

District Executive Minister's Report

Russ Matteson

As I look back over this past year in ministry for the Pacific Southwest District the theme that comes most quickly to mind is construction. There have been two major facility construction projects happening in our district: Circle of Peace's new worship center, and the remodeling of a wedding chapel into a church for Iglesia Cristian Elohim in Las Vegas. And, they are not the only churches that have been working at projects to enhance (or simply repair) their church buildings as a part of engaging with their community.

The work of construction in our churches is not only with steel and concrete, drywall and wood. The work of our pastors in providing spiritual care and leadership is vital work in building up the church for the work of ministry. Those leaders are surrounded and supported by lay leaders whose gifts of ministry are vital for the church to be all that God is calling it to be. As I visit our churches I give thanks for the ways in which people come together and share in the work of Jesus in their neighborhoods, together building up the body of Christ.

Spanish Language Ministry Training

At present we have six licensed ministers for whom the Educación para Ministerio Compartido (EPMC) provides their training and deepens their connection with the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren. These students work weekly with Gilbert Romero in class and throughout the week put what they learn into practice in the churches where they serve in ministry. This year, in partnership with Brethren Press, we arranged for a Covenant Bible Study (on the book of Samuel) to be translated into Spanish. The students are currently leading members of their churches using this Brethren created resource. We have access to use the translation at no cost in all of our churches, and Brethren Press will be able to sell this to other Spanish speaking churches. We are exploring the possibility of translating another Covenant Bible Study yet this fall for use in 2025.

This partnership, Brethren Press printed resources and PSWD's financial resources and need, opens the possibility of helping to equip the district's churches and the broader denomination by making quality resources from a Brethren perspective available to more of our congregations.

Know 2 Grow 2

We are partnering with Jeff Glass and Yoryanis Iglesias to help congregations work at improving their social media presence as a part of reaching their community. In the first half of the year they partnered with three

congregations, developing resources for Facebook, Instagram, and Tik-Tok to support the local church's ministry and to connect with neighbors that might otherwise never interact with the church. Based on early responses of increased social media interactions we are rolling the opportunity out to other churches in the district. This effort is being supported through the Ministry & Improvement Fund Reserves.

Support for Ministry with Children/Families

Out of the survey work done by GDL Consulting around our district youth program, the strong sentiment was that our churches could use some help in building or strengthening their ministry with children and families. During the past year we have explored several possibilities to provide support and coaching as each congregation's situation is unique. In August we joined Practical Resources for Churches as a district which gives all of our congregations access to their resources and support. Key among those is a "Launchpad" consultation which includes three to four sessions of questions and coaching about the church's current situation and goals for ministry with children and families. We are hopeful that this will provide helpful support to congregations that are looking to build their ministry in this area.

International Guest

In July the district hosted Gedeon Terrero, a pastor and gifted musician from the Church of the Brethren in Spain. Gedeon spoke and led worship in four of our churches over the course of 3 days. It is a joy to connect the global church with PSWD congregations.

Pastoral/Congregational Transitions

Church of the Living Savior (McFarland, CA) - Pastor Phil Corr ended his service as pastor of the congregation in June of this year and relocated to Alhambra, CA. Phil continues to serve as a consulting pastor to the Spanish language congregation from a distance. The leadership is working together to chart the next steps in ministry for the congregation and Linda Davis and Tony Blanco are providing preaching leadership.

Circle of Peace (Peoria, AZ) - The new Worship Center construction is moving quickly and they anticipate being able to use the space this December. Costs on the project have held to budget, but the quick construction has resulted in the district providing additional loan funds as their time to raise funds has been shortened.

Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas, NV) - The church moved into their new facility in June of this year and the building was dedicated in September. Plans are in place to continue to reach out to their new neighborhood with the invitation to become part of the work of Jesus there.

Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles, CA) - This congregation has two women who are licensed ministers and provide support to Pastor Nick Corral in leadership of the congregation. Additionally, they have several young people taking music lessons to provide worship leadership during services. These lessons are being supported by Ministry Partnership Funds - New Ministry Opportunity from the District.

Cristo Sion (Pomona, CA) - Pastors David and Rita Flores and their congregation are in ministry again in Pomona and in partnership with the Pacific Southwest District. They are renting space from another church in Pomona and working to build their ministry with children and families.

Glendora - Gilbert Romero is serving as the pastor. They are also working with new members of the church to operate a twice a month Food Pantry.

