

Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren

Business Book



62nd Annual District Conference

November 7-8, 2025

Business on Saturday, November 8

**An In-Person & Virtual Conference
Held using internet formats like Zoom,
and meeting at La Verne Church of the Brethren, La Verne, CA
www.pswdcob.org/distconf**

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Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren
2025 Annual Meeting — November 7-8, 2025
A Conference, held using internet formats like Zoom,
and meetings at La Verne Church of the Brethren, La Verne, CA.

Welcome to the 2025 Pacific Southwest District Conference

Welcome to the 2025 Pacific Southwest District Conference

Thank you to the La Verne Church of the Brethren for hosting our District Conference this year. I pray you will choose to come and attend in person though we will also offer online services for those delegates/attendees unable to be present in-person due to health, transportation or scheduling issues.

We welcome the leadership of Matt Guynn from our denominational agency, On Earth Peace, for our plenary session. Also, thanks for the leadership of District members providing workshops including Music for Peacemaking, Spiritual Practices for Peacemaking, Peace in Troubled Times and the opportunity to visit the Peace and Carrots Garden.

The SERRV shop will again be at District Conference so come prepared to shop.

I credit my peaceful nature to the presence of God's Spirit within me. I have received encouragement through meditation upon the prayer of St. Francis utilizing the book by Patrick Allen entitled Practicing the Prayer of St. Francis. This book was purchased for our churches encouraging a book study prior to Conference. The District sought and received permission to translate the book into Spanish. May we each be an instrument (or channel) of God's peace to the world around us.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Rom.15:13

Norma Sexton
2025 District Moderator

Moderator@pswdcob.org

2025 Pacific Southwest District Conference — Business Meeting Agenda

Saturday, November 8

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
2. Roll call and establishing of a quorum
3. Approval of 2025 Agenda and 2024 Minutes (p.[54](#))
 - A. Name a Committee to review the 2025 minutes
4. Business Items
 - A. Election of leadership (pp.[16-17](#) & pp.[59-62](#))
 - B. 2026 PSWD Operating Budget & Church Planting Budget Proposals (pp.[63-66](#))
 - C. 2027 PSWD Budget Parameter (pp.[63-66](#))
 - D. Action to Organize Iglesia Cristiana Elohim as a Fellowship (p.[67](#))
5. Reports
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 - C. District Policy Board (pp.[19-?](#))
 - D. District Program Committee (p.[16](#))
 - E. Standing Committee Delegate (p.[14](#))
 - F. District Executive Minister (pp.[11-14](#))
6. Consecration of Moderator and other 2026 District Leadership
7. Adjournment

*This agenda represents the business to be completed, not the order in which it will take place. An intended plan for working through the business will be available at the District Conference.

2025 Pacific Southwest District Conference Schedule
La Verne Church of the Brethren
2425 “E” Street, La Verne, CA 91750-4912

Friday, November 7th

9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - (registration at 8:30 a.m.) - Ministers & Leaders Professional Growth Event

3:00 p.m. - Registration and Exhibits open

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Dinner

6:45 p.m. - Music in the Sanctuary

7:00 p.m. - Worship in the Sanctuary

8:15 - 9:00 p.m. - Ice Cream Social - Sponsored by Mennonite Aid Plan / Mennonite Insurance Services

Saturday, November 9th

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. - Worship

9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. - Business

10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. - Plenary

12:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. - Workshops

2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Business

4:30 p.m. - Consecration of New Leadership

5:00 p.m. - Appetizer Social





In my opinion, probably the most challenging part of the office of District Moderator is the selection of a theme. As I was praying about it over time, I had received several comments that I was a peaceful person. I attribute my peaceful character as a gift of the Spirit of God. In developing a logo I had the idea of adapting the peace symbol:



I also wanted to include the thought that in any language there is a word (or phrase) for the concept of peace. I started with the original Biblical languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. With the help of the Program committee, we decided to add the languages that are used by Brethren congregations around the Brotherhood. So, we added (in order left to right around the light blue inner circle) Tagalog (Filipino), Haitian Creole, Hausa (Nigerian), and Zapotec (Oaxaca, Mexico).

I want to thank Alex Morgan (La Verne) for his artistic development of the logo shown above who listened to my feeble ideas and created a beautiful design.

Norma Sexton, Moderator
Moderator@pswdcob.org

Delegates' Dedication

November 8, 2025

Moderator: We gather here today in person, online and in spirit to conduct the business of the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren. We gather together in a spirit of peace.

Delegates: **We are here today representing the Church of the Brethren in Arizona, California, and Nevada. We are God's people. We are here to do the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.**

Moderator: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Col. 3:15a)

Delegates: **We commit ourselves to work together to deal effectively with the business before us as we seek to minister to a world that needs Jesus.**

Moderator: As the body of Christ, let us lift up each other. Let us listen to each other with the heart and mind of Jesus.

Delegates: **Since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** (Rom 5:1)

Moderator: Let us dedicate this day to strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up. (Rom14:19) Please join with me in praying the Prayer of St. Francis:

All: **Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**



Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren – 2025

Officers of the District Conference

Moderator	Norma Sexton, Prince of Peace
Moderator-Elect	Don Shankster, Papago Buttes
Clerk	Laura Miller, Papago Buttes
Board of Administration Chair (ex-officio)	Jeremiah “Jay” Irizarry, Empire
District Executive Minister (ex-officio)	Russ Matteson

Note for the Delegates

The District Conference is a mass meeting to which delegates and other interested persons from the member congregations come in business sessions and for purposes of worship, education and fellowship. The District Conference projects the program of the District, and approves new programs, constitutional changes and budget. Through its delegates, it interprets and promotes the decisions of the District Conference to the local congregations.

Participation of Non-delegates

Non-delegates are urged to attend District Conference, including the business meeting. Non-delegates may discuss the business and make motions; voting is restricted to the delegates and officers. Wide participation at the business session adds inspiration and encouragement to the moderator, delegates, Board of Administration and staff. Pacific Southwest District has been noted for excellent attendance at the business session.

What May Be Done with Queries

- (1) A query may be accepted and passed on to Annual Conference.
- (2) A query may be sent back to the originating church or District Board, which means one of several things: *not important to the larger church, Annual Conference has already answered it, not a proper query, etc.*
- (3) A query **may not** be changed by amendment.
- (4) A query may be added to, but care must be taken not to change the intent of the query. One way to add is to attach a similar query to the one being considered.

Rules of Order on District Conference Business

- (1) The moderator conducts business according to Robert’s Rules of order, which will be the standard for any point not covered in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- (2) The moderator appoints tellers and timekeeper.
- (3) Nominations from the floor must have the prior consent of the nominee (*see next page, bottom section*).
- (4) Length and number of speeches allowed are determined by the District Conference officers.
- (5) The election of officers is by ballot with a plurality vote, except the moderator-elect and the standing committee delegate(s), who are elected by a majority vote.
- (6) A quorum consists of fifty percent of the total elected delegates representing fifty percent of the churches of the District.

Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren

Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

(Based on Robert's Rules of Order Revised
And Rules Governing Annual Conference)

The Five Essential Steps Through Which a Motion Passes

- A. Presentation of the motion:
“I move that _____.”
- B. Seconding the motion:
“I second the motion,” or “I second it.”
- C. A written copy of the motion shall be given to the conference clerk.
Stating the question (by the moderator) and discussion of it:
“It has been moved and seconded that _____.”
- D. Putting the question to a vote:
“Are you ready for the question? All of those in favor of the motion which is _____
_____. say ‘Aye.’ Opposed, ‘No.’”
- E. Announcing the result of the vote:
“The motion is carried (lost) and you have voted to (not to) _____.”

Motions, Who Makes Them and How

- A. All attendees of the District Conference have the privilege of moving and discussing the business of the Conference.
- B. To make a motion, it is necessary to “obtain the floor” – that is, to rise after the floor has been yielded and address the presiding officer by his/her official title (Brother/Sister Moderator). Give your name and the name of the congregation you represent as soon as you are recognized by the moderator after addressing him/her.
- C. A motion is seconded without obtaining the floor or rising.

Some Rules of Debate

- A. All remarks must be addressed to the chair.
- B. All remarks must pertain to the immediately pending question before the District Conference.
- C. All remarks must be of an impersonal nature.
- D. Length and number of speeches are determined by District Conference officers.

Nominations and Voting

- A. Nominations may be made from the floor. However, one must have the person's permission to present his/her name in nomination, have all the same written information provided by the other candidates to present to the conference clerk, and have copies of the ballot information to distribute to the delegates (*see page 18*).
- B. No member can be compelled to vote. Those not voting are not counted in deciding whether it is a majority, two-thirds, or unanimous. All blank ballots are ignored and, thus, not counted.
- C. Most votes are taken first by voice or by show of hands, except in case of motions requiring a two-thirds vote, when a rising vote is taken first.

Motions Classified and in Ascending Order of Precedence

A Privileged and Incidental Motions: motions that take precedence over any pending question although not related to that question. Not debatable.

1 ADJOURN or RECESS

Object: to dismiss a meeting or to provide for an intermission – “I move that we adjourn (recess) while (until) _____.”

2 RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Object: to get the attention of the moderator at once, to ask a question, or to attend to some matter that cannot wait – “I rise to a question of privilege” (state your question).

3 POINT OF ORDER

“I rise to a point of order” (state your point).

B Subsidiary Motions: motions that are applied to other motions for the purpose of most appropriately disposing of them.

1 LAY ON THE TABLE – TAKE FROM THE TABLE (second, not debatable, not amendable, simple majority)

Object: to lay aside business in such a manner that its consideration may be removed later – “I move that this matter be laid on the table.”

2 PREVIOUS QUESTION (second, not debatable, not amendable, two-thirds majority)

Object: to stop debate and order an immediate vote – “I call for (or move) the previous question.”

3 POSTPONE TO A SET TIME (second, debatable, amendable, simple majority).

4 COMMIT, REFER, or RE-COMMIT (second, debatable, amendable, simple majority),

Object: to place the business in the hands of a few for later reporting to the Conference (for major changes) – “I move that this matter be referred to a committee of ____ to be named _____ with instruction.”

5 AMEND (second, debatable, amendable, simple majority).

a. “I move to amend the motion by striking out _____.”

b. “I move to amend the motion by inserting _____ between _____ and _____.”

c. “I move to amend the motion by adding _____ between _____ and _____.”

d. “I move to amend the motion by striking out _____ and inserting _____.”

e. “I move to amend by striking out _____ and substituting this (read or state the substitution).”

6 POSTPONE INDEFINITELY (second, debatable, and amendable, simple majority).

Object: to kill a motion – “I move to postpone this matter indefinitely.”

C Principal Motion: a motion made to bring before the Conference, for its consideration, any particular subject.

D Main Motion: (second, debatable, amendable, simple majority).

Object: to introduce business for consideration –

1 “I move that _____.”

2 “I move the adoption (acceptance, approval) of this report.”

District Executive Minister's Report

Russ Matteson

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. - Leviticus 19:33-34

2025 has been a challenging year for many of our churches and for their members as there are many who are a part of our District family who do not have legal status to be in the United States of America. And even for those who do have citizenship, or protected status, or are in the process of requesting asylum for their safety, life has been challenging with reports of detention and deportation that indiscriminately round up people whose skin is not white, whose last names sound certain types of foreign, who happen to be in the wrong place at the time of an action. And it does not seem that next year, or the year after that are likely to be any better as it relates to this subject.

