports and 2023 Budget

The financial report was presented by Stephanie Moats and is on pages 29-32.

Ineke Way from Skyridge asked and Stephanie clarified that a portion of the $1200 shown as given by Skyridge to the District in 2022 was actually for 2021.

Motion to accept the financial report: Frank Polzin

Second motion: Mark Ward

Motion passed

The 2023 budget as submitted and moved for passage by the Leadership Team was presented and approved (see pages 31-32).

Camp Brethren Heights Report

Randall Westfall gave the Camp Brethren Heights Report (which was distributed and will be included in the minutes) The draft for the 2023 camp season was also shared. Thanks to Carla Joseph for being the treasurer and sharing her expertise. Also, a big THANK YOU to RJ Wise for lifeguarding for all the camps this summer. Austin Bancroft was hired as a helper at camp and has contributed a lot of his skills. They encouraged everyone to use the camp whether it be for spiritual retreats, family camps, etc. Think of how you and your congregation can partner with camp. Tara Wise commented that it was a big help when the camp listed their needs and sent it to all the congregations. Wanda Joseph gave a testimonial as to how much the camp meant to her as her family met there for a family reunion. Motion to accept the camp report: Lois Ozuna

Second motion: Frank Polzin

Motion passed

Rau Farm Report

Frances Townsend presented the report and is on page 33. It was noted that Marilla gives money to camp aside from the Rau Farm monies. Motion to accept her report: Cindy Asiala

Second motion: Frank Polzin

Motion passed

Saturday Afternoon Business Session

Gary Copenhaver, Moderator, presided over the meeting with Wanda Joseph serving as both parliamentarian and Zoom support.

The business session opened with announcements and then Gary Copenhaver related how Living Peace Church is helping in the neighborhood by supporting a group refurbishing a house to be used for families evacuated from war-torn countries.

The roll was called and there were 18 delegates present, including those on Zoom.

New Business Item #1 from the Leadership Team

The motion was read by the clerk (see page 13):

As a result of the decision of the Zion congregation, the District Leadership team recommends to the District conference that the Zion Church of the Brethren be disorganized.

After a short discussion, the delegates voted  pass this motion. Gary then read the history of the Zion church from the Brethren Encyclopedia and read a tribute to the congregation he had written.

New Business Item #2 from the Leadership Team The motion was read by the clerk (see page 13):

The leadership team moves name changes to the MEEB accounts spelled out in the 2013 Plan of Organization (Article Vll, Section C) to reflect the intended use of each account more accurately:

1. The current Equity Fund Account will be renamed The Endowment Fund Account
2. The current Endowment Fund Accounts will be renamed The Ministry Restricted Investment Accounts
3. The newly named 3 Ministry Restricted Investment Accounts will have the word "Endowment" removed from their names.

All MEEB rules set forth for the above accounts shall remain unchanged. Other references using the former names will be updated as well in the 2013 Plan of Organization.

An explanation was given by Wendy Russell and Mary Lorah-Hammond. The motion passed with 15 votes.

New Business Item #3 from the Leadership Team The motion was read by the clerk (see page 14):

The Leadership Team moves to change the amounts in the Eder Financial Accounts to reflect the findings of our MEEB inquiry. (Money will be allocated per the chart on page 14 of the conference booklet. Since the amount in the account changes each month, the actual amounts allocated to each fund may differ slightly)

A lot of work was required to untangle the co-mingled funds. Thank you to Eder financial for their help and consultation. Also, thank you to Stephanie Moats for her quick actions at providing data for the Leadership Team. Motion passed with 17 votes (2/3 required).

Gary thanked many people behind the scenes at conference:

Nancy O'Neill for helping with child care, along with the Wise children and friends

RJ Wise for offering to be the life guard at conference

Brenda Westfall, Carla Joseph, Beth Sollenberger who cooked (and others who helped)

Motion to adjourn the business meeting of the 2022 Michigan District Conference was made by Frank Polzin and seconded by Lois Ozuna. Motion passed.

2022 Michigan District Registered Delegates

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Church | Delegates | Friday | Saturday AM | Saturday PM |  |
| Beaverton |  |  |  |  |  |
| Church in  Drive | Frank Polzin  Nate Polzin | x x | x x | x x |  |
| Common Spirit | John Willoughby |  |  |  |  |
| Crystal |  |  |  |  |  |
| Drayton Plains | Wendell Peterson Michael Rath | x x | x x | x |  |
| Flint | Mary Lorah-Hammond | x | x | x |  |
| Hope |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lakeview | Janet Stroup | x | x | x |  |
| Living Peace Church | Becky Copenhaver Wendy Russell | x x | x x | x x |  |
| Marilla | Cindy Asiala Paula C Rinal |  | x x | x x |  |
| Midland | Sue Gessford | x | x | x |  |
| Muskegon |  |  |  |  |  |
| New Haven | Brian Ruth |  | x | x |  |
| Onekama | Mark Ward  Leslie Osborn  Tim Joseph | x  x | x  x | x  x |  |
| Shalom |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skyridge  Church of the  Brethren | Ineke Way  Ruth Moerdyk | x x | x x | x x |  |
| Spirit of Peace | Barbra Curtis | x | x | x |  |
| Sugar Ridge |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woodgrove | Tara Wise  Lois Ozuna | x x | x x | x x |  |
| Zion |  |  |  |  |  |

Respectfully submitted,

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Becky Copenhaver

Clerk

9478 Brethren Heights Rd + Rodney, Ml 49342

(231) 867-3618 • brethrenheights@gmail.com 

www.campbrethrenheightsmi.org

Connect with Creation. Awaken your Soul. Ignite your Faith

August 10, 2022

To the Delegate body of Michigan District Conference:

Mission: 

Camp Brethren Heights is a natural sanctuary created by God, grounded in Jesus Christ, where all are welcome to experience the transformative power of the Spirit and live in harmony with one another.

