

1 **Minutes of the**  
2 **Fifty-Fourth Annual District Conference**  
3 **Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren**

4 **November 11, 2017**

**Hillcrest, La Verne, California**

5 **I. Call to Order**

6 The 2017 Pacific Southwest District Conference was called to order by Moderator Sara Haldeman-  
7 Scarr at 8:32a.m. and prayer was offered. The delegates were given assigned tables to sit at and  
8 were invited to get to know each other and consider the tables a place of hospitality.

9 **II. Introductions**

10 Moderator Sara introduced those at the front which included: Nelda Rhoades Clark, Board Chair;  
11 Karen Pierson, Moderator-Elect; Karen Cosner, Clerk; Clark Youngblood, Time Keeper; Eric  
12 Bishop, Parliamentarian; Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister; and Virginia Stark, pianist.

13 **III. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum**

14 The clerk verified that we have 65 delegates in attendance representing 21 of our 25 congregations  
15 to confirm that we have a quorum and can conduct the business of the Pacific Southwest District  
16 at this 54th District Conference.

17 **IV. Approval of Agenda**

18 **Motion to accept Agenda, Donna McAvoy (Live Oak)/Janet Short (Pomona Fellowship),**  
19 **Passed.**

20 **V. Approval of Minutes of 2016**

21 **A. Motion to approve 2016 Minutes, Sabrina Stern (San Diego)/Mike Fletcher (La Verne),**  
22 **Passed.**

23 **B. The following persons volunteered to certify the accuracy of the 2017 Minutes: Phil Corr**  
24 **(Church of the Living Savior), Richard Keeling (Bakersfield), and Richard Hart (Pomona**  
25 **Fellowship).**

26 **VI. Delegate Dedication**

27 Delegates' Dedication Litany and Hymn of Affirmation, from page 6 of the Business Book.

28 **Table Conversation: Bible Study, Sara Haldeman-Scarr**

29 *Based on Matthew 5:1-16.* Sara asked the attendees to share a personal story based on a story of  
30 Jesus and using lengths of play dough, weave the stories together. She closed the session by sharing  
31 that an amazingly beautiful tapestry is made and that God is working through our diversity. She  
32 then went around the room and smashed the tapestries that were made and shared that smashing  
33 can create another tapestry.

34 **VII. Business Item: Election of Leadership, from page 48 of the Business Book.**

35 **A. The meeting was opened for nominations from the floor.**

36 **B. Seeing none, a motion was made to close the ballot, Jeff Glass (Modesto)/Phil Corr**  
37 **(Church of the Living Savior), passed.**

38 **C. A motion was made to move the ballot, Luella Cole (Modesto)/Tom Hostetler (La Verne),**  
39 **passed.**

40 **D. The following persons were elected to the PSWD 2018 positions:**

41 1. Moderator-Elect: Bob Morris (Glendora)

42 2. Nominating Committee: Lucile Leard (Glendale)

- 1           3. Program Committee:
  - 2           a. Cady Laycook (South Bay)
  - 3           b. Peggy Redman (Pomona Fellowship)
- 4           4. Standing Committee
  - 5           a. Representative: Don Shankster (Papago Buttes)
  - 6           b. Alternate: Sara Haldeman-Scarr (San Diego)
- 7           5. District Board of Administration:
  - 8           a. Mario Cabrera (Príncipe de Paz), Youth & Young Adult Representative
  - 9           b. Jaime Farrar (Modesto), Youth & Young Adult Representative
  - 10          c. Elizabeth Piazza (Live Oak), Youth & Young Adult Representative
  - 11          d. David Flores (Cristo Sion), At-Large Representative
  - 12          e. Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace), At-Large Representative
  - 13          f. Joanne Wagoner (La Verne), At-Large Representative
  - 14          g. Julia Wheeler (La Verne), At-Large Representative
  - 15          h. Joel Price (Empire), Northern CA Representative
  - 16          i. Cindy Badell-Slaughter (Glendale) Southern CA West Representative