As the year began I was hearing concern from the pastors of many of our churches about how the district and denomination might be able to help. I hosted a few conversations with pastors and other leaders. I attended countless webinars related to how churches could respond, how we could prepare members, what individuals and churches should do to make it as safe as possible to gather.

With my colleagues in the Atlantic Northeast, Atlantic Southeast, and Virginia districts we worked with On Earth Peace and the Church of the Brethren Office of Intercultural Ministry to form a response that could provide support to our immigrant churches and encourage all churches to stand in solidarity and support of those who are here and being threatened with deportation. These four districts committed a combined \$100,000 to build out a team to provide this kind of support and connection. At the Annual Conference, On Earth Peace issued a challenge to the church to provide at least \$100,000 to support a mutual aid fund to provide material assistance to fellow members of the Church of the Brethren with needs that arise out of detention or deportation actions.

I am grateful for the churches in our district that are actively working to provide support to immigrants in their communities and finding ways to build

relationships and make connections. I encourage us all to pray for a better approach to how our country works with immigration and those who have been here without documentation for a long time and are a part of the fabric of their communities and our churches.

Eaton Fire Response

January also had the severe Los Angeles County Fires in the Palisades and Altadena areas. Many from the Conexión Pasadena church had to evacuate, and a few people were among those who lost their homes or employment because of the fires. Included in that was the church itself and Pastors Juan Pablo Plaza and Adriana Rios. They and their children were in Columbia visiting family when the fire took place, but Juan Pablo returned to Pasadena with the knowledge that the church parsonage which was their home and all of their possessions had been lost to the fire.

One of the blessings in our denomination is that people do respond when there is a disaster and the District Office had immediate contact from Brethren Disaster Ministries, Disaster Child Care Services, the Communications Office, and local churches across the country wanting to know how they could help. Disaster Child Care set up a center as soon as the fires were contained to provide child care while parents began the hard work of making insurance and other disaster related claims. The District Policy Board set up a fund to receive donations from across the district and denomination to provide immediate and longer term aid to Brethren families that had been impacted. A bit more than \$20,000 was received to support those impacted by the fire.

The District continues to work closely with the Conexión congregation. Their pastors and members have been actively involved in the community helping others who have been impacted by the fires. They are working with Pasadena Mennonite Church (who rents space for worship at the Brethren facility) to bring Mennonite Disaster Services to the area for a rebuilding project that would be based out of the Conexión church building. The Glendora congregation has made its parsonage available to the Plaza/Rios family at an affordable rent. In the midst of the loss there have been many, many blessings to the church and the broader community. There is

much work that remains to be done, and we are fortunate to have a committed congregation that is stepping up as a part of the local community.

Insurance concerns

A final note on this relates to property insurance. Unfortunately the congregation was late in making their half year insurance premium payment, and their policy had been canceled about a week prior to the fires. So the loss of the parsonage is not covered by insurance, nor was the cost of cleanup at the church building. It has made a challenging situation even more stressful. I share this to make the point to the rest of our churches that letting your insurance lapse is not an option that can even be considered. If your church is having difficulty making the payment, please be in touch with the District Stewards Commission or myself. We will figure out a way to help you get the payment made. Insurance companies are taking any reason they can to drop coverage on churches as they have suffered significant losses from fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes over the last few years. We can't afford to not have our properties properly insured. We have connections to other companies that are more closely aligned with our values that several churches have shifted to. We also ask that you add the District as an additional insured party to your policy. By doing that, if the policy were about to lapse, the District would receive notification and would be in touch with your congregation. The message here is to be in communication with the district if insurance premiums are becoming a challenge. Your church is not in this alone, but if you don't reach out we are not able to even consider being of assistance in your time of need.

Associate District Executive Intern

In June of this year Jose Rudy Amaya accepted the invitation to be the first PSWD District Executive intern. In this position Rudy works 12-15 hours a week learning about and helping with the work of the district. He has attended a lot of meetings (which District Executive Ministers do) locally as well as participated with the Council of District Executives to gain understanding of the church denominational. He has a few projects that he is working on for the district, and is available to visit about one church each month. The internship is for a minimum of six months and can be renewed twice to provide a total of 18 months of exploration of the call. The goal of the internship is to expose those in ministry work to the skills needed and the work that makes up middle

judicatory work in our denomination.

New Pastors

We welcome Glenn McCrickard as part of the pastoral team at the La Verne congregation. Glenn comes to PSWD from the Mid-Atlantic District where he served the Westminster congregation. His wife, Nancy, is a Mission Advancement Advocate for the Church of the Brethren. They have followed their adult sons to the western part of the USA.

Ministry Calling and Training

A significant portion of the district work is the calling and training of people into the set apart ministry of the church. Gilbert Romero's work with many of our Spanish speaking licensed ministers is a key part of this effort. But the work of calling is a shared responsibility. The local church needs to be aware of those who have gifts for ministry, and then invite them to prayerfully consider the call. Individuals who sense a call to ministry need to talk with their pastor and local leaders to begin the process of exploring that call. Those who are currently ordained have an important role to play by serving as mentors for those who are considering licensing and further training for ministry. And as the district we provide the oversight of the process, encouragement and resourcing for training, and assist in placing those called into meaningful opportunities for ministry. It takes all of us working together to call out and train people for the work of ministry.

And it takes some time. This year we have had five people in the discernment process, working with a calling cohort and now moving forward into the licensing process and beginning their training. In the last few months I have had four conversations with individuals who are feeling called to ministry and are prayerfully considering their next steps. I know that there are more conversations like those that will happen in the next few months. From those initial conversations, to working with a Calling Cohort, to doing licensing paperwork and an interview is a process that usually takes six months to a year. The training process, be it Seminary or one of the training programs of the Brethren Academy, takes three to five years to complete. And all of this is happening while the candidate is working a regular job, being part of their family, serving as a lay volunteer or perhaps pastoring in their congregation.

I am excited to see the next group of people who are being called into ministry. They are a diverse group

in age, gender, theology, educational background, and life experience. And the church and our district will be richer for the fullness that they will add to the ministers who serve among us. Pray for those who are licensed and in training. Pray for those who are discerning the call. Pray about who you might be called to encourage to share their gifts through the set apart ministry.

Websites and Social Media

Like it or not, the front door and bulletin board in our society today are websites and social media. We don't have phone books any more to look up local churches to find out when they meet. And most people are unlikely to walk into a church without having done some research to gain a better sense of the preaching and ministries of the church they are going to visit. Our district for many years has provided basic support to help churches have a website, but many of those sites have not been updated to work well on tablets or cell phones, or to even have current information. And while some of our churches have robust social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms), for others these are a whole new world.

For the last year Jeff Glass and Yoryanis Iglesias have been working with a group of churches to see

how the district could help these churches engage more fully on social media. We are encouraged by what we have seen, and we have built up a nice set of resources that can be shared more broadly across more churches. We have developed resources in both English and Spanish.

Beginning in 2026 the District has a new plan to work with our churches to refresh websites where needed and to help all churches open the digital front doors widely so that your community can come to know your church better and invite those who need to find a church community to consider being a part of your congregation. More details will be available at District Conference on how to get involved and get your church in the queue to become a part of this effort. Funding for this is coming from the proceeds of the sale of the Tucson church property several years ago, and we are committed to at least a two year effort to help our churches grow in this aspect of their ministry.

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

Russ Matteson

District Executive Minister

Deceased Ministers

James Isaacs - 2/8/1937 - 11/14/2024

Thomas Guthrie - 6/28/1940 - 2/5/2025

Galen Snell - 1/11/1934 - 02/14/2025

Richard Zapata - 12/24/1963 - 6/09/2025

Linda Davis - 3/14/1958 - 8/25/2025

Recognition of Ministers' Ordination Anniversaries

70 Years

Carl C. Beckwith

65 Years

Willard D. Ressler

55 Years

John E. Price

45 Years

Robert E. Morris

Mario Serrano

40 Years

Susan I. Boyer

30 Years

Nada B. Sellers

15 Years

Doris Dunham

Jeremy Schaub

10 Years

Dawna Welch

5 Years

Annali Topf

**Representing 395 years
of service.**

MTC: Ministry Training Coordinator: SeBAH and EPMC Report Gilbert Romero

See also Ministry Commission report on page [22](#).

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, meeting twice a week with them as they read the books for some academy units, and keeping them connected to resources. Rigo and Luz are on their last unit and are ready for the ordination paper work. Amen.

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, Pastors Rigo & Margie

Berumen of the Los Banos Centro Agape en Acción fellowship, and Pastor Henry Roblero of the McFarland Iglesia del Salvador Viviente fellowship. The EFSM students and I function as the support Cohort. The students have all finished two units this year: the books they read are *Samuel: Lider para un Mañana Diferente* by Eugene F Roop, *Evangelizacion Contextual: Fundamentos Telogicos y Pastorales* by Orlando E Costas.

Gloria Diaz of the San Diego congregation began her studies this year in SeBAH.

Príncipe de Paz Pastor Richard Zapata has passed away, but he did finish his SeBAH program while he was battling cancer. Amen.

Thank you for letting me work with these students. Be blessed.

Gilbert Romero, MTC
MTC@pswdcob.org

Report of Standing Committee Delegate

Standing Committee met two times in the fall of 2024 and in January of 2025. The purpose of the fall meetings was to receive final updates on the agency covenants and to finalize our recommendations that all three agencies continue to have agency status with the Church of the Brethren. In January our work centered on finalizing the ballot for Annual Conference.

On Sunday evening June 29th we began our work for this year's Annual Conference. We spent most of the evening in worship and getting to know each other. This important relational work assisted us greatly ahead of two and a half long days of prayer, discernment, and discussion as we developed recommendations for the delegate body. We also spent considerable and valuable time meeting with the church agencies and with the district executives. We also had a listening session with members of the Bridgewater congregation from Virginia. Most of the time one day was spent developing recommendations for the two queries. The details of those discussions, recommendations, and Annual Conference action are addressed below.

The following is a summary of the celebrations and actions of the 2025 Annual Conference.

Unfinished Business

UB 1. Query- Standing with People of Color.

The Standing Committee received the final report and the AC delegate body received the final report of the committee. The group made no recommendations but

reminded the delegate body of its development of study materials and resources. See www.onearthpeace.org/swpoc for more information and resources.

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

The Standing Committee received the final report and recommendations. The AC delegate body also received the report and the four recommendations. The specific recommendations are outlined in pages 193-199 of the conference booklet. In summary they include;

1. Using technology to help with communication in different languages and online. Explore ways to shorten conference business.
2. Look at hybrid models for Annual Conference, such as online one year, in person the next.
3. Use technology to assist with table/break out groups online etc.
4. Provide scholarships for those traveling more than 1200 miles to Annual Conference.

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

The Standing Committee received the final report and recommendations of the Calling Denominational Leadership Committee. The Standing Committee has determined that the eight recommendations with this report will require the following: A two-thirds majority for the first recommendation and a simple majority for the remaining recommendations.

The delegates at Annual Conference adopted

recommendation 1 by a two-thirds majority. One amendment was adopted. Recommendations 2-8 were adopted by simple majority. The first recommendation was a matter of polity.

Much of the discussion was around reducing the required number of nominees and for Review and Evaluation to consider recommending a slate for Annual Conference to approve. A number of speakers expressed concern that we continue to elect "names we know".

New Business:

NB 1, 2 and 3.

These were the recommendations from Standing Committee to renew the Agency status of Bethany Theological Seminary, Eder Financial, and On Earth Peace. The Annual Conference delegate body approved all three agencies. The only significant questions regarding agency status came during discussion of On Earth Peace. This session was marked by some high emotion both for and against continuing On Earth Peace's agency status. When discussion ended there was a strong vote in favor.

