

District Executive Minister's Report

Russ Matteson

I've been thinking a lot about the District's Unity Statement over the past several months. The statement is grounded in the call to love one another found in John 13:34-35. It invites us each and all to humble ourselves, to focus on Jesus, to find our unity in Christ. This is a challenging thing to do in a time and culture where pride and division are the prevailing choices. The choice to divide and separate seems to many to be the right or easy way forward. I am challenged that the way of Jesus is the way of love and reconciliation, and that is not an easy thing.

I will share with you the strain in many districts over the withdrawal of churches from the denomination. The process involved is time and energy consuming for the District Executive and for members of the District Board. It is never a congenial process. It is seldom a place of love and reconciliation. I invite you to hold the Church of the Brethren and those places where withdrawal is a present reality in your prayers.

And I invite us to remember what we as a district committed to as the gathered church in 2007 when we unanimously approved the Unity Statement which is printed below. In the midst of the challenges and trials around us, may we focus not on our differences but with love for one another choose to focus on Jesus, together.

On this 300th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren, we remember the words of Jesus:

"Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples – when they see the love you have for each other." (John 13: 34, 35; The Message)

Recognizing we are a living peace church, and that God is constantly revealing, we commit to humble ourselves, and to engage in the tension of community necessary for new birth.

Not focusing on our differences, but in the spirit of love and acceptance, we choose to focus on Christ.

We purpose to remain open, as we listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit, working in love to mutually support and encourage our various ministries.

Sabbatical

Después muchas reuniones en enero, mi tiempo de sabático comenzó. Me fui por seis semanas de estudio en Puebla, México. Mi tiempo estaba lleno con clases, viviendo con una familia, y aprendiendo sobre la historia y la cultura de México y los pueblos indígenas. En seis semanas aprendí muchas nuevas palabras, muchas conjugaciones verbales, y cómo trabajar con pronombres. Aprendí mucho y tengo mucho más que aprender. Muchas gracias al distrito por este tiempo fuera. Muchas gracias a Erik Brummett, el presidente del equipo, y Beth Sollenberger, una ministra ejecutiva del distrito jubilada, por su trabajo mientras yo estaba en sabático. Estoy trabajando para practicar y usar lo que he aprendido. Este tiempo me ha ayudado ya que estamos en asociación con las iglesias de habla hispana que forman parte de este distrito.

Leadership Development Opportunities

As part of the Ministry & Improvement Fund a key area we are funding is for pastoral and leadership support. Support was provided to help five persons attend Annual Conference, and we had a few more pastors take advantage of Resiliency Grants to help them access coaching, counseling, or spiritual direction resources. I also want to lift up two resources that we offered congregations the opportunity to participate in that were covered by this fund:

Know to Grow - This is an opportunity for local churches to interact with local demographic and psychographic information with support and coaching from Jeff Glass. Jeff has shared reports and invited initial planning with 14 of our churches, and several churches have invited him for additional coaching and planning using the data provided. Unfortunately Percept, the information partner in this program, closed operations in February, but Jeff was able to pull at least preliminary reports for the areas around many of our congregations that had not yet asked for information. Jeff remains available to consult with congregations. The cost for using Jeff as a resource in this area is covered by the district.

New & Renew Conference - The district sent a group of 15 adults and 2 children from 6 congregations to this biennial Church of the Brethren gathering that focuses on resourcing

congregations that are new churches or committed to the work of renewal. With several keynote addresses, 20 workshop choices, four worship services, and time to fellowship, I believe this is one of the best events that the denomination offers. Our attendees came home with many ideas and connected to each other and partners across the church.

Pastoral/Congregational Transitions

Church of the Living Savior (McFarland, CA) - The church began hosting a new Spanish speaking congregation in mid-2022 and working to partner in ministry with this group. This ministry has chosen the name Iglesia del Salvador Viviente and has been recognized by the District as a new church project sponsored by the Living Savior congregation. Their leaders are in the process of being licensed and adding to the training they already have.