Journey South Bay (Redondo Beach, CA) - There is business on the conference agenda to approve their being a dually affiliated congregation and using the name they are known by in the community, a combination of the names of the two churches that have partnered together. The church is growing and has moved to having two services on Sunday mornings.

Modesto - The congregation invested significant time and energy into working with the city of Modesto to become a city operated tiny house site that would have provided short term support to families dealing with housing needs. Unfortunately the project was discontinued due to neighborhood opposition. The congregation continues to work with their partner, Family Promise, to find ways to use the church property to assist unhoused families in the community.

Papago Buttes - The congregation celebrated the ordination of Pastor Jon Chubb in the Church of the Brethren this year. They are working with GDL Consulting on vision and planning in the midst of the growth in participation they are experiencing. This work is receiving support from the district through Ministry Partnership Funds - Coaching/Training.

Pomona Fellowship - Julie Wheeler was called to serve as the pastor of the congregation in March. They continue to work at ways to connect their ministry with the people of Pomona. A team from the church attended a 2 day Fresh Expressions conference in Boise, ID, with support from the Ministry & Improvement Fund - Leadership Development. They also have received a Jesus in the Neighborhood grant to connect with their community with Taco Sundays, and are trying some new things with their music program with the support of Ministry Partnership Funds - New Ministry Opportunity from the District.

Prince of Peace (Sacramento, CA) - We are grateful to the church for their willingness to host the district conference this year. Interim Pastor Matt Real has let the church know that he will need to finish his service there by the end of 2024.

Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana, CA) - Some water damage to the church building from storms this past spring served as the impetus to undertake some remodeling that the church had long dreamed of. After replacing the roof, they spent the summer worshiping in the church basement while the first floor sanctuary and foyer underwent remodeling and refurbishment. Having moved back into the sanctuary they are now starting projects in the church kitchen and for the children's classrooms. The district has supported this work with a Ministry & Improvement Fund - Facility Improvements grant and a loan.

Salvador Viviente (McFarland, CA) - There is business on the conference agenda to organize them as a fellowship. The group continues to strengthen their ministry in McFarland and the surrounding community.

San Diego - The congregation served as a project site for Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) this year and new volunteer is in place through September 2025. The church continues to be in ministry with persons who are in the process of gaining asylum in the United States.

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

Russ Matteson

District Executive Minister

Deceased Ministers

No Deceased Ministers

Recognition of Ministers' Ordination Anniversaries

60 Years
Gerald L. Moore

45 Years
Jeffrey E. Glass
Tom Hostetler

40 Years
Dena Pence

35 Years
Jeanine Ewert

30 Years
Terry R. Mathis

25 Years
Linda E. Davis
Joe Surin

20 Years
Melvin L. Campbell
Reba Herder
Andrew Sampson

Representing 365 years
of service.

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

First, I would like to thank PSWD for the opportunity to serve over the years. Working with my students has been a blessing. We meet every Tuesday at 7:00 PM to go over the topics that we study. We read together and discuss what we read. We have fun being together because we are a family. At the end of each class we pray for each other and their needs. We are up to date and on schedule with our requirements. As the MTC coordinator, I am BLESSED to serve in the EPMC program!

Gilbert Romero, MTC
MTC@pswdcob.org

Report of Standing Committee Delegate

Standing Committee began its work on Sunday evening June 30th. We spent most of the evening in worship and getting to know each other ahead of beginning the tasks of developing recommendations for the delegate body. We also spent considerable and valuable time over the next 3 days meeting with the church agencies and with the district executives. For someone, like myself, who was new to Standing Committee this was especially helpful. We lamented the process of having to disorganize the district of Puerto Rico because all of the congregations have left the denomination. We drafted a letter of lament that was sent to the pastors. On a positive note, and with fantastic leadership from Madelyn Metzger, our

moderator, we were able to complete our tasks a few hours early on Wednesday July 3rd and enjoy a bit of rest ahead of conference.

Worship Wednesday evening included a heartfelt message of love, lament, and hope from sister Madelyn. I do not believe there was a dry eye in the room. It set the tone for one of the best conferences I've had the privilege to attend.

The following is a summary of the celebrations and actions of the 2024 Annual Conference.