Vision:

As a mission point, we faithfully strive to cultivate a setting that will deepen faith in Jesus Christ and nurture awareness of our connection with God's creation; so that all who experience this sacred space will have their hearts awakened and their souls stirred to live a more abundant life.

Core Values:

* Proclaiming the Good News of God's Love as recorded in the Bible, embodied in the life of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit
* Nurturing faith in Jesus Christ through our Witness, Discipleship and Servant Leadership
* Instructing and responding to conflict with principles of Biblical Peacemaking and Reconciliation
* Cultivating biblical stewardship practices with God's creation
* Fostering a Safe Environment for healthy spiritual, emotional, and physical development
* Partnering with Church of the Brethren congregations and the wider Christian and local communities 
* Setting apart and tending a natural and peaceful environment for the renewal of heart, mind, body, and soul

CBH 2022 Highlights:

* We celebrated 73 years of outdoor ministry in Michigan
* CBH Board Retreat in April at Camp Mack. New mission, vision, values, and 3-year strategic planning  50 campers and 40 staff representing 7 congregations. COB campers represented 67% of participants this summer. The theme was What's in a Name
* This summer's offering project went to the BDM Ukrainian Refugee Relief Program. The camp raised $700.
* New amenities and features: new flooring, new paint, new commercial kitchen stove, new freezer, new hot water heater in girl's bathhouse, new target range, reconfigured upper parking lot and crushed concrete road (thanks to many donors and congregations who supported us financially)  We continue to receive A ratings from our state regulations (a big thank you to our staff and volunteers for all the work (seen and unseen) that goes into keeping this camp looking and functioning as well as it does. Thank you for your passion and gifts to make CBH the sacred space that it is and will be for future generations.

Camp Brethren Heights is the outdoor ministry of the Michigan District Church of the Brethren since 1949.

Located on Jehnsen Lake in one of the most ecologically diverse settings in west-central Michigan;

We provide a setting where you can connect with creation, awaken your soul, and ignite your faith.

* Our camp staff, board and volunteers have both done incredible work extending the ministry of Camp Brethren Heights to a larger number of guest groups, and they have sought to be wise and diligent stewards of our financial resources.

CBH 2023 Summer Schedule:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| June 11-16 | Dadirri Camp | (Ages 15-18) |
| June 25-30 | Bobcat Camp | (Gr. 7-9) |
| July 2-4 | Otter Camp | (Gr. 1-3) |
| July 9-14 | Survivor Camp | (Ages 12-14) |
| July 16-21 | Red Tail Hawk Camp | (Gr. 10-12) |
| July 23-28 | Beaver Camp | (Gr. 4-6) |
| July 30-Aug. 2 | Target Camp | (Ages 12-15) |
| Aug. 4-6 | Grand Camp | (Grandparents & Grandchildren) |

We share this report about the ministry taking place at camp so that you may know how such experiences of immersive Christian community help people know and experience first-hand the presence of God in ways that nurture hope for our present and future.

What you can do to help CBH grow:

Have your congregation book camp for a spiritual renewal or leadership retreat weekend

> Share with family and friends who might like to use camp for family reunions/gatherings

Encourage (and fund) any all children in your congregation to attend summer camp programs and have them invite a friend.

Have your congregation organize a volunteer workday(s) to come and offer support for camp

> Volunteer to serve on staff at camp as a cook, counselor, health officer, nature director, craft leader....

As we continue the work of Jesus at camp, we ask that you prayerfully consider how you might have a role in the ministry of camp. And as always, we look forward to what awaits us in 2023.

Check us out at www.campbrethrenheightsmi.org or follow us on Facebook.

Respectfully,

# QCQ2

Randall Westfall

Camp Brethren Heights Director

## New Church Development & Renewal Report

With another year of COVID, the Church Renewal Team (consisting of me) has been hibernating. During the first half of COVID, we held book clubs and Lenten/Advent study groups over Zoom quite successfully. Due to my own busy schedule, and some zoom fatigue by myself and the world, we did not resume those during this year. I am hoping to increase my committee size this year. Even adding one person would double the size, and it would help me plan and implement some programs. With COVID letting up, an in-person meeting, similar to that held at camp in March of2019 is a goal, in order to revitalize the collaboration between our congregations. I hope to also have another book club or other similar format over zoom, which is a good way to meet with regularly, while not having to travel.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawne M. Vowler

2022 Standing Committee Delegate Report

Mary Lorah-Hammond

The Standing Committee meets in advance of the annual conference to receive reports and financial statements and take actions to prepare for the business sessions. Therefore, the actions listed below from annual conference were part of standing committee business.

Unfinished Business Items:

UB 1 Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies: Annual conference adopted the Leadership Team's recommendation that its UProposed Update Regarding Polity for Annual Conference Agencies be approved and that its recommendations for implementation be adopted. (Approval by 2/3 vote)

Additional Information: In relation to this, at the Standing Committee meeting prior to conference the Standing Committee group members in conversation On Earth Peace representatives presented recommendations, and after editing these recommendations were adopted:

1. Standing Committee will provide full clarity of expectations for agencies in the proposed new covenants with agencies. Standing Committee will also create a process with clear and specific provisions that explain steps to deal with concerns when they arise.
2. Standing Committee should act within three years to bring clarification for how Annual Conference decisions and policy statements should be received and implemented, so that all individuals and entities within the church are more likely to have commonly understood and agreed upon expectations. Additionally, clear guidelines should be provided for how judgments with regard to compliance should be impartially examined, appealed, or reviewed.