NB 4. Query Reducing Harm: Interim steps to Address Suffering

The following was recommended by Standing Committee and adopted by the delegate body by more than a two-thirds vote. The vote in favor was around 80%.

The query was adopted and answered twofold:

1. We lament that conversion therapy was considered a safe or viable option in previous Annual Conference statements and do not endorse "conversion to heterosexual orientation [as] another option" (Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective, 1983).
2. We acknowledge that Annual Conference's position statements should reflect the denomination's current best discernment of the way of life God calls us to live' (2025 Annual Conference Booklet, p. 66), and recognize that some existing position statements on human sexuality appear out of step with current realities and merit further discernment. In the interest of unity and care for all in the body, we await the Spirit's leading for renewed study. While the current statements on human sexuality remain on record, we seek to honor and love all in the body by lifting up guidance that builds safer and more compassionate communities, including:
 - "challenging openly the widespread fear, hatred, and harassment of [people in the LGBTQ+ community]."
 - "advocating the rights of [LGBTQ+ people] to jobs, housing, and legal justice," and

- "engaging in open, forthright conversations with [people in the LGBTQ+ community]...stop alienating one another and instead venture toward understanding."

(All quotes from Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective, 1983 Annual Conference Statement)

As Paul counseled a divided church, "if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26, NIV). Discussion was passionate and many individuals came to the microphones with personal and vulnerable sharing of their own stories.

NB 5. Query: Concerns about Current Practices Related to Matters of Sexuality

The Standing Committee recommended and the delegate body approved that the concerns of the query be accepted as a legitimate question and be referred to the Review and Evaluation Committee. The query asks how the church can move forward in a manner that reflects greater mutuality and space for differing understandings about sexuality among individuals and congregations.

NB 6. Recommend Cost of Living Adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors.

The cost of living adjustment of 2.6% was adopted

Elections and final thoughts

Don Fitzkee will be next year's moderator and **Dennis Beckner** was called as moderator elect.

The five members of the Review and Evaluation Committee are:

Ilexine Alphonse, Miami, FL Haitian Church of the Brethren

Lupita Ortiz Cruz, Bassett, VA. Mt. Hermon Church of the Brethren

Chris Douglas Elgin, IL Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren

Anna Lisa Gross Fort Wayne, IN Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren

Daniel Rudy Callaway, VA Monte Vista Church of the Brethren

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:

Norma Sexton, Moderator, Chair
Don Shankster, Moderator-Elect
Karen Pierson
Janice Shaw Morgan
Cheryl Crane

Ex-Officio Members of the Committee:

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

Invited Guests:

Board Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry

Web-Registrar: Juliana Pitruzzello

I want to start off by thanking the members of the Program Committee listed above. This is a wonderful group of fellow servants ready and willing to take on the task of production of District Conference 2025. One of our first tasks was to determine a location. There had been good feelings following the 2024 Conference held at Sacramento Prince of Peace church reporting "it was good to be in a local church again." In the past we had been hosted at the University of LaVerne, however, they would be unavailable to host on our dates of November 7-8. Wanting to stay in the Southern

California area we sought another location and accepted the invitation to be hosted by the LaVerne Church of the Brethren. I was pleased to accept their invitation as I had seen a photo of the church with its flock of origami peace cranes decorating the ceiling since I had chosen my theme as "The Fruit of the Spirit is ... Peace." We sought and were pleased to have confirmation that Matt Guynn from our denominational agency, On Earth Peace, would be available and willing to lead a plenary session. Workshops will return this year including topics as Spiritual Practices for Peacemaking, Music for Peacemaking, Peace in Troubled Times, and an opportunity to work in the Peace and Carrots Garden at the church. My prayer is that as we meet to worship and attend to the business of the conference we all will seek peace and pursue it.

(1 Peter 3:11)

Norma Sexton,
2025 District Moderator
Moderator@pswdcob.org

Nominating Committee Report

Committee Members:

Don Shankster, Chair & Moderator-Elect
Marye Martinez
Jose Rudy Amaya
Barbara Brandt

Ex-Officio Members with vote:

Clerk, Laura Miller
Moderator, Norma Sexton
Board Chair, Jeremiah Irizarry

Ex-Officio Member without vote:

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

We are blessed to have so many gifted people in our district who are willing to share their time and talents at the district level. This year we have been privileged to connect with many in our district in filling the ballot for this year's conference. While doing so, we were able to hear about the joys and struggles of many among us, witness their discernment in the possibility of giving time and talent to various positions and offer support and encouragement. Again, we have attempted to reflect the great diversity in our district on the ballot to better serve all of us in the Pacific Southwest. "There

is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galations 3:28)

The Nominating Committee is a dedicated group of people working to come up with names of personalities to best serve our district. Russ Matteson's knowledge of many individuals across our district was invaluable in lifting up persons to answer the call to serve. It is helpful to have names offered to us on the committee as we work to fill the ballot. Thus, we invite you to consider current or potential leaders in your congregation who could help shape the future of our district and submit their names on the attached form. We solicit your prayers for all who agree to serve our district in some capacity. It is indeed an honor to work with these sisters and brothers in Christ who have been called to share time and talent in the mission of Christ in our district, peacefully, simply and together.

In Christ,
Don Shankster, Moderator-elect

Please consider these suggestions:

Dear Nominating Committee, for District Conference Ballot:	
I, _____, suggest that you consider: <small>your name your telephone</small>	
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	

Please consider these suggestions:

Dear Nominating Committee, for District Conference Ballot:	
I, _____, suggest that you consider: <small>your name your telephone</small>	
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	

Please consider these suggestions:

Dear Nominating Committee, for District Conference Ballot:	
I, _____, suggest that you consider: <small>your name your telephone</small>	
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 2024 ballot
as a nominee for the following position of service: _____

Nominated by: 1st _____
2nd _____

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)

2026 Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes)

#2027 Gail Heisel (La Verne)

#2027 Bill Himes (La Verne)

#2025 Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)

2027 John Keeling (Bakersfield)

#2026 Jim Lefever (Glendale) Section Rep. SOCA

2026 Arnoldo Mendoza (Centro Ágape en Acción)

2026 Michael Monson (Modesto) Section Rep. CVCA

2025 Fernanda Navarette (Conexión Pasadena)

2027 Carlos Padilla (Glendora)

2027 Marvin Ramos (Príncipe de Paz)

x2025 Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz)

x2025 Dean Sabo (Circle of Peace) Section Rep. AZ/NV

Ex-Officio with vote

2025 Moderator: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)

2025 Moderator-Elect: Don Shankster (Papago Buttes)

#2027 Clerk: Laura Miller (Papago Buttes)

2025 Treasurer: Karin Heckman Nelson (La Verne)

Ex-Officio without vote

District Executive Minister: Russ Matteson

2025 Standing Committee Delegate: Shawn Carothers (Circle of Peace)

Invited to meetings without vote

Mission & Ministry Board members residing in PSWD (By-Laws III.B.): Erik Brummett, Edward Cesar - Fincher

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

Board Chair: Jeremiah Irizarry (Empire)

Vice-Chair: Gail Heisel (La Verne)

Ministry Chair: Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes)

Stewards Chair: Jim Lefever (Glendale)

Moderator: Norma Sexton (Prince of Peace)

Moderator-Elect: Don Shankster (Papago Buttes)

District Executive Minister (ex-officio without vote): Russ Matteson

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

Stewards Chair: Jim LeFever (Glendale)

Vice Chair: Dean Sabo (Circle of Peace)

John Keeling (Bakersfield)

Gail Heisel (La Verne)

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

Invited Guests: Board Chair

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

Ministry Chair: Jon Chubb (Papago Buttes)

Vice Chair: Ruth Rivera (Príncipe de Paz)

Secretary: Michael Monson (Modesto)

Policy Board Member: Marvin Ramos (Príncipe de Paz)

ex-officio members: District Executive Minister; Moderator

Invited Guests: Board Chair

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

Chair: Bill Himes (La Verne)

Policy Board member: Arnoldo Mendoza (Los Banos)

Policy Board member: Fernanda Navarrete (Conexión)

Policy Board member: Carlos Padilla (Glendora)

ex-officio members: District Executive Minister; Moderator

Invited Guests: Board Chair



PSWD Policy Board meeting in Las Vegas with members of Iglesia Cristiana Elohim Church of the Brethren

Board of Administration Report

As I began my final year on the Policy Board and as Board Chair, one of my goals for this year was to make this year memorable. The goal was accomplished. We started off the year with the Policy Board meeting in January through zoom. We would normally meet in person for this meeting but because of the LA county fires, we had to change the format. We welcomed new members to the Policy Board and Executive Board.

This year's items we discussed and voted on:

- Board Appointments - Treasurer: Karin Heckman Nelson through 2025; Ethics Committee: Ron Faus through 2029; Margaret Carl Trust: Janelle Keeling through 2027; Arizona Ecumenical Representative, Doug Dozer through 2025; Nurturing & Credentialing Committee: Eric Bishop through 2029.
- Policy Board approved creating an emergency fund to support Brethren impacted by the 2025 LA County Fires. Board also approved of moving \$2500 from the Growth From the Ashes fund to support the emergency fund.
- Executive Board approved dissolving the Waterford Church of the Brethren corporation and the Paradise Church of the Brethren corporation.
- Executive Board approved providing \$20,000 for support of the Deportation Defense Initiative led by our and three other districts.
- Approval of AC Scholarship Requests: Jose Rudy Amaya (Conexion Pasadena); Gloria Diaz (San Diego), and David Messamer (Modesto) each for \$1,000
- Tucson Funds:
 - \$400,000 of the Tucson funds be used to lower the debt balances for the congregations in Los Banos and Las Vegas. (\$250,000 for Los Banos and \$150,000 for Las Vegas.)
 - Policy Board approved a proposal to Improve

PSWD Congregational Websites and Social Media Presence with work in 2026 and 2027 using up to \$160,000.

- Know 2 Grow 2 Funding: The board approved an additional \$20,000 to K2G2 to extend the program through the end of 2025. Funds to come from Ministry & Improvement Funds - Leadership Development.
- IT Web Hosting Migration Project: Executive Board approved a proposal which focuses on moving district websites from GoDaddy web hosting company to Hostinger web company to lower the cost of web hosting and make it easier to manage each site.
- Policy Board voted to approve Cristiana Elohim as a Fellowship to present to District Conference as a business item.

In-person meetings I attended this year include a Program Committee meeting in La Verne, May Policy Board meeting in Las Vegas, and August Policy Board meeting in Pasadena. I want to thank each of those congregations for hosting our district meetings. The congregations I was able to visit and worship with include: Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas), Bakersfield CoB, and Laton CoB.

This is my final year on the Policy Board after serving two consecutive terms. It has been an absolute pleasure to be a part of the district for the past six years. I have learned so much about what our district is about and how we operate. It has also been a pleasure to serve as Board Chairperson for the last two years. God had granted me the opportunity to serve with a great team, and I will forever be grateful. Till my next go around, I will simply say "Thank You".

**Jeremiah "Jay" C. Irizarry,
2025 PSWD Board Chair**

Ministry Commission Report

Ministry Commission:

Jon Chubb, Chair
Ruth Rivera, Vice-Chair
Michael Monson, Secretary
Marvin Ramos

ex-officio: District Executive Minister; Moderator



Pastors and Spouses at the 2025 Retreat

This has been my second year on the Ministry Commission, with it being my first time as chair.