Circle of Peace (Peoria, AZ) - Ground breaking on their new worship center should happen in December of this year. The District Board has allocated an additional \$250,000 from the Growth from the Ashes Fund to the project. The District will also provide a loan of \$1.4 million for the project. Continue to hold them in prayer as they gather the funds and begin construction.

Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas, NV) - As their current space rental situation continued to worsen, the District committed to partner with them to find new space to rent or buy that would allow them to operate without the challenges of space sharing. At the end of June we closed on a small property (originally a home, most recently a wedding chapel) in a residential area and near to where the pastor lives. Renovation work is underway to have a space that will hold up to 70 people for worship, classrooms, and an office. We hope that they will be able to use the space by the end of the year.

Glendora - Gilbert Romero is serving as the interim pastor. They have remodeled and updated their sanctuary space.

La Verne - The congregation is moving to a ministry team model and in late 2022 called Amanda Bennett to be one of the two members of the pastoral team.

They are still in a search process for the other team member.

Pomona Fellowship - They have now reached a long term agreement to rent space for office and worship from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Pomona. They are using a preaching team from within the congregation, and Julie Wheeler serves as the congregational chaplain providing pastoral care support. They have formed a search committee and we will soon begin work on looking to call a pastor.

South Bay (Redondo Beach, CA) - This Spring the congregation and their partner church Journey Covenant called David Fasold to serve as their pastor. David is ordained in the Evangelical Free tradition and is Commissioned for term of service. The year ahead will bring conversation around them officially being one, dually affiliated church, which is how they operate at a practical level.

Other Assignments

I have been called to serve a second four year term on the Board of Eder Financial (formerly Brethren Benefit Trust). I represent members of the retirement plan and the District Executives on the board and serve on its Investment Committee. The work there does allow me to work to encourage how Eder can better serve the pastors of our district and the whole church. It has also helped our Stewards Commission as we work at how we manage the district's resources.

I also serve as the Treasurer of the Council of District Executives. Doing our books is not that difficult, but in this role I also serve as the District Executive representative on the Brethren Faith in Action Fund approval committee. It has been good to encourage and help several of our congregations to access the funds available through the denomination.

Pace e bene, Paz y bien, Peace and all good,

Russ Matteson

District Executive Minister

Deceased Ministers

Donald E. Fancher - 1/17/1934 – 1/29/2023
Roland Johnson - 11/09/1950 – 1/23/2023
Nelda Rhoades Clarke - 2/6/1951 – 6/27/2023
Barbara Ober - 7/1/1939 - 8/8/2023

Recognition of Ministers' Ordination Anniversaries

70 Years

James E. Daughtry

65 Years

Dr. Robert T. Neher
Galen R. Snell

60 Years

Glenn R. Stanford
Gene E. Wenger

40 Years

Catherine L. Laycook

30 Years

Erin Matteson
Russ Matteson
Nancey Murphy
Gilbert Romero
Zandra Wagoner

25 Years

Ernest M. Snyder

15 Years

Carrie Cesar

5 Years

Mercedes Zapata

**Representing 555 years
of service.**

TRIM Supervisor Report. Russ Matteson
See also Ministry Commission report on page [21](#).

At this time the district has no students formally enrolled in the TRIM program. We are using the courses offered in TRIM to provide Brethren content for Jonathan Chubb (Papago Buttes) as he works to have his ordination transferred to the Church of the Brethren, and for training of Sandra Millard (Bakersfield) who is licensed and doing some coursework to add to other work she comes into ministry with.

Russ Matteson, TRIM Coordinator
DE@pswdcob.org

MTC: Ministry Training Coordinator: SeBAH and EPMC Report. Gilbert Romero
See also Ministry Commission report on page [21](#).

In my role as MTC (Ministry Training Coordinator) for the district I find that through the many challenges, our current team makes everything work! I have a wonderful job centered on putting people that have been called to ministry in the Church of the Brethren into the training programs EPMC: Educación para Ministerio Compartido, and SeBAH: Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano. Then I follow-up with calls and emails encouraging the licensed ministers as they move through the training, meet weekly with them as they read the books for

some units, and keep them connected to resources.