 3. Standing Committee asks AC to review the organizational structure of the Church of the Brethren, which includes the denomination, agencies, districts, and local congregations, to address the deep dysfunction that exists in the communication processes, in organizational structure, in our ability to resolve/transform conflict and division, and in the overall effectiveness of the mission of the church.

4. Theological differences around human sexuality have too often been manifested in bullying, violence, and a general sense of dismissal toward one another and specifically toward our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters. We must redouble our efforts to live out these differences, as individuals and through our systems of governance, in ways that preserve the humanity, dignity, and deeply held spiritual convictions of all. Harsh, dismissive, unloving, and unforgiving behaviors toward one another cannot have a home among us. We recommend that a first step toward healing be taken through Standing Committee leading a significant intentional time of confession and repentance as part of Annual Conference 2023 around this specific point of failure in our relationships with one another. As is so well stated in James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

New Business items:

NB 1 Amendments to the "Appeal" Section of the Ethics in Ministry Relations" Polity: Annual conference adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that the amendments to the "Appeal" Section of the "Ethics in Ministry Relations" Polity be adopted, with one amendment incorporated. (Approval by 2/3)

NB 2 Query: Standing with People of Color: Annual conference adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that the query "Standing with People of Color" be accepted with thanks to the church and district for this important reminder. The concerns were answered with this response, which incorporates one amendment:

"We recognize the struggles faced by many of our sisters and brothers of color and believe the church should be agents of change. We encourage congregations, districts, agencies, and other denominational entities to continue to follow the teachings of Jesus by living out the great commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. We understand the great diversity that the word neighbor implies. So, we encourage congregations to study the teachings of Jesus and how they apply to our relations with all people of color, to express solidarity with all people of color, offer sanctuary from all forms of violence, and identify and dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions, and then begin to live out those findings by being Jesus in the neighborhood. "

This response becomes an official statement of Annual Conference. This response to the query on "Standing with People of Color" will be implemented through a two-year study/action process. This will include Southern Ohio-Kentucky District and On Earth Peace collaborating to develop various materials for congregations, district, and denominational use.

NB 3. Query: Breaking Down Barriers — Increasing Access to Denominational Events: Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee's recommendation that the Query: Breaking Down Barriers — Increasing Access to Denominational Events be adopted and that a study committee to examine the theological, philosophical, and practical implications of the query along with a feasibility study be conducted.

Background: From Living Stream Church of the Brethren, the denomination's only fully online congregation, and Pacific Northwest District, the query asks, "Should the Brethren explore the possibilities of how we can faithfully, in good order and with proper representation, use technology to remove barriers and facilitate the full participation of delegates and those desiring to be present for Annual Conference and other events, who might be better served—and could better serve the body—from a distance?"

NB 4. Revisions to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc. Revisions were adopted as presented.

NB 5, 6, and 7. Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement and revised guidelines for Pastors' Salaries and Benefits; Revised Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors and Recommended Cost of Living Adjustment for Pastors were adopted as presented.

Theme of the 2023 Annual Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio:

"Living God's Love (Ephesians 5:1-2)."

"Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Tim McElwee, Moderator

**Interim District Executive Minister**

In reflecting upon the short time, yet many activities and experiences that I have had as a District Executive Minister since January, it is evident that I have been actively engaged in various events and responsibilities that I never even knew existed!

I started off my service with the district by attending the CODE winter meeting in January, then in February I went to District Executive training in Westminster, Md, and then in March for a continuing education CODE training event at Bethany Seminary. Then, in July I attend the CODE summer meeting at the Annual Conference and the Annual Conference itself! Thanks for the opportunities for growth spiritually and intellectually, I’m really enjoying the position.

In the Michigan District directly, I have been engaging in active participation on ZOOM with the Leadership team and also with the program arrangements committee. I also have in-person visits with the Skyview Church of the Brethren and their climate change presentations. I’ve also been involved with the installation, ordination, or commissioning of pastors at the Midland Church of the Brethren, Muskegon Church of the Brethren, and Living Peace Church of the Brethren and have been very impressed with health and vitality of these churches and the way they are sharing God’s love. All our churches together are nurturing their communities, their members and supporting the clergy within our district.

Psalm 122:1: “I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!” It is clear that God's hand is guiding our efforts as a District. God's presence and guidance have enabled you to actively participate in the growth, development, and support of the denomination, the district and its congregations, fostering positive change and progress. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

May you continue to rely on God's strength and wisdom as you carry out your responsibilities, trusting that God will continue to manifest God’s presence and bring about great things within the Michigan district and within the Church of the Brethren that we serve together.

Blessings,

Byrl Shaver

Interim District Executive Minister

304 Mack Drive

Nappanee, IN 46550

(574)333-5233 Cell

**Leadership Team Report 2023**

Greetings to my sisters and brothers in the Michigan District!  As chair of the Leadership Team, I want to share with you the projects that we are working on in the district, as well as decisions that we have made on your behalf.  First though, I want to express my deep appreciation to the rest of the Leadership Team as well as the District Executive Team that continues to show up meeting after meeting and continues to participate in productive and meaningful conversations towards the work of the Michigan District. The following is a list of our discussions, actions and motions that we have been working on since last August:

1. After the resignation of our part-time District Executive, Beth Sollenberger in Fall, 2022, the Leadership Team worked with Nancy Heishman to find a replacement.  Working through several discussions and the interview process, we were able to hire Byrl Shaver on a ¼ time basis as Beth’s replacement.  Dan Rossman and Frank Polzin have continued on in their support of Byrl to round out the District Executive Team.
2. Our Team worked in 2023 to focus much of our time and energies on Disaster Ministry work.  This included working towards 3 goals:

A.  **Committing to send a Rebuild Team to the Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministry 2023 site in Dawson Springs, Kentucky.**  A group of 7 from Michigan including myself, traveled to Dawson Springs the week of April 10-15. We partnered with Habitat as well as Disaster Ministry workers from Kansas and Illinois, and worked on 7 different houses in various stages of rebuilding.  Insulation, floor installation, door hanging, painting, house framing, house sheathing,and roof trusses were on the list of accomplishments.