I'm very thankful to our previous chair, Julia Wheeler, for showing me the ropes and for our current other members and all the hard work that they put in! The Ministry Commission "gives counsel and guidance to all ministerial matters in the District" - essentially we help to oversee different aspects in supporting churches and pastors.

We continue to meet every other month, as well as

NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee:

#2025 Susan Boyer, Chair
2026 Gary Pierson
2027 Deb Merrifield
2028 Becky Zapata
2029 Eric Bishop

Ex-Officio:

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

at the Policy Board meetings. One big yearly event is the Pastor/Spouse retreat, which was held in Malibu in June. Ten pastors and their spouses were in attendance. A big thank you to Gary and Karen Pierson for being on-site support for that event.

This is the year for Ordination renewals, so many of our pastors have been getting in their paperwork for that. Part of that process includes attending an Ethics Seminar - while most were able to attend that seminar at last year's District Conference, there was a make-up one which occurred in June.

There are several individuals in the process of pursuing licensing and ordination and we look forward to working with NACC as that paperwork is completed.

We are so thankful for all the work and support that Russ Matteson provides us all. We are also thankful for all the work and support of Gilbert Romero, who serves as our Ministry Training Coordinator.

We've heard regular reports from him on the work with those in SeBAH and EFSM. Thank you to Kimberly for helping finalize minutes, agendas, Zoom meetings and other important updates to the team!

Jon Chubb, Chair
PSWD Ministry Commission

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

NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee

The role of the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC) is to provide guidance, nurture and encouragement through the licensing and ordination process of the Pacific Southwest District. We serve under the purview of the District Ministry Commission. 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.

District Board of Administration: continued

We currently have nine licensed ministers. Richard Zapata was a licensee who had completed all the steps towards ordination except the final paperwork in preparation for his ordination interview with our committee. We convey our heartfelt sympathy to his family and congregation upon his death in June. At present there are five people in the discernment period towards potential licensing to ministry.

Eric Bishop is our newest member on NACC. This is the final year of my second term on NACC. It has been a pleasure to serve on this committee alongside strong and caring people who strive to encourage strong and faithful leadership in our local churches. I am grateful for the leadership of Russ Matteson and Gilbert Romero who provide consistent

supportive guidance and wisdom to candidates working towards licensing and ordination.

I ask you to include our nine licensed ministers and five potential licensees in your prayers. Our churches, our district and our world are in need of the message and ministry they can and are bringing. Adding the needed educational requirements to the work they are already doing is a heavy burden for many of them. Bless them for discerning God's call on their lives; for the study and discernment they are currently doing; and may they continue to find the strength and time required to continue to move forward on this journey towards licensing/ordination.

Susan Boyer, NACC Chair

Stewards Commission Report

Stewards Commission:

Jim LeFever, Chair
Dean Sabo, Vice-Chair
Gail Heisel
John Keeling

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

Financial Status

The stability of interest rates has varied more this year than in previous years however thus far there have not been significant drops and we have successfully timed withdrawals from the District's savings to the moment the markets were high, as a result we have thus far not needed to take significant losses as we moved our assets from account to account.

Fire recovery

While they were unburnt, both the Pasadena Church and the near by parsonage sustained sufficient smoke damage to be initially unusable. Working with the Pasadena Mennonite congregation both buildings were cleaned up and put back into use.

The second parsonage was lost in the fire and was

found to be uninsured. The lot has been cleaned, and we are currently working with Mennonite Disaster Services to replace the lost parsonage.

Loans, repairs and improvements

During the year, the Stewards worked with:

- The Circle of Peace Church, to provide loans funding the final completion of their new sanctuary building on their campus. Construction is now complete, and the building will see its first service shortly.
- The Glendale church to repair the church roof and repair termite damage.
- The Imperial Heights church to complete roof repairs.
- Income from the Tucson fund over and above the original deposit and interest earned in the agreed holding period has been made available for other district efforts. To date these funds have been used to reduce the indebtedness of our two church plants in Los Banos and Las Vegas.

Jim LeFever, 2025 Stewards Chair

Congregational Vitality Task Group

CVTG: Congregational Vitality Task Group

Bill Himes, Chair

Bill Himes (La Verne)

Arnoldo Mendoza (Los Banos)

Fernanda Navarrete (Conexión)

Carlos Padilla (Glendora)

Ex-officio 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 2025 the Task Group has approved 11 grants to congregations:

Jesus in the Neighborhood - (up to \$500 to support engagement by your congregation with the community around you) Glendora for a Community Outreach Event, Príncipe de Paz for Sunday Coffee Bar run by youth ministry and another for Hallegría Night,

Modesto for an Easter Egg Hunt, Cristiana Elohim for a Community Movie Night, Imperial Heights for a Senior Wellness Program, and Nueva Visión for Fiesta Otoño.

Coaching/Training - (up to \$2500 on a matching basis for coaching or training to help the congregation address needed skills) There were no applicants this year.

Ministry Opportunity - (up to \$2500 on a matching basis to support a new effort by the congregation to engage in ministry) Glendale \$900 for media and outreach support.

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) and Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana)

There are still funds available in the 2025 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, 2024**

Church ID #	Name of Church	2024 Final	2025 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	\$500	\$500
32-070	Glendale	\$900	\$550
32-080	Glendora	\$0	\$0
32-082	Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas)	\$0	\$0
32-083	Iglesia de Cristo Genesis (Los Angeles)	\$250	\$0
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	\$4,583	\$3,333
32-120	Live Oak	\$0	\$1,000
32-190	Modesto	\$0	\$0
32-197	Nueva Visión La Hermosa (Waterford)	\$0	\$0
32-205	Papago Buttes (AZ)	\$400	\$0
32-035	Pasadena Conexión	\$0	\$0
32-290	Pomona Fellowship	\$800	\$400
32-290	Prince of Peace (Sacramento)	\$0	\$0
32-322	Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana)	\$1,000	\$0
32-280	Restoration Los Angeles	\$0	\$0
32-300	San Diego First	\$0	\$1,000
Sub-Total		\$21,983	\$15,283

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

GRAND TOTAL	\$24,063	\$16,973
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*The Auditor's Review of our 2024 books is still
in process.

Their report letter will be available at District
Conference.

University of La Verne 2024-25 Report to the PSWD Conference

This report represents highlights for the University of La Verne for the 2024-25 academic year.

Appointment of Provost Ken O'Donnell

The University of La Verne has named Ken O'Donnell as its new provost and vice president for academic affairs, effective June 1, 2025. O'Donnell brings nearly 25 years of leadership experience in higher education, with a focus on student success, equity, and academic innovation.

O'Donnell currently serves as vice provost and professor of communication at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Known for his focus on equity and experiential learning, he has led initiatives to improve graduation rates, expand high-impact educational practices, and align academic programs with workforce needs.

"As provost, Ken will help us maintain the university's strong commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and accessibility to higher education," said Risa Dickson, who is currently serving as president of the University of La Verne. "His depth of experience and understanding of the challenges facing higher education will play an important role in advancing our mission and supporting our students, faculty, and staff."

At Dominguez Hills, O'Donnell managed academic programs serving a diverse student body, including many first-generation and underserved students. In his new role as the University of La Verne's chief academic officer, O'Donnell will oversee academic programs, faculty development, and strategic initiatives designed to enhance student outcomes and support the university's mission.

"Higher education faces significant challenges today, but the University of La Verne has positioned itself ahead of these changes," O'Donnell said. "By embracing online learning early, serving adult and nontraditional students, ensuring career relevance, and maintaining a distributed campus model—all while staying committed to deep learning and the liberal arts—it has created a model for the future. I'm excited to be part of this vision."

In addition to his leadership roles, O'Donnell held administrative positions at the California State University Office of the Chancellor, where he directed systemwide initiatives to improve student outcomes across the CSU's 23 campuses. Earlier in his career, he was a member of the screenwriting faculty and an assistant dean at Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, following a successful career as a film writer and producer.

O'Donnell holds a master's degree in film production from the University of Southern California and a bachelor's degree in French literature from Northwestern University. His combined experience in higher education and the creative industries offers a distinctive perspective on preparing students for a rapidly changing workforce.

Appointment of AVP of Inclusive Excellence & Mission Integration

The University of La Verne is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Marquisha Frost as the new Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Mission Integration, effective August 4, 2025.

Dr. Frost brings more than a decade of leadership experience in higher education, nonprofit strategy, and inclusive excellence. She most recently served as Senior Vice President of Strategic Engagement and Initiatives and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, where she led statewide initiatives to promote equity, well-being, and systemic change.

A former adjunct professor at the University of La Verne and Youth Coordinator at the La Verne Church of the Brethren, Dr. Frost is deeply familiar with the university's mission and the surrounding community. Her return marks a homecoming to a campus she describes as having "La Verne Magic."

In her new role, Dr. Frost will report to the provost and work closely with leadership across campus on strategic efforts that advance the university's core values—Ethical Reasoning, Diversity and Inclusivity, Lifelong Learning, and Civic and Community Engagement. She will oversee several key offices, including Title IX, Civic and Community Engagement, Multicultural Services, Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research.

Dr. Frost holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Claremont Graduate University, along with master's degrees in counseling and education. Her research and professional work have focused on student success, inclusive leadership, and institutional transformation.

"We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Frost back to ULV," said Ken O'Donnell, Provost of the University of La Verne. "She combines visionary leadership with down-to-earth personal commitment, and a knack for connecting with people. She's ideally suited to lend her voice and direction to the values that distinguish us as a university."

University Chaplain Transition

University Chaplain Zandra Wagoner has transitioned to take a new position at Loyola Marymount University where she will continue her ordained ministry, but in a new context.

The University community has benefited from her many years at La Verne and her characteristic grace, insight, and guidance. She has been instrumental in furthering the University's core values and developing an interfaith culture on campus, while also deepening and expanding spiritual development opportunities for students, faculty and staff. Early in her tenure as Chaplain, the University was recognized in 2014 by the White House as one of the top five Interfaith campuses in the U.S. She facilitated the development of the *Ludwick Center for Spirituality, Cultural Understanding and Community Engagement*, which features a beautiful Sacred Space that serves all people and traditions and a welcoming building that provides opportunities for spiritual and cultural exploration and service opportunities to the community. She has been known and appreciated for her prayers, blessings, reflections, and ceremonies that create peace, community, and a focus on shared values. She has been a bridge to the University's Brethren heritage and has stewarded the longstanding and inspirational Summer Service program started by Church of the Brethren donors in the 1950's.

Zandra shared these words with the community: "I feel immense gratitude for the opportunity to have worked at the University for nearly 25 years, where I've learned so much about higher education, access, creating community, and serving students with intention. Serving as chaplain has been a profoundly meaningful, rich, and bright, bright light in my professional life. I'm grateful to La Verne for entrusting me with this role. Please know I am leaving La Verne appreciative, happy, inspired, and full of admiration for what La Verne contributes to this world. I'm also leaving with a good measure of sorrow (!), equal to the love and care I have for this community. I love the mission, purpose, and special quality of this place, our students, and the dedicated staff, faculty, and administrators who make La Verne so special, kind-hearted, and purposeful."

The University is grateful for her time at La Verne and is in the process of hiring a new University Chaplain.

To the Pacific Southwest District: We want to extend our gratitude for your ongoing support of Spiritual Life at La Verne. Thank you for your annual \$4000 donation, which is used to support the spiritual well-being and formation of our students.