I praise God for our EPMC licensees: Clara Rubalcalva and Maria Garcia from Cristo Genesis in LA, Pastor Luz Roman of the Las Vegas Iglesia Cristiana Elohim church plant, and Pastors Rigo & Margie Berumen of the Los Banos Centro Agape en Acción fellowship. They have all finished three units this year: Introducciona Los Estudios Biblicos with Marcos Inhauser, Preaching and Worship with Jaun Pablo Plaza, and Church History with Gilbert Romero. Pastor Florecita Merlos has finished SeBAH and is waiting for her Ordination. Príncipe de Paz Pastor Richard Zapata is battling cancer, so his SeBAH program is on pause. Thank you for letting me work with these students. Be blessed.

Gilbert Romero, MTC
MTC@pswdcob.org

Report of Standing Committee Delegate

The 2023 Standing Committee met in warm, humid, Cincinnati buzzing with Taylor Swift fans on July 1. After opening worship led by moderator Tim McElwee looking at a passage from Hebrews about “exasperating each other to love”, we shared with each other some of the things happening in our districts that required some creativity; challenges; and joys.

Many districts are grieving the loss of congregations as a result of tensions over the acceptance of and ministry with LGBTQIA persons.

What does it take to be church in post-pandemic era with in-person gatherings and hybrid worship and meetings?

What is required to be the best multi-cultural church or district? Multi-lingual?

How do we build relationships across large geographical landscapes?

In his report, moderator Tim highlighted brethren history looking at the balance of local autonomy versus a hierarchical model of governance. He noted previous annual conference statements that declared we will not enforce by decree. There continues to be stress in the denomination from the 1983 paper on Human Sexuality. Thus, he noted the 2008 invitation to agree as opposed to mandates to abide by polity. He called us to do more than name the tension, more than just repent. He said we have been outside the Promised Land for more than 40 years. He noted that brethren are a blend of congregational and Presbyterian styles of governance. It is time to disagree in love AND allow local members and congregations to reach their own conclusions in matters of faith and interpretation of scriptures as we have done previously on issues like flags in worship or members serving in the military.

On Sunday afternoon, Standing Committee took a learning tour of The Freedom Center of the Underground Railroad. We were encouraged to ponder our own reactions and responses to the displays, stories, and history – which included a section on the trafficking of humans that continues today. Then we spent time in the evening debriefing our experience – sobering, overwhelming, wondering where and how we yet participate in oppression today.

Standing Committee spent time for delegates to share and respond on various issues. “Reparation” is now a trigger word causing some to oppose that part of the Resolution to Lament the Doctrine of Discovery. How we present a time of confession and repentance with the larger conference body led to group wordsmithing of the liturgy around the call to confession and repentance. It took an extra meeting in the evening to attain support. We were test subjects for questions to be used by the committee responding to

“Breaking Down Barriers” and for the committee working on “Standing with People of Color.”

As Standing Committee reflected on our time together this year, there was positive affirmation that spending time together can make friends of those across the aisle theologically. Coming from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, we were able to build trust and respect for one another. We were able to disagree on the floor and then turn around and laugh together and even give a hug. We ended with a standing ovation for the work and spirit of moderator Tim.

During Annual Conference we welcomed international guests, including a few from Nigeria who had just celebrated 100 years of Church of the Brethren mission (Bethany president, Jeff Carter, witnessed the baptism of forty young people, preparing for ministry; membership is above 700,000 and growing in Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria). Brethren Volunteer Service celebrated 75 years of ministry and over 7,000 volunteers. We received an extended report from the World Council of Churches having just met this last year, with affirmation of the large contribution our small denomination makes to the WCC. Ten-minute Bible studies opened business sessions. Chad Brennan led a business educational event on “Working Toward Racial Justice.” Congregational videos of “Jesus in the Neighborhood” were scattered throughout the business.