#### 17 **VIII. Introduction of Guests**

18 Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister, introduced guests Nevin Dulabaum, Brethren Benefit  
 19 Trust President; Jeff Carter, Bethany Theological Seminary President; Lori Current, Bethany  
 20 Executive Director for Admissions & Student Services; Jay Wittmeyer, Brethren Inc. Executive  
 21 Director, Global Mission and Service; Thomas Dowdy, PSDW representative on the Ministry and  
 22 Mission Board; Erin Gratz, On Earth Peace Board Member; Julie Wheeler, University of La Verne  
 23 Director of Church & Interfaith Relations; Zandra Wagner, University of La Verne Chaplain;  
 24 Kamal Abu-Shamsieh, an international leader in Islamic chaplaincy.

25           Later in the day, Matthew Neeley, Hillcrest President & CEO, was introduced and shared  
 26 greetings as our Hillcrest host, where residents are: dreamers, servers and quiet builders.

#### 27 **IX. Reports From Annual Conference Agencies** (written reports on pages 33-43 of the Business 28 Book) A video was shown representing all five agencies: On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological 29 Seminary, Brethren Inc., Brethren Benefit Trust, and Annual Conference. Each year two agencies 30 are present and give a live report, this year's reports were from:

- 31 A. On Earth Peace: Board Member Erin Gratz expressed her gratitude for the District's support  
 32 and shared that OEP has 5 permanent staff members.
- 33 B. Brethren Benefit Trust: President Nevin Dulabaum shared the ways that BBT relates to  
 34 socially responsible investments (Brethren Value Investments). They invest in third world  
 35 developing companies. They don't invest in drugs or guns. They have a community  
 36 development plan which invests in inner city projects and they look to boards that have ethnic  
 37 and gender mix, etc.

#### 38 **X. Church Planting Task Force Report**

39 The members are: Mike Fletcher (La Verne), Rudy Amaya (Príncipe de Paz), Donna Welch (La  
 40 Verne), Jeff Glass (Modesto), and Robert Aguirre (Cornerstone). They are encouraging  
 41 congregations to dream and follow up on their dreams. Their mission is to: Empower, Support,  
 42 and Train.

43           New project Príncipe de Paz Los Banos. Russ introduced Pastors Becky and Richard Zapata  
 44 of Príncipe de Paz in Santa Ana, who introduced the leadership couple in Los Banos Rigo and  
 45 Margie Berumen. Moderator Sara led in a prayer of thanksgiving for the new church plant.

1 **XI. Policy Board Report**

- 2 A. Board Chair Nelda Rhoades Clarke reported: On April 29, 2017 the Policy Board accepted the  
3 PSWD Objective – “A Circle of Support” (found on page 25 of the Business Book) which  
4 contains “Core Objective – Supporting congregations in being vital and healthy communities  
5 of faith that embody and share distinctive Brethren ways of Christian belief and action.” The  
6 nine areas of PSWD focus include the responsibility of helping congregations build inter-  
7 cultural ministry and relationships.
- 8 B. Update: The Lindsay “New Harvest” congregation will be closing and PSWD will sell the  
9 facility to another congregation.
- 10 C. Update: The Korea church property will have an offer to sell by the end of the year.
- 11 D. Ministry Commission chair Tom Hostetler shared that there have been over 12 persons  
12 interested in a licensed ministry. The commission approved 2 ordinations. There are 75  
13 ordained and commissioned ministers in PSWD. Gilbert Romero was hired as Ministry  
14 Training Coordinator. In 2018 all pastors and their spouses are invited to a retreat to be held  
15 in Malibu. The commission believes all pastors deserve support and encouragement from the  
16 District.
- 17 E. Stewards Commission chair Joel Price. See report on pages 22-24 of the Business Book. Nelda  
18 shared that the Pastoral Support Grant program from the district is ending with 2017.