B. **Hosting a Disaster Ministry Childcare Training Workshop**.  Skyridge Church has graciously agreed to let the Leadership Team use their facilities to host a training workshop (Led by the Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministry Trainers from Elgin and partnering with the Red Cross) on Friday and Saturday October 27-28, 2023.  There will be more details forthcoming later in the summer and early Fall.  If you are interested in being trained to do volunteer Childcare work  with children directly after a disaster occurs, or if you simply want to learn techniques and practices of working with children dealing with trauma, please consider signing up for the training.

C. **Putting together a Michigan District list of members in the Michigan District who may be interested/available to respond to a disaster either on a national level (The COB Rebuild Projects or Childcare Ministries) OR to respond to more local/state disaster projects**.  We have reached out to partner with the Michigan Mennonite Disaster Ministries Team, and they are now beginning to send updates on other opportunities to serve through their organization.  This District list has been started, and will hopefully be finalized this summer, so that correspondence can go out efficiently when a disaster need arises.

3.  The Leadership Team has also supported various ministries around the Michigan District either financially, or through communication and promotion of events.  As of the writing of this report, the Leadership Team has approved MEEB matching funds to help support Jesus in the Neighborhood projects such as Loads of Love ( a volunteer monthly laundry service/food bank) in the Lansing area, as well as support with efforts in refugee resettlement in both the Ann Arbor and Plymouth areas.  The team also worked to communicate and support the efforts of our District Peace Coordinator, Paul Brun Del Rae.  The organization “Plant Justice, Sow Peace,” along with the Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren, organized a recent vigil at the Lansing Capitol to bring awareness about gun violence and their concerns around this topic to their legislators

4.  With sadness, and a feeling of loss, the Leadership Team is putting forth a motion to District Conference in support for the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren to separate from the Michigan District as well as the Church of the Brethren denomination as requested and voted on by the Sugar Ridge Congregation. A short presentation featuring the history and contributions of the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren will be made to the Michigan District Conference in honor of their many years as a member of the district.

 As we move towards 2024, I look forward to another great year working with your Michigan COB District Leadership Team!

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Russell

(Chair of the Michigan District Leadership Team)

**DISCIPLESHIP TEAM**

The Discipleship Team Ministry of the Michigan District Leadership Team is comprised of four coordinators each managing their own area of discipleship. Anna McAvoy-Emrick, BVS Coordinator joins Paul BrunDelRe, Peace Coordinator, Roy and Tara Wise, Youth Ministries and Bob & Candy Schnepp, Disaster Ministries

**BVS:** Various BVS events and news items have been shared on the MI District Face Book page. Latest news has been Chelsea Goss began as the director of BVS this year...a few months ago. She's working out of Elgin.

**DISASTER MINISTRIES:** Disaster ministry update:   
• A team from the District (including Russells and Schnepps) went to Dawson, Kentucky right after Easter.    
• Disaster Child Care training being sponsored by the district is officially approved by Children's Disaster Ministry Office to host training at Skyridge on Oct. 27-28, 2023!  More details to follow on how you can help as we get closer to that date.  15 people are needed to sign up for training.  
Disaster point people in congregations:   
Wendy Russell– Living Peace Church        Becky Phillips– Beaverton  
Bob Schnepp – Spirit of Peace (Lansing) Tim Joseph and Barry Barto – Onekama  
Cindy Tarte– Muskegon                                Ron Wood and Mark Wahr– Sugar Ridge  
Greg Harlow– The Church in Drive.

**YOUTH MINISTRIES:**

**PEACE:** Paul has kept us posted via email on activities involving actions for peace. On June 2& 30, 2023, PJGP (Spirit of Peace) met on the Capital Building wearing orange to call for an end to gun violence. If you’d like to receive updates from Paul, please let him know.

**Please share any ideas you have for further Discipleship activities with me.**

Sherry Pries, Discipleship team chair

Finance, Property, and Resource Report

I want to start this report by sincerely thanking Stephanie Moats and Brenda Westfall for their work as treasurer and financial secretary, respectively.  A replacement is being sought for Brenda as she resigns soon.

Three MEEB grants have been approved by the Leadership Team.

Dan Rossman and I attended two meetings at the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren relative to their initiation of the withdrawal process from the Church of the Brethren.  The Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren followed the process outlined by the denominational Leadership Team (March, 2019).  The Michigan District Church of the Brethren Leadership Team is recommending that the Sugar Ridge Church of the Brethren be disorganized effective 8-12-2023.

When we work out our budgets for the Michigan District, we usually have a deficit of as much as $17,000.00.  At this rate, we will use up our "Operation Fund" at Eder Financial in possibly 5 to 7 years.  In 2019, 15 congregations contributed $25,626.00.

                                           2020, 15 congregations contributed $19,902.00

                                           2021, 11 congregations contributed $21,796.00

                                           2022, 11 congregations contributed $21,946.00

                                           2023,  9 congregations contributed $10,673.00 (this is through 5-31-23) with an additional $10,000 from the Dan McRoberts estate.