Apart from trying to amend an amendment to an amendment to a motion, delegates approved Standing Committee’s recommendations on how to respond to new business items with some changes in wording. Eric Bishop was called to be part of the study committee on Calling Denominational Leadership, Gail Heisel was called to serve on the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements committee. Susan Boyer was approved to serve on the Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees. Russ Matteson was approved to serve a second term of four years on the Eder Financial Board.

Worship services provided inspiration, challenge, and a unifying spirit. Children’s activities, choirs, exhibits and equipping sessions provided a full array of opportunities to be engaged and to connect. Thursday afternoon a group marched from the Duke Energy Convention Center to Cincinnati City Hall to bring attention to the desire to End Gun Violence – with local media coverage. Our conference ended on Saturday morning with the consecration of our new moderator, Madalyn Metzger and moderator-elect, Dava Hensley.

Moderator Madalyn introduced her theme for the coming year – “Welcome and Worthy” – based on Romans 16:2, inviting us to join her at next year’s Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 3-

7, 2024. See the 2024 Annual Conference logo below.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your delegate to Annual Conference for the last six years. I continue to work with the Standing Committee Agency Covenant Writing Task Team.

Your Servant in Christ, Don Shankster

District Conference Program Committee Report

Committee Members:

Judy Stout, Moderator, Chair
Paul Lovelace, Moderator-Elect
Mary Kay Ogden Cady Laycook
Karen Pierson
Nohemi Flores (through 5/23)

Ex-Officio Members of the Committee:

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

Invited Guest:

Board Chair: Erik Brummett

Web-Registrar: Juliana Pitruzzello

Having experienced a well-received hybrid in-person / virtual conference at University of La Verne in 2022, we chose to return to the same venue in 2023. With the exceedingly hard-work of Joseph Guthrie from the Papago Buttes Church, we were able to become a hybrid in-person / live streaming Zoom conference. We plan to repeat this hybrid experience but also to truly encourage folks to come and participate in-person for some good old-fashioned

Brethren fellowship. As we planned for 2023, we reviewed the participants' evaluations from 2022. We decided to skip the workshops held during the week on Zoom and concentrate on two workshop slots on Saturday. In order to focus on our fellowship and learning from one another, we shifted the Saturday schedule to begin with worship, scheduling the business meeting for afternoon, after both workshops. A sub-committee has collected a diverse array of workshops, including several offered bilingually. Simultaneous translation is offered throughout the Friday workshop and the Saturday programming. We are very happy to welcome Jonathon Hunter and Jeremy Ashworth as worship speakers. Both will consider the conference theme of: "Being the Hands and Feet of Jesus" and the scripture: Micah 6:8 "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God", "Practicar la justicia, amar la misericordia, y humillarte ante tu Dios", as the Spirit moves them.

Judy Stout, Moderator



Nominating Committee Report

Committee Members:

Paul Lovelace, Chair & Moderator-Elect
Marye Martinez
Joanne Wagoner
Brenda Dickson

Ex-Officio Members with vote:

Clerk, Laura Miller
Moderator, Judy Stout
Board Chair, Erik Brummett

Ex-Officio Member without vote:

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

One of the tasks for the Moderator-elect is to chair the Nominating Committee. I feel this is the most important function of the Moderator-elect. The persons who have been asked and agreed to be on the ballot represent the entire membership of the district. The better they reflect the cultural, economic, ethnic and theological diversity of the district the better the district can serve all of its congregations.

It was my privilege to work with a dedicated committee who made many phone calls to ask people to consider the call to participate in PSWD leadership. Russ Matteson's knowledge of potential leaders in every congregation was of utmost importance to our ability to provide this year's ballot. Please take the time to consider who are current or potential leaders in your congregation that could help shape the future of our district and submit their names on the attached form so we can continue to have a district board and other committees that truly represent the entire PSWD.

Please be in prayer for those on this year's ballot as well as the continuing members of the PSWD board and committees. I am looking forward to getting to know as well as serve with this group of leaders who have accepted the call to serve God through District leadership positions.