2025 Carnegie Classification Recognition

The University of La Verne proudly announces its designation as an Opportunity University in the newly revised 2025 Carnegie Classifications. This recognition underscores the university's commitment to providing equitable access and fostering student success through higher education.

The 2025 Carnegie Classifications, developed by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, introduced the Student Access and Earnings Classification to

highlight institutions that excel in both providing access to education and supporting students in achieving competitive earnings post-graduation. Fewer than 500 institutions (roughly 12%) were given this new distinction, and the University of La Verne's classification as an Opportunity University identifies it as a model for how campuses can foster student success.

Dr. Risa Dickson, President of the University of La Verne, expressed her enthusiasm about this recognition. "At the University of La Verne, we are dedicated to empowering students from diverse backgrounds to pursue their dreams and succeed in their careers. Being recognized as an Opportunity University validates our demonstrable impact on student achievement."

At the University of La Verne, about 50 percent of students receive Pell Grants, and the institution also has a high percentage of students who are the first in their families to attend college.

The Student Access and Earnings Classification evaluates institutions based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard, and the U.S. Census Bureau. It considers factors such as the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants and the earnings of graduates relative to local economic conditions.

"The majority of students apply to college with the hope it is a path to opportunity, and the job they've dreamt about," said Timothy F.C. Knowles, president of the Carnegie Foundation. "This work is about ensuring that institutions are recognized when they empower students to reach their goals and succeed."

For more information about the 2025 Carnegie Classifications and the University of La Verne's designation as an Opportunity College and University, visit <https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/>.

College of Health & Community Well-Being

Katy Tangenberg will join the University of La Verne on June 16 as the new dean of the College of Health and Community Well-Being. Tangenberg brings over two decades of leadership experience in higher education, social work, and health sciences, with a focus on student success, equity, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

"We are pleased that Dr. Tangenberg has chosen to join us and lead the ongoing work of building our newest college," said University of La Verne President Risa Dickson. "Her experience and knowledge of the community will be key to positioning the college within the university and the region."

Tangenberg comes to the University of La Verne from Seattle Pacific University, where she has served as dean of the School of Psychology, Family & Community since 2016. In this role, she has led academic programs, faculty development, and accreditation efforts while strengthening community partnerships. Prior to that, she held key leadership positions at Azusa Pacific University, where she was the founding director and chair of

the Master of Social Work program and later served as associate dean of the School of Behavioral and Applied Sciences.

Tangenberg earned her PhD in social welfare from the University of Washington and has built an extensive career in clinical practice, social welfare policy, and higher education administration. She is committed to advancing health equity, expanding student opportunities, and fostering external partnerships to enhance academic programs.

"The University of La Verne has found an exceptional leader to guide the college through its next phase of growth and development," said Ken O'Donnell, incoming provost. "In conversations with committee members, the campus community, and me, she stood out for her interpersonal effectiveness, candor, and warmth."

In her new role, Tangenberg will oversee the continued growth of the College of Health and Community Well-Being, which is dedicated to preparing future healthcare and social service professionals. With her deep roots in the San Gabriel Valley and passion for serving diverse communities, she is well positioned to lead the college into its next chapter.

The College of Health and Community Well-Being is dedicated to advancing education, research, and innovation in health and the social determinants of health. It offers eight undergraduate and graduate programs in health administration, child life, psychology, marriage and family therapy, clinical psychology, kinesiology, and athletic training.

College of Business Rankings:

- **DBA program ranks No. 3 nationally in "Best Online DBA Degrees of 2024"** Forbes Advisor's list of the Best Online DBA Degrees of 2024
- **ULV ranks No. 14 in "Best Colleges for Business in California"** Niche.com, 2025
- **MBA with Information Technology Concentration ranked No. 18 for Affordability** Affordable Degree Guide 2024

CLPS Rankings

- **ULV ranks No. 76 nationally in "Best Colleges for Criminal Justice"** Niche.com, 2025
- **ULV ranks No. 135 in "Best Public Affairs Programs"** U.S. News & World Report, 2025

LFCE Recognitions & Developments:

- **ULV ranks No. 11 for the best Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership Programs in 2025**

- **ULV ranks No. 12 in “Best Colleges for Education in California”**
Niche.com, 2025

LaFetra College of Education Joins Prestigious National Consortium to Transform Doctoral Education

The University of La Verne proudly announces that its LaFetra College of Education (LFCE) has been accepted into the prestigious Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), a national consortium of over 150 institutions committed to reimagining the Ed.D. as a rigorous, equity-centered, practice-based degree.

CPED is at the forefront of preparing educational leaders to address complex, real-world challenges across the PK-20 continuum. Membership in the influential network reflects the University of La Verne’s longstanding commitment to education equity, innovation, and community-responsive leadership.

Acceptance into CPED followed a competitive peer-reviewed application process led by the CPED Membership Committee, which recognized LCFE’s readiness to contribute meaningfully to the consortium’s mission and scholarly community.

Joining CPED represents a significant milestone for the University of La Verne,” said Dr. Risa Dickson, president of the University of La Verne. “It aligns directly with our mission of academic excellence by preparing highly skilled practitioners, advocates, and equity-minded leaders to serve diverse educational communities.

The University of La Verne now joins an esteemed cohort of institutions such as the University of Southern California, Arizona State University, and Baylor University, positioning LFCE among national leaders advancing the future of doctoral education.

Membership in CPED will:

- Strengthen LFCE’s academic brand in the competitive landscape of doctoral.
- Equip faculty with research-based design frameworks, resources, and collaborative development opportunities.
- Enhance LFCE’s appeal to educational leaders seeking a practitioner-focused, equity-driven doctoral experience.
- Foster cross-institutional learning and scholarly engagement for faculty and students.

“This membership reaffirms our vision to prepare equity-driven scholar-practitioners who are ready to lead systems change,” said Dr. MD Haque, dean of the LaFetra College of Education. “We’re

proud to contribute to CPED's national movement for innovation in doctoral education."

LCFE's newly launched EdD program in Educational Leadership reflects this commitment. Designed for PK-12 professionals, the program is structured for accessibility and impact. It is 36 units, can be completed in just two years, and is offered at \$1,000 per unit to support working educators.

Our program was built to meet leaders where they are – grounded in practice, responsive to community needs, and focused on real-world impact," said Dr. Shana Matamala, chair of the EdD Program. "Becoming a CPED member strengthens our ability to support educators through collaboration and continuous improvement.

To learn more about the University of La Verne's CPED membership and its EdD programs, please visit <https://education.laverne.edu/>.

University of La Verne Celebrates Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar as Top 100 Education Influencer

The University of La Verne proudly celebrates Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar, an esteemed alumna of LaFetra College of Education and current adjunct faculty member, for being named one of the Top 100 Education Influencers for 2025 by *District Administration* magazine.

A respected leader in education, Dr. May-Vollmar serves as Superintendent of California's Desert Sands Unified School District, where she focuses on innovation and equity in K–12 schools. She has helped close the digital divide by bringing curriculum and technology teams together and works with her staff to strengthen the district's presence through storytelling and social media outreach.

This national honor follows her recent recognition as a 2024 DA Women of Distinction Award recipient, further cementing her reputation as one of the most forward-thinking leaders in public education. Dr. May-Vollmar exemplifies the values of La Verne, preparing future education leaders through her mentorship and advocacy.

"We are incredibly proud of Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar's national recognition. Her commitment to equity, innovation, and community impact exemplifies the values we uphold at the University of La Verne," said Dr. MD Haque, Dean, LaFetra College of Education.

Dr. May-Vollmar remains an active and inspiring presence at the LaFetra College of Education. As an adjunct professor in the college's innovative Summer Launch EdD program in Educational

Leadership, she mentors doctoral candidates preparing to lead schools and districts of their own. She also serves on the Dean's Superintendent Advisory Board, where her insights shape the college's approach to preparing education professionals for real-world challenges.

"Being recognized as one of District Administration magazine's Top 100 Education Influencers for 2025 is a tremendous honor," said Dr. May-Vollmar. "This accolade underscores the collaborative spirit and commitment to innovation shared by educators across our district. I am grateful to the University of La Verne for providing a transformative educational foundation that empowers leaders to effect meaningful change in our schools and communities."

Dr. May-Vollmar's national recognition is not only a personal milestone but also a reflection of the University of La Verne's deep commitment to preparing leaders who drive systemic change in education.

HILLCREST

2705 Mountain View Drive, La Verne, California 91750-4313
(909) 392-4000



MISSION STATEMENT

To serve and enrich the lives of older persons

VISION STATEMENT

To be the Premier Destination for Vibrant Community Living

CORE VALUES

Integrity
Respect
Service
Stewardship
Teamwork

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee: Dale Stanley, Chair; Jackie Doud, Vice Chair; Karen Weed, Secretary; Jack Meek, Treasurer; Matthew Neeley, CEO; John Blickenstaff, Past Chair.

Directors: Pauline Abbott, Thomas Allison, Shireen Fatemi, Patrick Joyce, Dan Lane, David Nelson, Joseph Pritchard, Donna Redman.

Ex-Officio with vote: Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister

Hillcrest Celebrates 80 Years of Service

On June 29, 2025, Hillcrest's Board Chair Dale Stanley shared an important announcement during the Sunday services of the La Verne Church of the Brethren. He presented a special Proclamation celebrating the 80th anniversary since Martha Lear passed a petition among the membership of the La Verne Church of the Brethren in June 1945. The petition encouraged the church to take action in creating an organization that would become Hillcrest.

This proclamation honors the La Verne Church of the Brethren for its community outreach and service. Hillcrest has positively impacted tens of thousands of individuals over the last eight decades including residents, associates, and the family members of both. It also has served thousands of others through its community programs like Meals on Wheels, AFC membership, Bonita Unified School District, the Thrift Store, and by hosting community events and welcoming everyone to our campus.

Each of you--whether resident, associate, Board member, or volunteer--is an important part of Hillcrest's impact. Today we celebrate and thank all who are a part of the Hillcrest community and its mission to serve and enrich lives!



Certificate of Authority #069

DSS: #191501662

DHS #950000005

HILLCREST IN THE NEWS

HILLCREST CEO RECOGNIZED FOR COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

Matthew Neeley was recently honored as an Outstanding Community Leader at the NAACP Pomona Valley Branch 6th Annual Freedom Fund Event. Through his compassionate leadership and steadfast commitment to serving others, Neeley has led efforts that uplift individuals, bridge divides and build a stronger, more inclusive community.

L to R – President Jeanette EllisRoyston, NAACP Pomona Valley Chapter, honored Hillcrest CEO Matthew Neely as Outstanding Community Leader.



LA TIMES STUDIOS LA EXECUTIVE NAMES HILLCREST'S CFO AS HONOREE



LA Time Studios LA Executive selects Joel Brouwer as the Honoree for CFO Small/Midsize Company

In his role at Brethren Hillcrest Homes, Brouwer is responsible for overseeing financial operations, strategic planning and budgeting. He collaborates closely with the leadership team to develop initiatives that not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also ensure the organization remains financially sound. Brouwer's unique blend of experience in technology and personal insight into senior care positions him as a leader dedicated to elevating the lives of seniors and their families.

RESIDENTS WHO ESCAPED THE EATON FIRE FIND NEW HOMES AT HILLCREST

Bud Meeker, 89, left, and Jennie Frederick, 82, are seen Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025, inside Hillcrest senior living community in La Verne, where they moved after being evacuated when the Eaton fire approached their former facility. Their former home, The Terraces at Park Marino in Altadena, burned in the blaze. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)



Certificate of Authority #069

DSS: #191501662

DHS #950000005

Camp Peaceful Pines



Camp Peaceful Pines is a summer camping site affiliated with the PSWD of the Church of the Brethren. It has been in operation for over 77 years in the central Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Carson Iceberg Wilderness. A variety of camps include: Junior / Jr High / Youth Camp, Discovery, Family Camp & Women's Retreat. We rent the camp to groups such as family reunions when time slots are available.