I am including these figures in this report so that we observe the trend of fewer congregations supporting the district.

I may bring a possible plan to think about our future in some sort of presentation at District Conference.

I strongly recommend that the delegates support all three of the financial business items brought to District Conference by the Leadership Team.

I have enjoyed serving the District and look forward to one more year in this capacity.  Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklin D. Polzin, Finance, Property, and Resource Team Leader

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MICHIGAN DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN | | | | | |  |  |
| December 1-31, 2022 and Year-to-Date January 1 - December 31, 2022 | | | | | |  |  |
| **Income 2022** | **General Funds** | **General Funds Year-to-Date** | **Rent** | **MEEB** | **Youth** |  | **New Church Development** |
| Beaverton CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Church in Drive |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Common Spirit CoB |  | $650.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Crystal CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Drayton Plains CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Flint CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hope CoB |  | $2,775.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lakeview CoB |  | $1,750.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Living Peace CoB |  | $500.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marilla CoB |  | $1,846.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Midland CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Muskegon CoB |  | $1,000.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| New Haven CoB |  | $3,600.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Onekama CoB | $300.00 | $3,900.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shalom Community |  | $3,300.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skyridge CoB |  | $1,875.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spirit of Peace (Lansing) |  | $750.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sugar Ridge CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woodgrove |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zion CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Individuals |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL IN CHURCH GIVING | $300.00 | $21,946.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |  | $0.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other Sources** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reimbursements |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| District Conference |  | $3,381.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Transfers |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| MEEB Equity |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Other Sources** | $0.00 | $3,381.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |  | $0.00 |
| **TOTAL AMOUNTS DEPOSITED** | **$300.00** | $25,327.00 | **$0.00** | **$0.00** | **$0.00** |  | **$0.00** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **December, 2022** | **$300.00** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 1 (Jan, Feb, March)** | **$10,911.50** | YTD (with all categories including MEEB - 2x$12.50) | | | | |  |
| **Quarter 2 (April, May, June)** | **$3,799.00** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 3 (July, August, Sept)** | **$6,801.00** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 4 (Oct, Nov, Dec)** | **$3,865.50** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Year to Date Totals** | **$25,377.00** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MICHIGAN DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN | | | | | |  |  |
| June 1-25, 2023 and Year to Date January 1, 2023 - June 25, 2023 | | | | | |  |  |
| **Income 2023** | **General Funds** | **General Funds Year-to-Date** | **Rent** | **MEEB** |  | **Youth** | **New Church Development** |
| Beaverton CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Church in Drive |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Common Spirit CoB |  | $500.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Crystal CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Drayton Plains CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Flint CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hope CoB | $925.00 | $2,775.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lakeview CoB |  | $750.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Living Peace CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marilla CoB |  | $923.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Midland CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Muskegon CoB | $250.00 | $750.00 |  | $12.50 |  |  |  |
| New Haven CoB |  | $3,700.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Onekama CoB | $600.00 | $1,800.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shalom Community |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skyridge CoB | $500.00 | $1,000.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spirit of Peace (Lansing) | $750.00 | $1,500.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sugar Ridge CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woodgrove |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zion CoB |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Individuals |  | $10,532.10 |  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL IN CHURCH GIVING | $3,025.00 | $24,230.10 | $0.00 | $12.50 |  | $0.00 | $0.00 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other Sources** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reimbursements |  | $569.57 |  |  |  |  |  |
| District Conference |  | $150.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Transfers |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous |  | $150.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| MEEB Equity |  | $0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Other Sources** | $0.00 | $869.57 | $0.00 | $0.00 |  | $0.00 | $0.00 |
| **TOTAL AMOUNTS DEPOSITED** | **$3,025.00** | $25,099.67 | **$0.00** | **$12.50** |  | **$0.00** | **$0.00** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **June, 2023** | **$3,037.50** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 1 (Jan, Feb, March)** | **$15,450.17** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 2 (April, May, June)** | **$9,687.00** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 3 (July, August, Sept)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarter 4 (Oct, Nov, Dec)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Year to Date Totals** | **$25,137.17** | YTD (with all categories including MEEB) | | | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |





# Rau Farm Report 2022

The Rau Farm is a rural property given in 1938. Cora Rau and her family transferred it so that the Marilla pastor could use the house as parsonage and farm the land to support himself. As property of churches is held by the district, the farm was transferred officially to the district mission board. Although it was given officially to the district, the Rau family always intended their gift to be a support to the Marilla congregation.

It was not quite an outright gift. The district had to pay off the mortgage of $900 and also agreed to pay Cora Rau $50 per year for the rest of her life. For many years a document drawn up in 1973 deemed that withdrawals from the farm income after expenses of the farm be split equally between the district and the Marilla church. This was because of the district’s investment and occasional help with paying taxes.

But in 2021, the district and the Marilla congregation formally changed the agreement since it no longer fit the situation. Now, the withdrawals do not need to be shared, though the congregation can and does voluntarily make grants to the district and camp. The money, when used, supports major projects at the church like replacing the well, and supports the pastor’s housing. Since the current pastor lives in the Onekama Church of the Brethren parsonage, Marilla sends money to Onekama for their share of housing.

In addition to the acreage itself, which is mostly in timber, this is where the assets stand. As of March 31, 2022, these were the cash balances in the Rau Farm fund:

13,720 in checking account

29,538 in a mutual fund

72,347 in TD Ameritrade account

$115,605

Transactions in 2021, early 2022

Some lumbering was done in 2021 because the market is high.

Sold $16,000 in timber

Paid a tree broker $500 commission About $500 a year goes for taxes.