Your fellow servant
Paul Lovelace, Moderator-elect

Please consider these suggestions:

Dear Nominating Committee, for District Conference Ballot:	
I, _____, _____, suggest that you consider:	
Name:	Email:
Church:	Tele:
Position: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Moderator Elect <input type="checkbox"/> District Board <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating Committee <input type="checkbox"/> District Board Youth / Young Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Standing Committee </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Program Committee </div> </div>	

Please consider these suggestions:

Dear Nominating Committee, for District Conference Ballot:	
I, _____, suggest that you consider:	
_____	_____
your name	your telephone
Name:	Email:
Church:	Tele:
Position: <input type="checkbox"/> Moderator Elect <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Program Committee <input type="checkbox"/> District Board <input type="checkbox"/> District Board Youth / Young Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk <input type="checkbox"/> Standing Committee	

Nominations from the Floor at District Conference

I, _____, am willing to allow my name to be placed on the year 20__ ballot as
a nominee for the following position of service: _____

Nominated by: 1 st _____ 2 nd _____
--

Personal Information: *(make enough copies to be distributed to the delegates, about 100)*

Name:	Age (optional):
Congregation:	
Vocation:	
Church Experience:	
Vision Statement:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

PSWD Board of Administration

= second 3 year term, x = appointed to fill an unexpired term ending



**Thanks to all for your gift of service to the district.
Special thanks to those who have completed
their term of service as listed by year below.**

Policy Board:

Chair: Erik Brummett (Live Oak)
Vice-Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
Recording Secretary: Clerk: Laura Miller (Papago Buttes)
#2025 Erik Brummett (Live Oak)
#2023 David Flores Sr. (Cristo Sion) through May 2023
#2024 Jonas Funderburk (Glendale)
2024 Gail Heisel (La Verne)
2024 Bill Himes (La Verne)
#2025 Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
2024 Andrew Kauffman (Circle of Peace)Section Rep. AZ
#2024 Richard Keeling (Bakersfield)Section Rep. Cen.CA
2023 Jim Lefever (Glendale)Section Rep. S.CA-W
2023 Bob Morris (Glendora)
2025 Fernanda Navarette (Pasadena)
2023 Cooper Sampson (Modesto)Youth / Young Adult
#2023 Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace, Sacramento)Section Rep. N.CA
#2023 Julia Wheeler (La Verne)
#2023 Elena Yoder (Circle of Peace)Youth / Young Adult
2025 Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz)Section Rep. S, CA E
Ex-Officio with vote
2023 Moderator: Judy Stout (San Diego)
2024 Moderator-Elect: Paul Lovelace (Pomona Fellowship)
2024 Clerk: Laura Miller (Papago Buttes)
2023Treasurer: Karin Heckman Nelson (La Verne)
Ex-Officio without vote
District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson
2023 Standing Committee Delegate: Don Shankster (Papago Buttes)
Invited to meetings without vote
Mission & Ministry Board members residing in PSWD (*By-Laws III.B.*)

Executive Board: (Members chosen each year by the Policy Board)

Board Chair: Erik Brummett (Live Oak)
Vice-Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
Ministry Chair: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)
Stewards Chair: Jonas Funderburk (Glendale)
Moderator: Judy Stout (San Diego)
Moderator-Elect: Paul Lovelace (Pomona Fellowship)
District Executive Minister (*ex-officio without vote*): Russ Matteson

Stewards Commission: (Members chosen each year by the Policy Board)

Stewards Chair: Jonas Funderburk (Glendale)
Vice Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
Secretary: Gail Heisel (La Verne)
Policy Board Member: Andrew Kauffman (Circle of Peace)
Policy Board Member: Bob Morris (Modesto)
ex-officio members: District Executive Minister, Moderator, Treasurer

Ministry Commission: (Members chosen each year by the Policy Board)

Ministry Chair: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)

Vice Chair: David Flores (Cristo Sion) through May 2023

Secretary: Julia Wheeler (La Verne)

Policy Board Member: Fernanda Navarrete (Pasadena)

Policy Board Member: Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz)

ex-officio members: District Executive Minister; Moderator

Congregational Vitality Task Group: (Members chosen each year by the Policy Board)

Chair: Richard Keeling (Bakersfield)