Celebrations: Numerous international guests from Burundi, Venezuela, Spain, the Dominican Republic, Sudan, India, and Nigeria brought greetings and brief reports on the world missions. We also celebrated the

300th anniversary of the Germantown Church in PA and the 100th anniversaries of Camp LaVerne and Camp Harmony.

Unfinished Business

UB 1. Query- Standing with People of Color.

The written and oral interim reports were received as information for the delegates. The team also guided Standing Committee and the delegate body thru some of the process of self- examination and how to obtain resources. We were encouraged continue to implement the process and district meetings and to have each of our congregations become more engaged with the curriculum.

UB 2. Query- Breaking Down Barriers-Increasing Access to Denominational Events.

The written and oral interim reports were received as information. The team was also granted one more year to analyze the data and bring forth recommendations.

UB 3. Request for an Annual Conference Study on Calling Denominational Leadership.

The written and oral interim reports were received as information. On a related note Jeff Carter from Bethany Seminary said that very few of their students are individuals being called from congregations within the denomination. I encourage all of us to seek out and support individuals to consider leadership in the church. Bethany has remote learning and scholarship support that makes the education process reachable for all.

New Business:

NB 1. Mandate for the 2025-2027 Review and Evaluation Committee.

With the exception of one friendly amendment the recommendation to adopt was passed.

NB 2. Recommendation for a One-Time Change in Tenure for Review and Evaluation Committee.

The one time change in tenure was adopted. In simple language, with the anticipated structural changes anticipated at the denominational level giving this committee more time to make recommendations was deemed appropriate.

NB 3. Housing Equity Fund Recommendations.

This was adopted by the conference. It makes the housing fund set up for pastors a number of years ago more tax friendly.

NB 4. Query: A New Model for Denominational Structure.

This query was accepted and referred to Review and Evaluation Committee because it asked about structural change.

NB 5. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding Updating Polity for Bethany Theological Seminary.

This was adopted.

NB 6. Proposed Update of Polity Related to On Earth Peace.

This was also adopted.

Background on NB 5 and NB 6. The agencies are in the process of completing covenants with the Church of the Brethren. These items bridge the gap until that process is completed. Standing Committee and the Agencies are committed to have that process complete and Covenants ready by the end of 2024. The sub-committee was granted until 2025 to complete this process.

NB 7. Recommend Cost of Living to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors.

The cost of living adjustment of 3.3% was adopted.

Dava Cruise Hensley will be moderator next year and Don Fitzkee was called as moderator elect. History was made this year at the end of annual conference as the gavel was passed from one female moderator to another.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our district. If you have any further questions regarding the work of Standing Committee or Annual Conference do not hesitate to contact me.

God's Blessings,
Shawn Carothers
Standing Committee Delegate
Pacific Southwest District

District Conference Program Committee Report

Committee Members:

Paul Lovelace, Moderator, Chair
Norma Sexton, Moderator-Elect
Karen Pierson
Cheryl Crane
Janice Shaw Morgan

Ex-Officio Members of the Committee:

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

Invited Guests:

Board Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry
Pastor of Prince of Peace Church: Matthew Real

Web-Registrar: Juliana Pitruzzello

The Program Committee began its planning by carefully reviewing the evaluations from the 2023 District Conference in order to identify both weaknesses and strengths that would help us to improve the 2024 conference. One of the biggest questions was how much of the conference should be hybrid.

Over time and after much deliberation it was decided to keep a hybrid format with working sessions on Zoom and by streaming worship. Russ and Paul are working with a technology committee to facilitate this. It is wonderful that we can have the conference in Sacramento this year. All of the conference activities will take place at the Prince of Peace Church in Sacramento. The designated offering on Saturday will be to support one of the community projects the Prince

of Peace Church supports, the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership Food Closet.

At the first meeting Paul shared his vision and how it was represented in the conference logo. This sparked a lot of idea sharing which quickly developed into a consensus that instead of having insight sessions we would have two plenary sessions, (everyone together), to work at how we as congregations can engage in the kingdom of God as pictured in Jesus first parable in Matthew 13. This is the parable of the scattered seed falling on different types of soil. What can we as congregations do to help people find good soil? What kind of soil are we? How can we work to provide good soil to people with different needs? We are very pleased that Jennifer and Nathan Hosler, co-pastors of the Washington DC Church of the Brethren will be here to help guide us through this time of seeking, learning and worshipping together.