Camp Peaceful Pines is rustic and only open three months of the year due to severe weather in the winter and road closures. It is a cozy & inviting place, with a multitude of projects going on at any given time. 2025 saw work on metal roofs for Cabin 9. Current projects include replacement of Cabin 11, tree planting. Camp replaced the water well which cost \$12,000. Camp is working a replacement generator with an estimated cost of \$25,000.



Family Camp



Womens Retreat

Volunteer superintendents, leaders, directors, counselors, nurses, construction workers, day laborers, families and friends all contribute to making Camp Peaceful Pines a viable spot for enjoying the great outdoors, while taking time for reflection and spiritual growth in a Christian community setting. The churches and other groups who donate annually to the camp budget help to defray the ongoing costs of running camp.

These costs include USFS fees, propane and fuel costs, garbage pickup, upkeep and maintenance of the facility, leadership stipends, upgrades to cabins and other amenities. Camp accepts donations and there is a link on the web site for donations



2025 Discovery Camp

More information about specific camps and dates can be found on the web at:

www.CampPeacefulPines.org
or search for us on Facebook and Instagram

Camp Peaceful Pines
PO Box 185
Modesto, CA 95367



Camp is located via Highway 108 adjacent to Sonora Pass at 6,200 feet

Camp Peaceful Pines is part of the 'Outdoor Ministries Association' and part of 29 camps across the US.

Garry Pearson, 2025 Board Chair

Camp La Verne



Celebrating 101 Years Of Outdoor Ministry & Experiences!

Since 1924 Camp La Verne has been providing Brethren Churches and Nature Loving Folks from all walks of life a place to enjoy the peace, quiet, and serenity of the forest and all that Mother Nature has to offer.

We are located at 6,700 feet in elevation in the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains, with Jenks Lake, the Santa Ana River, Big Bear and numerous hiking, biking, and running trails just outside our door! San Geronimo is the tallest peak in Southern California, and it's trail heads are just a short hike from our doorstep!

Come stay with us! Here at Camp La Verne with our rustic yet cozy summer and winterized cabins and our four season bathroom and kitchen, we can accommodate groups of up to 100+ campers throughout most of the year. Onsite and nearby activities like horseshoes, volleyball, archery, canoeing and challenge courses are here waiting for you! We also have a beautiful outdoor chapel, perfect for weddings, reading a good book, journaling, or just listening to the birds.

In addition to our scheduled summer camps, our CLV facilities are available for outside rentals such as school groups, Boy & Girl scouts, family reunions, weddings, and all denominations of church groups...everyone is welcome here!

CLV Summer Camps...98% Volunteer! Thanks to our incredible Camp Directors, dedicated CLV Board Members, fantastic Kitchen Staff, and wonderful Work Camp Volunteers, Camp La Verne continues to provide to our own groups an extremely affordable 'Camp Experience' every summer for Elementary, Junior, Senior High, College, and even Adult campers! (Registration for these is open to all) If you or someone you know would like to volunteer at CLV, or serve on the CLV Board, we would love to have you! Please call us or send us an email.

We can be contacted at: 909-794-2931 or E-mail us at: campmanager@camplaverne.org

You can also find us on the web at www.camplaverne.org

2024 Was AMAZING!!!...Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Our 100th Anniversary Year was a great success! Successful Fund Raising...Successful Rentals...Successful Summer Camps...Successful Work Camps...And over 200 people in attendance for our Centennial Celebration! It was a weekend to remember with folks from One to 95 Years In Age! Food, fun, lake time, campfires, song, and prayer! Our volunteers and your donations made this happen. While there is still so much more to do, we are making every great and small donation go a very, very long way! (If you are able to help CLV in our quest for all of our 21st century upgrades, and want to support us, you may send your donation to Camp La Verne, PO Box 355, La Verne CA 91750-0355 or find our PayPal and Zelle links on our website.)

Thanks to all and have a wonderful year!

Camp La Verne is under a Special Use Permit from the San Bernardino National Forest. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, Camp La Verne is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.



Eder Financial

BOLD. BALANCED. TRUSTED.

2025 Eder Financial Report

You likely benefit from the service of Eder Financial, whether you have direct interaction with Eder Financial or not. That's because we offer employee-based retirement, insurance, and financial services to nonprofit organizations like ministries, retirement homes, camps, and similar institutions. Serving those of like mind within the broader faith-based and nonprofit community, Eder also manages special funds, like ministry funds, memorial funds, cemetery funds, and building funds for congregations and other church-related organizations.

In 2024, we helped those we serve focus on carrying out their personal or organization's mission by –

- Permanently securing annuity payments for 1,700 annuitants.
- Offering complimentary life insurance to organizations that offered our other insurance products to their employees.
- Creating a toolkit to help organizations raise and manage funds to maintain their economic viability in the future.
- Increasing the number of grants within one of the benevolent funds we manage to proactively address the growing needs of our members.
- Continuing to offer learning sessions that give individuals and organizations the information they need to thrive.
- Adding additional components to our medical plan that help improve quality of life.

As an institution that partners with organizations that serve others, we seek to make decisions around retirement as easy as possible, creating a simple path to participation for all who can enroll, as many Americans find themselves having insufficient savings in retirement. We work to ensure members are not faced with that problem by streamlining the enrollment process, encouraging them to contribute consistently, and using an asset allocation model to help them grow their funds. Part-time employees meeting the minimum hour requirement can participate in both the Eder Retirement and Insurance plans.

Concierge service is included with our insurance products, which allows members to have their questions and concerns addressed more personally. Our ancillary insurances, which include but are not limited to life, vision, dental, short- and long-term disability, have held premium rate increases virtually flat over the past five years, which means eligible employees can protect themselves while not suffering high premium rate increases year after year.

We take the business of managing money very seriously, whether it is an organization's investment fund or money an individual has chosen to put aside for a charitable gift fund. Eder Organizational Investing has over \$140 million in assets under management, serving approximately 200 clients. We manage funds for organizations in a way that allows easy access. Plus, we offer several investment tools, reports, and resources to assist organizations with fund acquisition and management. We would be glad to connect with you to share more.

Plus, our service model includes assisted help and education. We educate members on the questions they should ask to be successful, whether helping them grow their congregations' financial base or managing their personal retirement plan or insurance.

Eder Values Investing

Eder has long believed that it should invest the funds it manages according to its values, which include but are not limited to peacemaking, stewardship, and community. Eder has a three-pronged EVI approach – screening, advocacy, and community development. Through screening, for example, each year Eder Financial's Board of Directors adopts two lists of companies that earn significant revenue from U.S. military operations. One list identifies the top 25 publicly traded defense contractors based on the size of contracts awarded by the Department of Defense, and the other list includes all publicly traded companies that generate more than 10 percent of their revenue from Department of Defense contracts. The firms on the lists are screened from Eder Financial's investment portfolios by all of our investment managers, and the organization avoids being a customer of any of these companies wherever possible.

A comparison of investment returns that are screened for Eder Values Investing by Eder's investment managers versus those managers' unscreened portfolios, shows that values-based screening almost always equals or exceeds unscreened portfolios. Eder Retirement Plan's investment funds have a history of strong performance. Our selection of funds offers opportunities for diversification and the potential for improved portfolio performance with thoughtful allocation. While we cannot guarantee market performance, Eder Values Investing ensures your investments are consistent with your values.

Eder Financial Board and Staff

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

We also have 30 people on our team working in retirement, employee insurance, organizational investing, finance, investments, client relations, marketing, public relations, IT, data, special projects, and business development. We are a family friendly, faith-based organization that strives to provide concierge level service to our members and clients while also providing a fulfilling work environment in a permanent work-from-home setting.

Conclusion

Our mission to inspire responsible stewardship by delivering high quality values-driven employee benefits, finance services, and educational resources, and our commitment to service has not wavered. We work to be proactive, not reactive. We strive to answer the questions our customers have before they ask, not waiting for questions to come our way but anticipating them. In short, we've got our members and clients covered. If you and/or your congregation have not considered Eder Financial for your needs, we invite you to explore what we have to offer.

Donna Rhodes

Eder Financial Board Chair

Nevin Dulabaum

Eder Financial President

A Future with Hope: On Earth Peace's Next 50 Years

"For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." – Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)



On Earth Peace's purpose as an **agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference** is to help the Church of the Brethren become a relevant, vital, "living" peace and justice church equipped to create vital relationships and initiatives responding to contemporary issues of violence and injustice.

On Earth Peace's work as a ministry within the Church of the Brethren dates to 1974, when the organization was founded by 20th-century Church of the Brethren peace leader M.R. Zigler. In 2024, we celebrated our 50th anniversary with the theme Legacy & Hope. In 2025, we work to build a future with hope for the next 50 years. **In each generation, we have developed new ministries and programs relevant to the moment and developed leaders who are confident and ready to step up.** Today, we work to prevent gun violence, challenge political violence, and stand with people of color as our faith calls us. In Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Pilgrimage to Nonviolence, he reflects, "The sixth basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future." **Through the eyes of faith, On Earth Peace has a deep hope in the future of the Church of the Brethren and of the world we live in. Our small denomination may have been created for such a time as this. Core Brethren discipleship values, commitment to follow the Prince of Peace, and our commitment to community are balm in a divided world.**

OEP is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has been an agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference since 1998. While OEP is an agency of the denomination, no centralized denominational funding supports our work. All resources for our ministry come from individual and congregational donations or program income. **We are grateful to all individuals and congregations who remember us in their family or congregational giving. If you are unable to include us in your annual budget, please consider taking up a one-time special offering in 2025.**

2024 Highlights

- **4 Affinity Groups** formed to address issues in their communities, including working for belonging and inclusion, and preventing gun violence.
- **4 youth groups** applied Kingian Nonviolence in their communities.
- **14 participants in the Kingian Nonviolence Level One training of trainers** from the United States, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Cameroon.
- **3 issues of a children's resource, Agape Magazine**, covering topics including Resisting War, Making Peace, and Pursuing Justice.
- **20 interns** supported On Earth Peace's programs, fundraising, and communications work.
- **242 Brethren trained** to date in Kingian Nonviolence towards our goal of 1000 Brethren.
- **92 trainings and events** including Kingian Nonviolence introductions and advanced trainings, gun violence prevention and political violence organizing meet-ups, and 50th anniversary events.
- **327 people participated in 50th Anniversary celebration** events and fundraisers.



Agape Magazine

In 2024, On Earth Peace published three issues of a digital magazine, *Agape: A Peacemaking Guide for Kids*, **designed for children in our constituency aged 8-12 who are eager to learn more about peacemaking**. Further issues are being published in 2025. Links to all issues of this digital magazine can be found on the On Earth Peace website: https://www.OnEarthPeace.org/agape_magazine

Community Engagement Mini-Grants for Youth Groups

OEP supports youth groups by offering up to \$500 in grant funding to support a youth-initiated project for peace and justice in their community. We accompany youth through webinars and consultation as they connect with their neighborhoods. In 2024, OEP offered grants to youth in Gombe, Nigeria, and Findlay, Ohio. Please help us connect with youth groups in your district!