Policy Board member: Bill Himes (La Verne)

Policy Board member: Jim Lefever (Glendale)

Policy Board member: Elena Yoder (Circle of Peace)

ex-officio members: District Executive Minister; Moderator

Invited guests: Board Chair

Board Appointments: Page [24](#)

Board of Administration Report

As both the district policy board and executive board began their work for 2023, one of our first major tasks was to plan and prepare for DE Russ Matteson's upcoming sabbatical. Russ had postponed his sabbatical twice, first due to COVID, and the second due to personal reasons. Both we and Russ wanted to make sure he was finally able to go on his sabbatical. Russ had planned how the work of the District office would be covered while on sabbatical, working closely with Kimberly to prepare her, reaching out to Joe Vecchio as someone who could help Kimberly, if needed, and answer any questions that might arise. Russ also discussed with me what role I would fill and how I would best be of service to the district while he was on sabbatical. I believe we all, working together, kept the district running smoothly.

One program the Executive Board continued working on was with Jeff Glass' "Know to Grow." I believe 6 congregations in total engaged with Jeff and his work. As one of those congregations that participated, I can say that the data Jeff collected for us was thorough, insightful, engaging, and surprising at certain points. While the project encountered a hiccup when the company Jeff worked with to accumulate the data suddenly closed, the data and information Jeff gathered for our congregations and district has proven invaluable and will continue to do so.

One project we began was with Greg Davidson Laszakovits, whom we contracted with to serve as a consultant on our continuing conversation surrounding the district youth ministry program. In 2022, we made some decisions regarding the program – to eliminate the district youth advisor position and place the district

youth ministry program on pause. As we conversed about the program, we recognized two things: we had lots of questions, and we were unable to carry out the work on our own. Thus, we contracted with Greg to interview congregations and members to learn what we as a district can provide congregations and how we can best support them, as it pertains to youth ministry. Greg met with the Executive Board on June 8 and shared with us what he heard in his interviews and based on what he heard, provided us with some recommendations. Greg sent the Policy Board a video report for our August meeting, as he was unable to join us via Zoom.

Throughout the year, we have been involved in a conversation pertaining to how we support Circle of Peace in Peoria, AZ with their building project. One action we have taken regarding this was the approval of the sale of a portion of the COP property.

We approved the purchase of a property in Las Vegas for Iglesia Cristiana Elohim to use as a worship space. Some remodeling needs to be done prior to them using the property as their church building.

Another conversation we have maintained is the process for Iglesia del Salvador Viviente, a Hispanic congregation worshipping in Church of the Living Savior's building in McFarland, to join the Church of the Brethren.

We appointed Carrie Cesar, pastor at San Diego, to the Ethics Committee, Ruth Rivera to replace Richard Zapata on the Policy Board, and approved Jody Romero for ordination and several Annual Conference support requests, as well Youth Fund requests and Tech Grant requests. We approved funding to support pastors and

District Board of Administration: continued

church leaders wanting to attend the New & Renew Conference in Elgin.

Thank you for your time and attention to this report. I hope and pray you find this District Conference

meaningful, fulfilling, and encouraging. May God be with you, Christ walk with you, and the Holy Spirit dwell within you. Amen.

Erik Brummett, Board Chair

Ministry Commission Report

Ministry Commission:

Norma Sexton, chair
David Flores, Vice-Chair (until 5/2023)
Julia Wheeler, Secretary
Fernanda Navarrete
Ruth Rivera

ex-officio: District Executive Minister; Moderator

It's been a privilege to serve again this year as chair of the Ministry Commission. A great big 'THANK YOU' is due to my commission members listed above. "The Ministry Commission gives counsel and guidance to all ministerial matters in the District" (from the District By-Laws, 2018 ed.) This encompasses the ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers in our District.

Our ministers have been utilizing the available Ministry Resiliency Grants offered for their use of a coach, spiritual director or therapist for their personal growth or spiritual health.