We are also happy that 2025 Annual Conference Moderator Dava Hensley will be with us. She will have some time to address us during the business meeting. She is going to be preaching at the Prince of Peace Church on Sunday morning, so we strongly encourage you to stay over to participate in that worship service.

Paul Lovelace,
2024 District Moderator
Moderator@pswdcob.org

Nominating Committee Report

Committee Members:

Norma Sexton, Chair & Moderator-Elect
Marye Martinez
Brenda Dickson
Jose Rudy Amaya

Ex-Officio Members with vote:

Clerk, Laura Miller
Moderator, Paul Lovelace
Board Chair, Jeremiah Irizarry

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, geographic, 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
Norma Sexton, Moderator-elect

Nominations from the Floor at District Conference

I, _____, am willing to allow my name to be placed on the 2024 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: Jeremiah "Jay" Irizarry (Empire)
Vice-Chair: Gail Heisel (La Verne)
Recording Secretary: Clerk: Laura Miller (Papago Buttes)
#2024 Jonas Funderburk (Glendale)
2024 Gail Heisel (La Verne)
2024 Bill Himes (La Verne)
#2025 Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
x2025 Dean Sabo (Circle of Peace) Section Rep. AZ
#2024 Richard Keeling (Bakersfield) Section Rep. Cen.CA
#2026 Jim Lefever (Glendale) Section Rep. S.CA-W
2026 Michael Monson (Modesto) Section Rep. N.CA
2025 Fernanda Navarette (Conexión Pasadena)
2026 Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes)
2026 Arnoldo Mendoza (Centro Ágape en Acción)
2024 Julia Wheeler (Pomona Fellowship)
2024 Madison McMillin (Papago Buttes) Youth / Young Adult
x2025 Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz) Section Rep. S, CA E
Ex-Officio with vote
2024 Moderator: Paul Lovelace (Pomona Fellowship)
2024 Moderator-Elect: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)
2024 Clerk: Laura Miller (Papago Buttes)
2025 Treasurer: Karin Heckman Nelson (La Verne)
Ex-Officio without vote
District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson
2026 Standing Committee Delegate: Shawn Carothers (Circle of Peace)
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: Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)
Vice-Chair: Gail Heisel (La Verne)
Ministry Chair: Julia Wheeler (Pomona Fellowship)
Stewards Chair: Jonas Funderburk (Glendale)
Moderator: Paul Lovelace (Pomona Fellowship)
Moderator-Elect: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)
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: Dean Sabo (Circle of Peace)

Secretary: Jim LeFever (Glendale)

Gail Heisel (La Verne)

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

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

Ministry Chair: Julia Wheeler (Pomona Fellowship)

Vice Chair: Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes)

Secretary: Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz)

Policy Board Member: Fernanda Navarrete (Pasadena)

Policy Board Member: Michael Monson (Modesto)

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: Arnoldo Mendoza (Los Banos)

Policy Board member: Madison McMillen (Papago Buttes)

ex-officio members: District Executive Minister; Moderator

Invited guests: Board Chair

Board Appointments: Page [28](#)

Board of Administration Report

After 4 years of being on the Policy Board and serving as Vice-Chair the previous two, the board voted me in as Chair going into my fifth year. I consider it a privilege and an honor to be of service to the district in this role.

To start the year, our Policy Board met in-person in January. We introduced new members to the board, as well as welcoming back a returning member for one last year. For this meeting, we discussed the sections of designations of congregations. The Executive Board voted to move to 3 sections, which now consist of Central Valley California (Live Oak to Bakersfield) section, Southern California section, and Arizona-Nevada section.

Other items throughout the year that were discussed and voted on:

- Board appointments for 2024: Ethics Committee - Florecita Merlos; Margaret Carl Trust - Linda Davis; Arizona Ecumenical Rep -- no appointment yet and will wait until 2025; Brethren Disaster Ministries - Lois and Lindy Frantz (three-year term); Policy Board - Julie Wheeler as Chair of Ministry (one-year term). Cheryl Crane to the Program Committee (one-year term).
- Recommendation from CVTG to adjust the Mission Church levels to \$6,000/\$9,000/\$12,000.

These are funds to help congregations in lower-income areas with a portion of members living at the poverty level to supplement their offerings. These grants are renewable.