Internship Program

Through our paid internship program, On Earth Peace connects with 18 to 24-year-olds, college and graduate students of any age, and recent graduates. OEP has hosted over 120 young adults in its internship program since 2016. In 2024, 20 interns and fellows worked as part of our team. **Please help us connect with young adults in your district!** All interns and fellows are trained in the 16-hour KNV Core Training in Kingian Nonviolence and participate in a multiracial, international cohort of interns. OEP interns and fellows support all the organization's work, including issue-based organizing, training, programs for children and youth, brand and messaging, and fundraising efforts. In early 2024, the staff and intern team worked hard to help a Palestinian OEP intern flee Gaza with her family; thanks to support from our entire community, we were able to raise sufficient funds to support their escape to safety.

On Earth Peace Values: Jesus-Centered Spirituality; Positive Peace; Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression; Intergenerational Leadership; Beloved Community

Vision Statement: "We see a world in Beloved Community, free from oppression, violence, and war."

Mission Statement: "We develop and walk with leaders and communities who work for justice and peace."

In 2025, we anticipate working with many of you to respond to the increasing political violence affecting our neighbors and communities. We name our support and commitment to LGBTQ+ persons, to immigrants, to people of color, to those affected by gun violence, to those most directly harmed by state violence and war, and to all who yearn and work for a world free from oppression, violence, and war. We will continue to walk with followers of Jesus in the Church of the Brethren as we seek together a path to become a living peace church. Please include us in your prayers.

In Christ's peace,

Matt Guynn
Co-executive Director

Marie Benner-Rhoades
Co-Executive Director

2025 Report to Church of the Brethren District Conferences

Bethany Seminary

February 1, 2025

As Bethany Theological Seminary enters its 31st year in Richmond, Indiana, we are delighted to report that our educational mission is thriving! We continue to see strong enrollment as students from the Church of the Brethren (as well as other Christian traditions) come to Bethany as they respond to a call from God to ministry and service. Thanks to strong financial support from alumni and friends, our robust academic program is affordable and accessible to all qualified students.

We have responded to the changing needs and interests of students by investing in technology that extends our learning community around the world. We regularly update courses or add new ones to help students grow spiritually and intellectually and prepare to minister and serve in a wide array of contexts. Yet the education we provide remains grounded in the enduring values and distinctive witness of the Church of the Brethren.

A review of the past decades reveals a clear trajectory as the Seminary has moved through worry about the institution's survival, completed diligent work to ensure our long term financial sustainability, and arrived at a moment where we can imagine flourishing for generations to come. The key to our success is that Bethany is a truly student-centered institution. When we put our energy and resources into providing students with a truly transformative seminary education, there is no doubt that Bethany, and our distinctive Brethren witness, will continue to shine.

Leadership

Board of Trustees

The Bethany Board of Trustees is led by Chairman Mark Clapper (Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania). Jacqueline Hartley (Elgin, Illinois) is vice chair and Jonathan Frye (McPherson, Kansas) is board secretary. New members of the board are Katy Gray Brown (North Manchester, Indiana), David McFadden (Milford, Indiana), and Dennis Webb (Evanston, Illinois).

Campus Leadership

Rev. Dr. Jeff Carter is in his 12th year as president of Bethany. He is assisted by an experienced leadership team that helps guide long-term planning and day-to-day decision making at the Seminary. This year Jeff has represented Bethany at meetings of the World Council of Churches, the Association of Theological Schools, and on visits to Nigeria. Locally, he remains engaged in the local community, working to build relationships with key

partners. Jeff continues to speak in congregations and at district and denominational events, and is working to strengthen the seminary's connection to the Brethren colleges.

Major Initiatives

The Seminary is working with the six Brethren colleges to establish a pathway for high achieving students at the colleges to earn a graduate certificate or begin work on a master's degree through Bethany while they are still undergraduates. Bethany hopes to have memoranda of understanding with all of the institutions signed within a year. The program will not only strengthen ties between the colleges and the Seminary, but also to provide undergraduates a seamless, affordable, and accessible way to pursue theological education and prepare to answer a call to various forms of ministry and service.

Bethany held its first Commencement ceremony in Jos, Nigeria on May 21, 2024. That joyous occasion honored 22 graduates who had completed postgraduate diplomas and certificates between 2021-24. The event marked an important milestone in a multiyear effort to build and nurture relationships in Nigeria. For context, Bethany signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ekkleisiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN) to offer an online educational program in 2016. The technology center where classes are now held was constructed in 2017. Bethany now has two full-time staff members in Jos — Sharon Flaten and Joshua Sati — who have built relationships with students, friends, and neighbors. President Jeff Carter and other Seminary leaders have traveled to Nigeria several times to meet with leaders of government offices, religious organizations, and academic institutions. We have also hosted visitors from Nigeria in Richmond. Especially notable is our connection to Rev. Dr. Daniel Mbaya, the president of EYN. He was keynote speaker at our first Nigeria commencement, and he visited our campus last summer.

Funded in part by a grant from the City of Richmond, Bethany has launched a new opportunity for leadership training and service that is open to students from all of the higher education institutions in Richmond. The Seminary has forged a new partnership with Indiana University East, which includes the opportunity for Bethany students to enroll in select courses offered at the University. These collaborations are part of Bethany's effort to deepen its connections to the local community.

At the 2024 Annual Conference, Bethany celebrated the public launch of Flourish: A Campaign for Bethany Theological Seminary. This fundraising effort seeks \$12 million to enhance the student experience, encourage faculty creativity and innovation, and to bolster the Seminary's annual fund. As of January 1, 2025, the Seminary had received 1209 gifts to the campaign and raised \$10.8 million. This total includes several leadership gifts, including \$1 million from Priscilla Wampler, and her late husband, Paul, to support the Bethany BOLD program; \$1.4 million from Kathy and Mark Melhorn in support of various needs; and an additional gift to ensure that the Seminary will continue to have a strong focus on Brethren studies. Bethany intends to complete the campaign in 2026.

Academic Community

The Seminary continues to offer four master's degrees, as well as nine programs leading to graduate certificates or postgraduate diplomas. All courses are accessible to students from anywhere in the world via an internet connection. Bethany offers students many opportunities to put their faith and education into practice through community engagement and service learning activities. Some intensive courses continue to be offered far from campus in such locations as Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Iona, Scotland.

Selected Faculty Activities

Dr. Jeff Carter led a continuing education event for pastors at the Idaho/Western Montana District Conference. He was also a presenter at the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center's day-long fall symposium. His presentation was entitled, "The Question of Leadership: Why It Matters!" In addition, Carter was a presenter and closing speaker at the Church of the Brethren LEAD Conference hosted by the Ephrata Church of the Brethren. He also recently published an essay in *In Trust* magazine discussing Bethany's commitment to forming community in person and with technology.

Dr. Joelle Hathaway presented at the American Academy of Religion on "A New Icon of The Triumph of Orthodoxy" in a pedagogy section called "Teach This Image." She also published a visual curation and commentary for *The Visual Commentary on Scripture* titled, "Discerning the Body." One image each from artists Graeme Mortimer Evelyn, Nyoman Darsane, and Susan Dorothea White were put into conversation with 1 Corinthians 11:17-33 to consider what it means "to come together" as a Church in today's world. These three contemporary works were chosen as small windows into the pressing issues of global poverty, gender discrimination, and ethnic and racial oppression. Read in light of Paul's concerns for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, these images invite us to consider various challenges to the unity of the body of Christ. Link: <https://thevcs.org/discerning-body>

At the December 2023 meeting of the Academy of Homiletics, Dr. Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, Brightbill professor of preaching and worship and editor of the journal *Homiletic*, gave a panel presentation on publication trends in the field of homiletics, along with editors of the *International Journal of Homiletics*, Westminster John Knox Press, and Rowan and Littlefield.

Dr. Denise Kettering-Lane, associate professor of Brethren studies, presented papers at two conferences last fall. In September, she presented "Lessons from the Past for 21st-Century Brethren" at The Forum for Brethren Studies at Bridgewater College. She shared "The Krefeld Connection: Pietists and Immigration to Germantown, Pennsylvania" at the Heirs of Pietism II Conference held at United Theological Seminary in October.

Dr. Steve Schweitzer, academic dean, published "Introduction and Biblical Context Notes" on 1-2 Chronicles in *Anabaptist Community Bible*. Harrisonburg, VA: MennoMedia, 2025. Schweitzer presented a paper: "Proximity to an Elusive Utopia in Deuteronomy: How the

Book Presents Its Vision as Accessible but Not Realized” at the Utopian Studies Consultation, national annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, in San Antonio, Texas. He also led a Continuing Education Unit event for Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center titled “Choose Life: Deuteronomy’s Message.”

Dr. Dan Ulrich, Wieand professor of New Testament studies, published commentaries about Hebrews 1:1-12 and Hebrews 10:5-10 at workingpreacher.org. Both passages appear this year in the Revised Common Lectionary.

Enrollment

As of the beginning of the 2025 Spring Semester, Bethany’s enrollment was as follows:

Certificates and postgraduate diplomas: 47

MA: 12

MATW: 21

MASST: 10

MDiv: 23

Total: 113*

*Note: some students are enrolled in more than one program at a time.

Fiscal Stewardship

	FY23	FY24
Assets	\$60,960,422	\$66,060,717
Endowment	\$47,080,825	\$51,587,976
Surplus/Deficit	\$3,308	\$11,126
Operating Budget	\$3,298,544	\$3,581,316

Fundraising	FY23	FY24
Bethany Fund	\$722,315.33	\$752,214.45
Total Giving	\$1,388,106.73	\$1,896,186.21
Number of Gifts	1,754	1,592

We are very thankful to all of those in the Church of the Brethren who support the mission of the Seminary.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Jeff Carter, President

Mr. Mark Clapper, Board Chair



Church of the Brethren

Greetings Pacific Southwest District in the Name of Christ!

I hear you are preparing for a District Conference. I hope your Conference will feature enriching times of worship, spiritual growth, and fellowship (while including as little tedium, and acrimony as humanly possible). Along with many faithful co-laborers, I'm working on a conference too, and I have some of these same modest hopes for the 2026 Annual Conference.

Lord willing, we will meet as a church from June 28 to July 2 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for the 239th recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. Instead of our more typical Wednesday-Sunday schedule, the 2026 event will run from Sunday evening through Thursday noon, and will include a mix of worship, business, learning, service, and fellowship.

I don't have a choice whether I will attend—that was pretty much settled when I accepted the call to serve as Moderator—but I recognize you do have a choice. I hope you'll choose to invest your time and resources in gathering with the larger church in Fort Wayne.

These are perilous times for the church. Cultural, theological, and political differences are severing the common bonds that once held us together. We have been fighting over some things for so long that it's hard to imagine it any other way. But imagine we must!

Scholar Walter Brueggeman in his classic work *The Prophetic Imagination* argued that the role of a prophet is to imagine new possibilities. Paradoxically, Brueggeman suggested that a prophet's visions and dreams for a hopeful future often reappropriate themes and symbols from the past—a newness that is so old, he wrote, that it has been forgotten.

If we were to rummage through our collective attic, I wonder what forgotten spiritual treasures we Brethren might rediscover that could help us imagine something new. Who threw that old sheet over the theme of radical discipleship? How did all that dust accumulate on the Book we say is our creed? How did caring community, humble service, and nonviolent peacemaking get buried in that cardboard box full of old Christmas decorations?

Next summer is still a long way off, so I'm not entirely sure how the 2026 Conference will come together. But I can imagine we will look back to see if we can rediscover anything that will help us move forward as a more faithful and united church. Whether you are a Conference junkie who remembers the location and Moderator of every Big Meeting since 1958 or you have never attended, I hope to see you in Fort Wayne. It's an important time for the church to be together.