We returned to the format of the traditional Pastor-Spouse Retreat this year which was held at the beautiful Serra Retreat center in Malibu. Leadership was provided by Steve Cuss with the theme of Calm, Present and Aware. As Steve was only able to present for one day additional leadership was provided by Matt Real (Prince of Peace, Sacramento). An art-appreciation outing to the Getty Villa was included in the week as well as free time for rest and relaxation.

Praise God for the blessing of the abundance of ministers in training in our District! We celebrate Jody

Romero completing his studies and was recommended for ordination following his ordination interview by the Nurturing & Credentialing Committee (NACC). This sub-committee hopes to soon receive ordination paperwork for review & in-person interviews for several other licensed ministers that have completed their courses of study. We currently have 13 persons licensed and engaged in training programs. I appreciate the service of the persons on the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC) that perform the licensing and ordination interviews of applicants and annual reviews of licensed ministers. I want to recognize the service as chair of NACC by John Grindler Katonah and of Gilbert Romero as our Ministry Training Coordinator.

Norma Sexton, Chair
PSWD Ministry Commission

The Ministry Commission extends our gratitude to those appointed by our commission:

TRIM Supervisor Report. Russ Matteson
See District Executive Minister report on page [14](#).

SeBAH and EPMC Report. Gilbert Romero
See Ministry Training Coordinator report on page [14](#).

NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee:
#2024 John Grindler Katonah, Chair
x2023 Becky Zapata
#2025 Susan Boyer
2026 Gary Pierson
2027 Deb Merrifield

Ex-Officio:
Ministry Commission Chair, District Moderator
Invited Guest: District Board Chair
ex-officio without vote on all district committees:
District Executive

NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee

The NACC Committee is a sub committee of the District Ministry Commission. We provide guidance, support and encouragement in the licensing and ordination process for the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren. Our committee of lay and ordained persons review and evaluate (following the District's mandate for licensing and ordination)

District Board of Administration: continued

progress as each individual advances toward ordination within the district's time period for completion.

In the past we met twice a year (fall and spring), however Covid required us to turn to zoom meetings last year and part of this year. Our meetings include interviews of those entering licensed ministry along with an ongoing annual review as they progress towards ordination. We particularly examine how they are proceeding with their educational requirements, pastoral functioning and cohort teams within their assigned congregational settings. At our Fall meeting we make recommendations and offer compassionate support, recognizing that many persons going through the licensing and ordination process carry multiple roles and life experiences in addition to being a student of ministry. Subsequently we review required written

ordination materials and hold a committee interview of those who completed training and are ready to seek a call to ministry as a commissioned or ordained minister.

Ultimately the District's Ministry Commission reviews our recommendations and decisions and makes the final determination for ordination. I have been privileged to participate in the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee' process of accompanying those committing themselves to the call to ministry in our district within the broader Church of the Brethren community. There is much determination, love for God, compassion for others and wisdom in the hearts and minds of those seeking ordination.

John Grindler Katonah, NACC Chair

Stewards Commission Report

Stewards Commission:

Jonas Funderburk, Chair
Jeremiah Irizarry, Vice-Chair
Gail Heisel, Secretary
Andrew Kauffman
Bob Morris

Ex-officio members: District Executive Minister,
Moderator, Treasurer

A Ministry & Improvement Fund Facility Repairs & Improvement request was approved for Restoration LA for fencing and landscaping. In 3 ½ years 15 churches and both district camps have requested \$314,000 in funds for repairs and improvements. There is still money available for those churches who have not yet accessed the funds or used all funds available to them.

This year the District purchased a building for use by Iglesia Cristiana Elohim in Las Vegas. The renovations for the building are still waiting for the approval of the city, and the church hopes to be using the space by December.

A 2024 proposed budget was approved which includes an increase in interest income due to the loan on the Las Vegas property and the new loan for Circle of Peace. The Commission also sent a "letter of stewardship" to the churches to encourage financial participation by each church in the district.