- Approve allocation of \$2500 from M&I Leadership Development to send Pomona Fellowship Group to Fresh Expressions "Gathered to Scatter" Conference in Boise, ID.
- Scholarship Approval. The following funds were approved for an Annual Conference scholarship: Erik Brummett, Pastor at Live Oak CoB, for \$1,000; Robert Aguirre, Pastor at Glendale CoB, \$1,000; the leaders of Iglesia Salvador Viviente, 4,000; Luz and Orlando Roman, \$1,000 each.
- Transfer of Funds (\$100,000) from M&I Fund - New Ministry to Church Planting.
- Know 2 Grow 2. The District is working with Jeff Glass and Yoryanis Iglesias, his spouse, on Know to Grow, Part 2 (K2G2). This was tried as a pilot program with three congregations. In K2G2 Jeff will be working with churches on how to develop and implement a social media strategy (websites, Facebook, Instagram, and more) to connect with their local community around what the church is doing and how it connects with needs and interests

District Board of Administration: *continued*

that the Percept reports identified. Approved up to \$40,000 over the next 12 months, with funds coming from M&I Fund - Reserves.

Items that were discussed and voted to bring to District Conference for final vote:

- Request from South Bay Congregation to Affiliate with Journey Covenant, part of the Evangelical Covenant Church. These are two congregations acting as one, requesting that the merger become official. Policy Board voted to make this a business item for District Conference.
- Policy Board also voted to organize Iglesia del Salvador Viviente as a Fellowship to present to District Conference as a business item.

The Executive and Policy Boards have also been in conversations in the following areas:

- Tuscon Funds use. The five-year hold has expired. Now what are our options? Executive Board approved capping the funds at \$914,000.

- Proposed Associate District Executive Minister internship. The Executive Board has been in conversations with Russ with the idea of creating an Internship as Associate DEM to help interested persons learn about the work and responsibilities of a District Executive Minister. This may also help to prepare for the future for when Russ decides to retire down the road. Conversations are still going.

I want to thank Centro Agape en Accion, Los Banos CoB and the pastors Rigo and Margie Berumen for hosting the August Policy Board meeting. A successful day with a good meeting, fellowship, and food.

This year of meetings I attended includes three policy board meetings (2 in-person, 1 zoom), monthly executive board, Stewards commission, Nominating committee, Program committee, and with one Tech team meeting for District Conference.

Jeremiah C. Irizarry, PSWD Board Chair

Ministry Commission Report

Ministry Commission:

Julia Wheeler, Chair
 Jon Chubb, Vice-Chair
 Ruth Rivera, Secretary
 Fernanda Navarrete
 Michael Monson

ex-officio: District Executive Minister; Moderator

It's been a privilege to serve 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.



We have reinstated the Ministry Resiliency Grants offered to our ministers to engage a coach, spiritual director, or therapist for their personal growth or spiritual health. Please apply, ministers!

We continued the every-other-year format of the Pastor-Family Retreat this year, which was held at the beautiful Redwood Glen Retreat Center, Loma Mar, CA. Leadership was provided by Erin Matteson with the theme of Spiritual Renewal. Ministers and families bathed in the gorgeous sights and sounds of the forest and had time for exploration of the area, as well.

The Nurturing & Credentialing Committee (sub-committee) recommended Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes) for ordination. Florecita Merlos (Empire), Juan Pablo Plaza (Conexion Pasadena), Fernanda Navarrete (Conexion Pasadena) held their ordination services this year.

We currently have 10 persons licensed and engaged in training programs. I appreciate the service of the people 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.

Julia Wheeler, Chair
 PSWD Ministry Commission

District Board of Administration: *continued*

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

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

NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee:
#2024 John Grindler Katonah, Chair
#2025 Susan Boyer
2026 Gary Pierson
2027 Deb Merrifield
2028 Becky Zapata

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

We usually meet twice a year (fall and spring) to interview those entering licensing ministry which includes an annual review as they progress towards ordination. Since the writing of our last report we added two new licensed ministers (Roblero and Blanco, both at Salvador Viviente); we had two ministers move from licensed to ordained (Plaza and Navarrete, both at Conexion Pasadena); and one minister move from commissioned to ordained (Chubb at Papago Buttes).

At this time there are 10 licensed ministers, and 8 of those serving as pastors of congregations. About half of the licensed ministers should be ready to go for ordination in 2025.

We are also working with at least 5 potential candidates for licensing, but I don’t think any will be ready to interview by our fall meeting. They are all in the calling affirmation process with their calling cohort.