A furnace repair bill was paid in early 2022.

Parsonage payment to Onekama $2,796

In June, 2021, the Marilla congregation authorized $1,000 to Camp Brethren Heights.

In January, 2022, the Marilla congregation authorized $2,000 to Camp Brethren Heights.

Submitted by Frances Townsend, pastor of Marilla Church of the Brethren

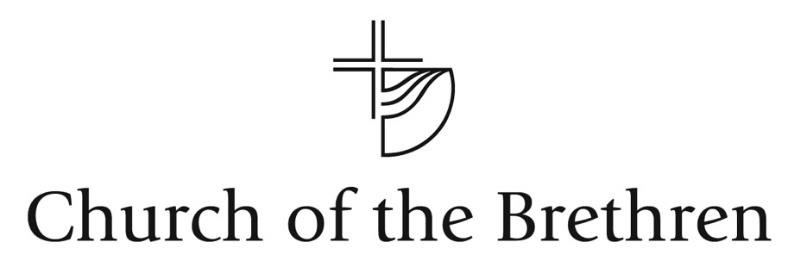
**Camp Brethren Heights**

Again, this past year I have been privileged to serve the Michigan District as the Liaison to the Camp Board (with vote). Through many meetings at camp the board has identified many needs relative to improving the facilities at camp. A proposal will be coming to District Conference asking for $10,300.00 for materials to complete various needed improvements at camp.  Another $6,000.00 will be requested to assist in the transition to a new camp director.  I heartily recommend that District Conference supports these requests, especially as the Michigan District owns the camp and uses it for District Conference.  These improvements will benefit us!  As I write this report (6-13-23), board chair Jack Durnbaugh is planning a meeting with a possible candidate for the camp director position.

Sincerely, Frank Polzin

DENOMINATIONAL

REPORTS



Dear Friends and Family of Faith in the Michigan District,

Greetings in the name of Christ! My thoughts and prayers are with you, as you plan and prepare for your District Conference. I hope it will be a time of earnest conscientiousness and responsibility related to carrying out the denomination’s mission, and a time of praise and celebration for the ways your congregations are putting Christ’s love into action. May we feel God’s presence among us.

I’m looking forward to our 237th recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, scheduled for July 3–7, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Annual Conference is a special time in the life of our denomination. Yes, it is an occasion to facilitate the business of the church through the various business sessions, study committees, agency reports, and queries. But it is also a time for Brethren from all walks of life to celebrate our unique place and ministry in – and as – the Body of Christ. From inspirational worship services to quality leadership development, open dialogue to rejuvenating fellowship, Annual Conference invites us to welcome, encourage, and engage with one another as a community of faith.

In her book, *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again,* author Rachel Held Evans wrote that Christianity can’t be an individual endeavor. Following Christ is a group activity – and one that, simultaneously, has been messy and incarnate since the beginning. Because, as Held Evans writes, “the church is not a group of people who believe all the same things; the church is a group of people caught up in the same story, with Jesus at the center.”

As Brethren, we know this to be true. Since our founding more than 300 years ago, we’ve been a faith family that has chosen another way of living: the way of Christ. We are a people called to live and experience our faith together – in community – in service to and with God, each other, and our neighbors. Each of us brings our own unique perspectives and experiences to this community. And it is through our willingness to share our faith journeys with one another that we can experience and see God’s vision for us more fully and, therefore, be transformed together by God’s Spirit.

So, I invite you to join me and our denominational community in Grand Rapids next summer. Let’s gather together knowing each of us is welcome and worthy – integral parts of the Body of Christ, answering God’s call to build authentic relationships and community with ourselves, each other, and those around us.

In grace and peace,

Madalyn Metzger

2024 Annual Conference Moderator

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**Eder Financial District Conference Report 2023**

Greetings to the moderator, delegates, and members, as you gather for your District Conference!

Did you know Eder Financial can make a positive impact on your life, directly or indirectly, whether you qualify to use our services or not?

That’s because we serve congregations and their staff so they can better perform their ministries for their members.

Eder provides a fantastic retirement plan and employee-based insurances for pastors, congregational, district, and camp employees. We can also manage special funds, like ministry funds, memorial funds, cemetery funds, and building funds for congregations and other church-related organizations.

We also provide several free workshops that help congregations learn how to grow their endowments, encourage people to include the congregation in their end-of-life financial decision-making, how to run the church as a business with good governance, and more. Ask the Eder representative attending your conference how we can bring a workshop to your congregation.

Can we serve you and your congregation if we aren’t already? Give us a chance. You’ll be glad you did. Ask us if your congregation, district, and camp are using our services. We welcome the conversation.

Eder Financial is now in its second year with its new name, having changed from Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust in May 2022. The transition has been well received in the denomination because of our core business model –

* We seek to serve congregations and organizations as partners, making choices and decisions surrounding participation in a retirement plan as easy as possible. It is important that we make it easy for all who can enroll to enroll, as many Americans are on track to have insufficient savings in retirement. We work to help ensure that our members are not faced with that problem, by helping them enroll early in their careers, saving to the plan consistently, and using an asset allocation model to help grow their funds. Not sure how to do that? We can help.
* We provide a concierge service model with our insurance products, answering questions and addressing all concerns proactively and satisfactorily. Our ancillary insurances of life, vision, dental, short- and longterm disability have held premium rate increases virtually flat over the past five years, which means eligible employees can protect themselves with various insurances while not suffering high premium rate increases year after year.
* Part-time employees can participate in both the Eder Retirement and Insurance plans. Ask us if you or someone you know qualifies.
* We manage funds of organizations in a manner that allows easy access, several tools for managing investments, and reports and resources that assist in the management of the funds. We would be glad to set up a demonstration for you and your organization of our fantastic customer web portal.
* And we provide education to give people information and to help them know what questions they should be asking so that they can be successful, whether helping to grow their congregations’ financial base or to manage their own retirement plan or insurance offerings.