We spent significant time in conversation around how to support the Circle of Peace church which needs a building expansion to accommodate their growing congregation. The District has agreed to fund a loan of \$1.4 million to support the project. The entire project is estimated at \$5 million. The church has raised \$1 million and has pledges for another million. They raised another \$750,000 by selling a parcel of land that is not being used. To be ready for the loan when needed, the commission authorized moving our invested Tucson fund and the remaining amount needed to meet the Circle of Peace loan (from our general investment funds) to a shorter term fund which has less market volatility.

Jonas Funderburk, 2023 Stewards Chair

**Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren
Giving to the District by Congregations, Individuals and Groups
January 1 to December 31, 2022**

Church ID #	Name of Church	2022 Final	2023 YTD
32-010	Bakersfield	\$250	\$350
32-021	Centro Agape en Acción (Los Banos)	\$0	
32-025	Church of the Living Savior (McFarland)	\$1,000	\$1,000
32-028	Circle of Peace (Peoria, AZ)	\$4,200	\$3,150
32-270	Cornerstone Community (Reedley)	\$0	
32-040	Empire	\$1,000	\$300
32-070	Glendale	\$700	\$550
32-080	Glendora	\$0	
32-082	Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas)	\$0	
32-083	Iglesia de Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles)	\$150	\$465
32-037	Iglesia de Cristo Sion (Glendora)	\$0	
32-150	Imperial Heights (Los Angeles)	\$0	
32-090	Laton	\$0	
32-100	La Verne	\$5,000	\$3,333
32-120	Live Oak	\$0	\$750
32-190	Modesto	\$0	
32-197	Nueva Visión La Hermosa (Waterford)	\$0	
32-205	Papago Buttes (AZ)	\$400	\$400
32-035	Conexión Pasadena	\$0	
32-250	Pomona Fellowship	\$1,225	\$400
32-290	Prince of Peace (Sacramento)	\$200	
32-322	Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana)	\$0	
32-280	Restoration Los Angeles	\$0	
32-300	San Diego First	\$1,000	
32-330	South Bay (Redondo Beach)	\$8,000	\$4,000
Sub-Total		\$23,125	\$14,698

	Individual Giving	\$1,235	\$1,000
	Marion Nine Trust	\$450	\$450
Sub-Total		\$1,685	\$1,450

GRAND TOTAL	\$24,810	\$16,148
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Thank you !

The Policy Board thanks those who accepted appointments and task group assignments during the past year. Most appointments are for one year, longer appointments list the concluding year. The Executive Board aims at making appointments between District Conference and the end of the year so that appointees can begin their work in January. Please give us suggestions for next year with the forms on pages [18-17](#) above.

Financial Appointments

Treasurer: (authorized signatory) Karin Heckman Nelson (La Verne)

Other Authorized Signatory: (yearly appointment) Mary Kay Ogden (La Verne), Dot Hess (La Verne)

Historical Committee

District Bylaws, Article III.K.2.

Not functioning at this time

Ecumenical Council Representatives

Arizona Faith Network: Doug Doser (Papago Buttes)

Judicatory Representative to all Ecumenical Councils: Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister

District Disaster Response Coordinator (BDM)

Network Co-Chairs: Lyndall & Lois Frantz (Empire)

Children's Disaster Services (CDS)

Network Co-Chairs: Kathy Davis (La Verne) & Mary Kay Ogden (La Verne)

Margaret Carl Trust Fund Advisory Committee

Applications for Bibles, tracts, etc. are available from the PSWD Office.

Administrator: Norma Morris, Trustee (Modesto)

Advisory Committee Members:

2023 Linda Davis (Living Savior, McFarland)

2025 Susan Price (Empire)

2024 Janelle Keeling (Bakersfield)

Ministerial Ethics Committee: (5-Year Term ending)

#2023 Karen Pierson (Living Savior)

#2024 Bob Morris (Glendora)

#2025 Eric Bishop (La Verne)

2026 Shawn Carothers (Circle of Peace)

2027 Carrie Cesar (San Diego)

Alternates for District Executive Minister:

#2024 Bob Morris (Glendora)

Ex-Officio: (with vote), *Ministry Chair*

Ex-Officio: (without vote), *District Executive Minister*