19 **Table Conversation:** The attendees were asked to discuss three questions:

- 20 1. What is happening in the District that you heard, that was interesting to you and why?  
21 2. What would you like to know more about in the PSWD and the work of the Policy Board?  
22 3. Where might you have gifts to share or want to get involved with the PSWD?

23 **XII. 2018 PSWD Budget Proposal** – Pages 55-58 of the Business Book.

- 24 A. **The Policy Board recommends to District Conference the adoption of the proposed 2018**  
25 **budget as presented. Passed.**
- 26 B. **The Policy Board recommends to District Conference that the Operating Expense**  
27 **maximum for the 2019 budget be \$446,000. Passed.**

28 **XIII. Program Committee Report:** Printed on page 17 of the Business book.

29 **XIV. Brethren Disaster Report:** Dot Hess presented a slide show.

30 **XV. Standing Committee Report**

31 Marlin Heckman shared that each district is allowed 1 delegate for every 5000 members. This year  
32 there were 36 delegates for Standing Committee. All items of business are reviewed by the standing  
33 committee. Change of Polity requires 2/3 vote of the membership. There were four items of new  
34 business, two were continued to next year because Annual Conference did not have time to get to  
35 them. It is important that we continue to remind the rest of the church that we here in the West exist  
36 and are a part of the body.

37 **XVI. District Executive Minister Report:** Printed on pages 11-13 of the Business book.

38 Russ introduced persons in new pastoral leadership within the district, including: Dawna Welch is  
39 the new full time Spiritual Formation Minister for the La Verne congregation. Randy Short is the  
40 new minister for Glendale, Mike Fletcher is the Interim at Modesto. Southern Ohio District  
41 Executive Minister David Shetler is working with Modesto in the search for a new pastor. Russ is  
42 working with Bakersfield in the search for a new pastor. Russ introduced Gilbert Romero as the  
43 new Ministry Training Coordinator for the District, and shared that Erik Brummett has been serving  
44 as the interim District Youth Advisor. In September the District Office moved from Hillcrest to  
45 office space at the Pomona Fellowship church facility to lower the cost of office rent.

1 **XVII. Congregational Vitality Task Group**

2 See “Ministry Partnership Funds” on page 12 in the Business Book. A video featuring Church of  
3 the Living Savior (McFarland), Modesto, and Glendale, talking about the work they had done with  
4 their Ministry Partnership Funds was shared. Seven different congregations have received  
5 partnership funds over the last two years.

6 **XVIII. Reports**

7 **Motion to accept the reports with appreciation for all the work. Thomas Dowdy (Imperial**  
8 **Heights)/Jody Romero (Restoration LA) Passed.**

9 **Table Conversation:**

10 What have you learned in your insight sessions or during the business and reports of the District?

11 **XIX. Announcements**

- 12 A. Thank you to the tellers, Gary and Rae Stern.
- 13 B. The Policy Board will meet at 8:00am Sunday morning.
- 14 C. Please return at 5:30 for Love Feast.
  - 15 1. The Service Project will be in the main room after Love Feast.
  - 16 2. The Campfire will take place following the Love Feast outside the entrance to the
  - 17 Meeting House.

18 **XX. Passing the Gavel**

19 Sara Haldeman-Scarr thanked the conference for supporting her and having fun and passed the  
20 gavel to Moderator Karen Pierson encouraging her to have the Joy of Faith, the Wisdom of God  
21 and the Blessing of Courage.

22 **XXI. Adjournment**

23 The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

24 \_\_\_\_\_  
25 Minutes recorded by Karen Cosner, Clerk

26 \_\_\_\_\_

27 In June 2018 the draft copy of the minutes was examined and given preliminary approval by the committee:  
28 Phil Corr (Church of the Living Savior), Richard Keeling (Bakersfield), and Richard Hart (Pomona  
29 Fellowship).