We also help tenured pastors and congregational, district, and camp staff who have extraordinary financial needs, if they meet certain guidelines. In 2022 the Church Workers’ Assistance Plan that Eder manages granted $250,000 to about 40 people who found themselves in financial distress with nowhere else to turn.

Most of the funds under our management conform to Eder Values Investing, which means you can utilize our services and know that your resources are being managed in accordance with the values in the Church of the Brethren tradition.

**Serving others who have common bonds and convictions**

Committed to serving as a Church of the Brethren Annual Conference agency, Eder is moving to include other people and organizations of faith that profess a like-mindedness with Eder Financials' values as an organization grounded in Christian faith. Program strength, product options, and lower costs come from a strong volume of business. Therefore, Eder will grow stronger in the long term by offering its ministries to others who seek competitive products backed by concierge service. If you know of a congregation, not-for-profit, or other faithbased organization that would benefit from Eder’s services, please let us know.

**EDER FINANCIAL BOARD and staff**

The 12-person Eder Financial Board consists of people who have knowledge and experience in accounting, finance, investments, law, employee benefits, human resources, actuarial science, or represent pastors, district executives, and organizations that are Brethren or have common bonds and convictions. If you or someone you know would like to serve on the Eder Financial Board, let us know. We are always looking for people who are dedicated to service, want to do meaningful volunteer work, and are committed to being an active member of a board.

We also have 27 people on our staff, working in retirement, employee insurance, organizational investing, finance, investments, client relations, marketing, public relations, IT, data, special projects, and business development. We are a family friendly, faith-based organization that strives to provide concierge level service to our members and clients while also providing a fulfilling work environment in a permanent work-from-home setting. If you or someone you know is interested in an Eder Financial job, let us know.

# CONCLUSION

Despite the expansion of its charter to bring in other members and clients of like mind from beyond the Church of the Brethren, Eder Financial remains committed to the denomination. Our organization was created by the Annual Conference to serve pastors, employees, churches, and organizations. That commitment to service has not wavered. We are here to help our members and clients achieve their financial goals. As we adopt new taglines, new goals, new language to articulate our vision, bridging our past with our future, one of our more recent BBT taglines melds quite nicely with Eder’s future vision of walking alongside those we serve. “Building financial security. Bettering the world. Together.” If you and/or your congregation have not walked with us in the past, let us do so in the future. In other words, those who have not given Eder Financial a look for a few years, or ever, should do so. Together, Eder will help you reach your financial goals which will help strengthen your ministry to the church.

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| --- | --- |
| Donna Rhodes | Nevin Dulabaum |
| Board Chair | President |

**1505 Dundee Ave. • Elgin, IL 60120-1619 • ederfinancial.org • 847-695-0200 • 800-746-1505 toll-free • 847-742-0135 fax**

March 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The earthquake in Turkey and Syria, war and violence from Ukraine to Africa, and a US school shooting are some of the things that have challenged BDM to respond creatively and prayerfully to deep hardships and loss in 2022 and the beginning of 2023. Whether responding to a natural disaster, violence, or other crisis, BDM staff and volunteers journeyed with survivors and families toward recovery and hope, often transforming lives, in places like Waverly, Tenn.; Uvalde, Texas; Dawson Springs, Ky.; and North Fort Meyers, Fla.

Encouragement for this ministry is found throughout the sacred scripture, such as Galatians 6:9a, 10a: “Let us not lose heart in doing good, . . . while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people”. It is also found in our partners such as Pamlico County (N.C.) Disaster Recovery Coalition, which shared: “[Not] only have you (BDM) helped to repair hurricane damaged homes, but you have also helped to restore and mend broken hearts. The light you have shown, and the relationships you have built with survivors and their families, will long have an impact on them and their generations.”

Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) volunteers responded this past year with deep compassion to the school shooting in Uvalde (Texas), floods, wildfires, and hurricanes. In Uvalde, specially trained volunteers (Critical Response Childcare teams) supported children and families of the 19 children killed by a lone shooter. These volunteers had 385 contacts with children as they helped them process the trauma and build resiliency in the face of this tragedy.

After Hurricane Ian made landfall in late September 2022, causing catastrophic damage along southwest Florida, CDS volunteers were initially housed by rebuilding volunteers with homes in the area. CDS teams served for six weeks in Florida shelters, with over 400 child contacts. During 2022, a total of 86 CDS volunteers served 1,065 children on eight responses. CDS also held three volunteer training workshops resulting in 40 newly trained volunteers, bringing the total CDS volunteer base to 576 by year’s end.

In March 2022, the BDM rebuilding program network of volunteers finished four years of repairing and rebuilding homes in the Carolinas following Hurricanes Matthew (2016) and Florence (2018). The program transitioned to Waverly, Tenn., for the remainder of the year, in response to devastating August 2021 flooding, when over 17 inches of rain fell in 24 hours. In October, a three week short-term response supported new home construction in Dawson Springs, Ky., where tornadoes destroyed around 650 homes in December 2021. Volunteer leadership on the projects was provided by 47 disaster project leaders from across the country who served to welcome and support 572 volunteers. The rebuilding program site moved to Dawson Springs, Ky., in January 2023 to continue the tornado recovery with local partners.