As to members, no one new this year as we renewed Becky Zapata for an additional five years on the NACC.

As I conclude my second and final term as a member of NACC, I wish to acknowledge and thank Russ Matteson for his faithful shepherding abilities. He has been immensely helpful to this committee when updating us on the various candidate’s interactions with their places of ministry and life challenges. Another key person who has guided and nurtured those in the licensing tract of hispanic ministry is Gilbert Romero. He brings an experienced and wise presence in encouraging those in the licensing path to sustain their desire to serve the Lord by expanding their education and knowledge of church history, scripture and spiritual care. Both of these individuals contribute to a strong, cross-cultural, welcoming and nurturing gateway into ministry within the Church of the Brethren’s Pacific Southwest District.

Through my participation on NACC, I have come to greatly appreciate the sacrifices and commitment many in pursuit of ordained ministry go through while they care for their families, their health, their self-care and a deepening of their faith in God and God’s people. I have gained much respect and a deeper understanding of those in this process so it has been an honor to serve on this committee.

John Grindler Katonah, NACC Chair

Stewards Commission Report

Stewards Commission:
Jonas Funderburk, Chair
Dean Sabo, Vice-Chair
Jim LeFever, Secretary
Gail Heisel

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

The property that was purchased in Las Vegas for use by Iglesia Cristiana Elohim has been remodeled and the congregation is able to utilize the building for worship services. The final cost of the remodeling was

about \$180,000 against the original \$110,000. Changes included: New sewer line and all new interior pipes - \$9500, total replacement of all drywall, electrical wiring, insulation - \$19,700, internal doors and windows - \$9730, asbestos abatement - \$3600.

There was a loan request from Principe de Paz for \$100,000. The work being done includes roof replacement, repairing concealed water damage and repairing one of the building exits. The contractor for the project has worked with the congregation previously. The estimated cost of the project is \$125,000.

There has been substantial growth in the district's

District Board of Administration: *continued*

investments this year. The commission authorized the withdrawal of some funds from the regular investment account to a safer money market account because disbursements were needed for Las Vegas, Príncipe de Paz, and Circle of Peace.

Bynum Mortuary is an entity that rents space at Los Banos. Due to delinquency in rent payments, a 3-day eviction notice was issued to the renter. In April, Bynum paid to within 1 month of becoming current. Through August they are up to date with rent.

Construction on the new worship center at Circle of Peace is going well. The loan agreement has been signed and the full \$1.4 million loan has been sent. The

congregation is making an increased effort to get contributions from the members to avoid having to accept additional loans from the district.

Ministry & improvement fund facility repairs were approved for Prince of Peace, Sacramento for fence and A/C repair and a new sign, and Bakersfield for new carpet in their coffee house. In 4-1/2 years 16 churches and both District camps have requested \$330,000 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.

Jonas Funderburk, 2024 Stewards Chair

Congregational Vitality Task Group

CVTG: Congregational Vitality Task Group

Richard Keeling, Chair Bill Himes (La Verne) Arnoldo Mendoza (Los Banos) Madison McMillin (Papago Buttes)
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<i>Ex-officio</i> members: District Executive Minister, Moderator Invited Guests: Board Chair

The CVTG is responsible for the promotion and distribution of the Ministry Partnership Funds portion of the district budget. The Ministry Partnership Funds cover five different possibilities for local churches to receive funding support from the district. Funds are usually in partnership form to help encourage a congregation to enter into a ministry or experience that they might not do if they needed to fund the entire possibility. This also has the benefit of helping the district learn from what one church does to share with other congregations.

To this point in 2024 the Task Group has approved nine grants to congregations:

Jesus in the Neighborhood - (up to \$500 to support engagement by your congregation with the community around you) Pomona Fellowship \$500 for Taco Sundays, La Verne \$500 for Peace Camp scholarships

Coaching/Training - (up to \$2500 on a matching basis for coaching or training to help the congregation address needed skills) Papago Buttes \$2500 to work with GDL Consulting, Pomona Fellowship \$600 for Discipleship Coaching

Ministry Opportunity - (up to \$2500 on a matching basis to support a new effort by the congregation to engage in ministry) Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas) \$2500 for instruments and signage for new building, Pomona Fellowship \$768 Vocal training for Music Director, Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles) \$2500 for music lessons for members

Mission Congregation - (assistance for churches working with membership in areas of high poverty, amount based on size of congregation with amounts from \$3000 to \$12,000 in support) Cristo Sion (Pomona), Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles)

There are still funds available in the 2024 budget to support your congregation in a ministry idea that you might want to explore. We encourage you to talk with our District Executive or one of the committee members about your ideas. The application form is on the district website under the Resources tab.

**Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren
Giving to the District by Congregations, Individuals and Groups
January 1 to December 31, 2023**

Church ID #	Name of Church	2023 Final	2024 YTD
32-010	Bakersfield	\$350	\$350
32-021	Centro Agape en Acción (Los Banos)	\$0	\$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	\$0
32-040	Empire	\$300	\$500
32-070	Glendale	\$800	\$600
32-080	Glendora	\$0	\$0
32-082	Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas)	\$0	\$0
32-083	Iglesia de Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles)	\$100	\$200
32-037	Iglesia de Cristo Sion (Glendora)	\$0	\$0
32-150	Imperial Heights (Los Angeles)	\$0	\$0
32-330	Journey South Bay (Redondo Beach)	\$8,000	\$4,000
32-090	Laton	\$0	\$0
32-100	La Verne	\$5,000	\$2,917
32-120	Live Oak	\$750	\$0
32-190	Modesto	\$0	\$0
32-197	Nueva Visión La Hermosa (Waterford)	\$0	\$0
32-205	Papago Buttes (AZ)	\$400	\$400
32-035	Conexión Pasadena	\$0	\$0
32-290	Pomona Fellowship	\$800	\$400
32-290	Prince of Peace (Sacramento)	\$0	\$0
32-322	Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana)	\$0	\$1,000
32-280	Restoration Los Angeles	\$0	\$0
32-300	San Diego First	\$500	\$0
Sub-Total		\$22,200	\$14,517

	Individual Giving	\$1,630	\$1,240
	Marion Nine Trust	\$450	\$450
Sub-Total		\$2,080	\$1,690

GRAND TOTAL **\$24,280** **\$16,207**



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September 5, 2024

**To the Board of Directors
Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren**

We have audited the financial statements of **Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren** for the year ended **December 31, 2023**, and have issued our report thereon dated **September 5, 2024**. Professional standards require that we provide you with information about our responsibilities under generally accepted auditing standards, as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. We have communicated such information in our letter to you dated **June 14, 2024**. Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

Significant Audit Matters

Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by **Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren** are described in Note 2 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted, except as noted, and the application of existing policies was not changed during the year ended **December 31, 2023**. We noted no transactions entered into by the Organization during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

New accounting policy adopted January 1, 2023 for Credit Losses, ASC 326. The adoption of this accounting policy had no effect on the accounting since the Organization does not have any allowances on trade and note receivables.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimates affecting the financial statements was:

- 1) Depreciation for the fixed assets.

Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statements users. The most sensitive disclosures affecting the financial statements are:

Note 8 discloses the concentration of credit risk.

Note 9 discloses the fair value of the significant assets of the organization.

Note 11 discloses financial assets available for general operations within the next calendar year.

District Board of Administration: continued

The financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.

Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all such misstatements. In addition, none of the misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management were material, either individually or in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Proposed audit adjusting journal entries and reclassifying journal entries are attached to this letter for your review.

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, professional standards define a disagreement with management on a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representation letter dated **September 5, 2024**.

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a "second opinion" on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the Organization's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor's opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Other Audit Findings or Issues

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the Organization's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

Items that have been discussed with the Organization and should be considered:

- 1) For the statement of functional expenses, as in the past, a reclassification of the DEM's salary has been made to split the salary to 70% program expenses and 30% administrative expenses.

District Board of Administration: continued

This information is intended solely for the use of the board of directors and management of **Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren**, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Very truly yours,

Suchan + Associates
Suchan & Associates



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:

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:

2026 Linda Davis (Living Savior, McFarland)

2025 Susan Price (Empire)

2024 Janelle Keeling (Bakersfield)

Ministerial Ethics Committee: (5-Year Term ending)

#2024 Bob Morris (Glendora)

#2025 Eric Bishop (La Verne)

2026 Shawn Carothers (Circle of Peace)

2027 Carrie Cesar (San Diego)

2028 Florecita Merlos (Nueva Vision la Hermosa)

Alternate for District Executive Minister:

#2024 Bob Morris (Glendora)

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

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

Minister