A local hybrid response to the October 2021 tidal flooding in Maryland’s Somerset and Dorchester counties was led by members of the Mid-Atlantic District, with support from BDM staff, vehicles, and equipment. In 2022, two homes were repaired by 35 volunteers through a grant award from

Lowes Home Improvement and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). This funding included $30,000 in Lowes Gift Cards to purchase construction materials for the homes and $4,200 to support volunteer housing and meals. This work will be completed in 2023.

In early February 2023, the world watched the rescue of survivors of the Turkey-Syria earthquake that has taken move than 50,000 lives. BDM responded quickly with Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants to partners working in both countries. The quake adds to the list of global catastrophes, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, resulting in a war that has displaced more than 12 million Ukrainians and, reportedly, caused nearly 7,000 Ukrainian deaths by the end of 2022. BDM responded to this crisis with EDF grants (totaling $215,000 in 2022) in collaboration with five key partners. Additional grants are expected early in 2023.

The BDM global response includes dual programs in Haiti that continue the 2021 earthquake response, with $166,969 in funds, while also addressing the acute overlapping crisis caused by the total collapse of the Haitian government. With severe hunger on the rise, a special program is helping to provide food to vulnerable families in the communities around the Haitian Brethren churches through a $39,000 grant. Smaller EDF grants supported global Churches of the Brethren in Uganda ($27,500) and Venezuela ($10,000) with flood recovery programs, as well as the South Sudan Mission ($11,000).

The Nigeria Crisis Response, a continued response to terrorism since 2014, provided support to four camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, and home repairs for the most vulnerable. Additional EDF grants included support for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese in Lebanon, continued hurricane and flood recovery in Honduras, and support for programming of the Rwandan Church of the Brethren.

The total BDM programmatic expenses in 2022 were $1,676,048. This includes the expenses from EDF allocations that support specific programs such as $274,393 for U.S. responses (Rebuilding, CDS, etc.); $190,076 for the Nigeria Crisis Response; $281,469 for other Global CoB partners; and $364,909 for all other global responses.

This ministry is only possible because the whole church is working together. Individual members and supporters, volunteers, churches, districts, and the auctions are part of the body of Christ coming together to pray, serve, give hope, and help families heal. Through all this we pray that more people come to God and know God’s amazing love.

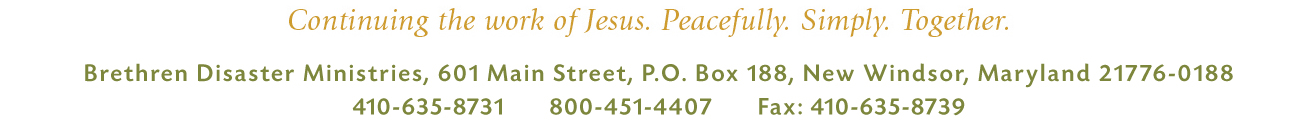
Thank you for your support and encouragement. You are an integral part of the body bearing witness to God’s love for all who are lost and need Christ.

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Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries

*On behalf of BDM staff: Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Sharon Franzén, Kim Gingerich, and Michael Scalzi*



**On Earth Peace**

Dear followers of Christ,

What does God need from the Church of the Brethren now (and are we

prepared to give it)?  What does it mean for us to be a “peace church” in today’s world?

Founded in 1974, On Earth Peace is an agency of the Church of the Brethren

Annual Conference which seeks to embolden the Church of the Brethren as a

historic and living peace church. Our name comes from the angel’s song at

Jesus’ birth, “On Earth Peace and Good Will to All,” and we work to lift that song in today’s world.

Historically, our Brethren identity as a peace church was defined in part by our relationship to war:

Following Christ, we were against war. Even as time passed and many Brethren didn’t agree with

pacifism, the Church’s identity as a force for peace and against war remained vital. What is the core

of our peace commitment today? What are we against, and what are we for--in God’s name?

In a church and world that is very polarized, what does it mean to you to be a follower of the

Prince of Peace? In some ways, the war we were against has come home, and the sorely-needed

peace (and justice) is more complicated than our ancestors in the faith may have known. Some parts

are still the same--the all-surpassing love of Christ as a foundation of that peace--and yet the world in

which we proclaim God’s love has changed, and so must our engagement with it.

On Earth Peace believes the Church of the Brethren has been called for such a time as this. We

as Brethren are a relational, warm, discipleship-centered community. We help put hands and feet to

God’s call to love all people. On Earth Peace seeks to help the Church of the Brethren become what it

can be, “for the glory of God and our neighbor’s good.”

Here are three OEP initiatives we believe can help the Church of the Brethren become what’s

needed in today’s world.

 1000 Brethren Kingian Nonviolence Training. We are seeking to train a new generation of

Christian leaders in nonviolence, to focus our “peace” and aid in our community ministries.

 Standing with People of Color Study/Action Process. Together with the Southern

Ohio/Kentucky District, OEP is leading a two-year denomination-wide study/action process

focused around key conversations we’re asking the church to have.

 Church of the Brethren Gun Violence Prevention Organizing Team. A hearty band of

Brethren from across the country has come together to galvanize all Brethren to stand and act

together on the scourge of gun violence in the US.

Please consider whether your family can support this ministry financially. We hope your congregation will include our ministry as part of your outreach giving in your 2024 budget.

Write to us at OEP@OnEarthPeace.org and share how God is moving you towards peace or justice in

these times. Visit www.OnEarthPeace.org to learn about our work and find upcoming events.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Guynn

For OEP’s executive team, with Darlene Johnson and Marie Benner-Rhoades

P.O. Box 188, New Windsor Maryland 21776-0188  Phone: 410-635-8704  https://OnEarthPeace.org  [**OEP@OnEarthPeace.org**](mailto:OEP@OnEarthPeace.org)

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