Blessings,
Don Fitzkee
2026 Annual Conference Moderator



Church of the Brethren

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of Christ our Savior!

It is an honor to write to you on behalf of the staff, volunteers, and the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren. We pray for you, your congregations, and your district as you gather to worship, sing praises, pray, fellowship, and accomplish the tasks set before you by your district. I am humbled by the ways your district and local congregations faithfully live into the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision, and I wish to express my gratitude for the many ways you support your communities and the wider church.

You will find much about our denominational mission and ministries reflected in two printed resources available to you at your district conference and on the Church of the Brethren website (www.brethren.org). The *Church of the Brethren Annual Report* offers a glimpse of the ministries over the last year, and the *Advocating Generosity* booklet invites you to partner with us in our current ministries. You will also find these resources, together with our recent Church of the Brethren video report, at www.brethren.org/annualreport.

The Church of the Brethren's Mission and Ministry Board approved a 2025 budget that includes nearly \$500,000 in reductions. The budget aligns with ministry priorities, such as supporting congregations, developing leaders, and engaging in global and service ministries, in response to the changing needs of the church and its decreasing membership. As I mentioned last year, our denominational vision calls us to "develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless." We recognize that as the needs of the churches across the denomination continue to evolve, our staff must also be innovative, adaptable, and fearless in our efforts to enhance support for congregations and their leaders.

We are renewing our efforts to connect with district executives to better understand the needs of congregations and their leaders. We are also seeking ways and opportunities to engage with congregations, encouraging our members to consider participating in our service ministries, and collaborate with us in our global partnerships. We believe this support is essential in fulfilling our vision to be and encounter Jesus in our neighborhoods. To that end, we are here to serve, so if you have any questions or needs, please let us know.

May we continue together to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Your servant in Christ,

David Steele
General Secretary

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120 847-742-5100 800-323-8039 Fax: 847-742-6103



Church of the Brethren

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

... let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth – 1 John 3:18

Every leader, volunteer group, and administrator has come with a wonderful attitude and will to work that is not often seen. BDM is a first-class organization with first class people from top to bottom. – Shane Wirth, Habitat for Humanity of Pennyryle Region (Ky.)

CDS is the “gold standard of childcare.” -- Red Cross liaison, California wildfire response (2025)

These reflections from people who work with and observe Brethren Disaster Ministries' (BDM) programs demonstrate that the staff and volunteers embrace and embody the call heard in 1 John. Their deeds and the truth are evident in how they live and all they do to bring healing, hope, and recovery to disaster survivors. Those who support BDM's ministries through prayer, financial contributions, in-kind donations, advocacy, and volunteering at all levels join as cherished partners in our mission to show God's love.

Hurricane Helene struck Florida on Sept. 26, 2024, and moved north causing major flooding all the way to southern Virginia. It was a reminder of how devastating and unpredictable disasters can be but also highlighted the strength of the Church working together for our neighbor's good. All of BDM actively responded to this catastrophic event, including Children's Disaster Services (CDS) sending volunteer teams to North Carolina; multiple coordinating calls with the Southeastern and Atlantic Southeast Districts; volunteer and relief supply coordination with the Virginia District and North Carolina's Camp Carmel; the purchase of special supplies such as mold remediation materials; and providing Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants to support district level responses. The mission expanded when Hurricane Milton struck Florida two weeks later, compounding the damage from Helene and prompting the sending of additional CDS teams. Working together through Christ, the BDM network helped “bear one another's burdens.” Home rebuilding in North Carolina is scheduled to start in the fall of 2025. Hurricanes Helene and Milton were just two of many disasters and crises that BDM responded to in 2024..

Children's Disaster Services volunteers served in eight MARCs (multi-agency resource centers) in response to multiple tornadoes in the South Central, Midwest, and Southeastern US regions in the spring and summer of 2024 and also responded to one flooding event and four wildfires. In the fall, at the request of the Red Cross to care for children impacted by the hurricanes, three CDS teams served four weeks in shelters and a Family Assistance Center in the Asheville, N.C., area and two teams served in shelters in the Tampa Bay, Fla., area. During the year CDS responded to 13 disasters, sending 68 volunteers who served 729 child contacts.

In early January 2025 wildfires in California stretched CDS to respond in multiple locations with four teams serving 515 children in the area in a little over a month. Spring tornadoes sent CDS to the plains states and Midwest to serve more children and families.

The Rebuilding Program completed 22 months of service to families impacted by the 2021 tornadoes in Dawson Springs, Ky. Additional support for this project site came from a Lowe's 2024 Winter Cycle Reconstruction Grant facilitated through NVOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). In response to the deadly 2022 flooding in Eastern Kentucky, a BDM volunteer group served survivors for a week in April 2024 in Letcher County and a new

long-term site opened there in the fall. BDM's partner described its arrival in September as "perfect timing" because they were lacking volunteers just at the time that federal and state funding was becoming available to build new homes.

Smaller responses included collaboration with the leadership in three districts in Pennsylvania to coordinate local flood responses in the Eastwick/Cobbs Creek neighborhood of Philadelphia and in York County. Two EDF grants were provided for the York County response to purchase materials installed by BDM volunteers and to support a local partner providing Disaster Case Management.

Through our project sites, 39 families received support from 600 weekly volunteers who provided 4,636 hours of service on their homes. This free labor provided a cost savings of \$1,242,077 to the families and local partners. Sixty-five disaster project leaders served in 2024.

Tragically, in 2024 international responses once again focused much more on supporting families impacted by violence, a human-caused crisis, than on natural disasters. In January 2025, the rebel group M23 invaded and occupied villages and cities in the Eastern DR Congo, displacing millions including Church of the Brethren members in North and South Kivu provinces. BDM is partnering with DR Congo and Burundi church leaders to help develop, support, and coordinate responses. In South Sudan political and ethnic violence has escalated to the brink of a civil war. BDM and Global Mission staff are working with leaders from the South Sudan mission to expand humanitarian response plans while supporting the mission. EDF grants are already supporting families displaced by this violence.

A total of \$564,000 in EDF grants funded war-related relief and recovery programs in the DR Congo, Lebanon, Nigeria, Palestine, South Sudan, and Ukraine. This was the first year that grants provided aid and relief to families impacted by the Israel-Hamas war in the Palestinian territories and Israel's attacks on Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Smaller grants provided critical storm and flood relief in Burundi, the DR Congo, Dominican Republic, and South Sudan. Grants to partners in Mexico and the Dominican Republic supported the needs of refugees. Another area of ongoing focus is a response to the crisis in Haiti, including a failed government and sections of the country controlled by violent gangs, leaving families and congregations struggling to survive.

The Nigeria Crisis Response (NCR), in collaboration with EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), received \$225,000 in EDF funds in 2024. Amidst ongoing, and often increasing, violence and insecurity, NCR maintains its focus on sponsorship of camps for internally displaced people; supporting EYN refugees returning from Cameroon, food distributions; medical assistance; livelihood training centers for widows and orphans; seeds and fertilizer; new wells for drinking water; education assistance for orphan children; and home repairs for the most vulnerable.

This ministry is only possible because the whole church is working together. Individual members and supporters, volunteers, churches, and districts are part of the body of Christ coming together to pray, serve, give hope, and help families heal. Through all this we pray more people come to God and know God's amazing love. Together, living in deed and truth, we build the body and bear witness to God's love for all.



Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries

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

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.

Brethren Disaster Ministries, 601 Main Street, P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, Maryland 21776-0188
410-635-8731 800-451-4407 Fax: 410-635-8739



2024-2025 *BVS* ANNUAL REPORT

Sharing God's love through acts of service

QUICK STATS:

2024 VOLUNTEERS: 54

ACTIVE PROJECT SITES: 56

**LOCATIONS OF PROJECTS:
16 US STATES, 12 COUNTRIES**

**BVS/FAITHX STAFF:
4 + 1 BVS VOLUNTEER**

**VOLUNTEER BENEFITS:
MONTHLY \$250 STIPEND,
FOOD, HOUSING, HEALTH
INSURANCE, TRANSIT**

FAITHX PARTICIPANTS: 183

FAITHX TRIPS IN 2024: 10

Brethren Volunteer Service continues to think creatively as we explore what service looks like and how we can best support our volunteers and engage with our community.

Currently, BVS staff work remotely. This allows staff to connect with BVS recruits & supporters in a wider range of locations without the carbon footprint. Plus, with digital files, we use less paper!

Staff Changes: Virginia Rendler moved from interim Volunteer Coordinator to permanent staff. Walt Wiltschek resigned from the position of office coordinator. BVSer Rachel Johnson joined the BVS team to help plan and lead the 2025 FaithX trips!

The biggest way you can support BVS is by sharing about it with others! Most of our volunteers come into BVS because someone they know encouraged them to apply. Who can you encourage to volunteer with BVS?

DID YOU KNOW?

BVS has a monthly email newsletter!
Sign up to stay connected!



BrethrenVolunteerService.org | BVS@brethren.org

MEET OUR STAFF



Director
Chelsea Goss Skillen



FaithX Coordinator
Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred



Volunteer Coordinator
Virginia Rendler



European Coordinator
Sara Cook



BVS Volunteer
Rachel Johnson



2024 ORIENTATIONS

27 volunteers completed orientation in 2024. Summer orientations (Unit 335) met at Camp Colorado and fall orientation (Unit 336) at Camp Brethren Heights in Michigan.

2025 ORIENTATIONS

This year's orientations will be held at Camp Colorado on July 27-Aug. 4, and at Camp Mardela on Sept 10-18. Anyone over 18 is welcome to apply!



BVS VISIONARY VOICES

BVS has a new quarterly speaker series! Join us to hear from professionals in our community as they share on relevant topics that are linked to the four BVS goals.



In 2024, FaithX welcomed over 180 participants for 10 week-long service trips, including an international trip to Ecuador and a trip specifically for adults age 55+. The summer's theme, 'Beloved', based on 1 John 4:7, reminded participants to love in the way that God loves us.

In 2025, FaithX is hosting 9 trips with over 160 participants. Combo junior high and senior high trips have been especially popular, allowing entire youth groups to serve together.

DID YOU KNOW? FaithX offers custom trips for groups of any age!



Brethren.org/faithx/ | FaithX@brethren.org

**Minutes of the
Sixty-First Annual District Conference
Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren**

November 9, 2024

Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren, Sacramento, CA

A Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:39 a.m. with prayer offered by Paul Lovelace.

B Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

A roll call was conducted by the clerk, and a quorum was established.

C New Business

Organization of Iglesia del Salvador Viviente as a Fellowship: Paul Lovelace

Paul Lovelace directed the delegates to Page 61 of the Business Book.

This item came as a recommendation from the Policy Board.

Approved, unanimous.

The delegates for Iglesia del Salvador Viviente were seated.

D Dedication of Delegates

Paul Lovelace directed the delegates to Page 8 of the Business Book and led the delegates in the Delegates' Dedication.

E Introduction of Leadership and Rules for Speaking

Paul Lovelace introduced Russ Matteson, District Executive; Laura Miller, Clerk; Norma Sexton, Moderator-elect; Paul Lovelace, Moderator; Tom Hostetler, Parliamentarian; Joe Vecchio, timekeeper; and Iris Berumen, Translator.

Paul Lovelace explained the rules for speaking from the floor.

F Approval of Agenda and Minutes from the 2023 Conference

Paul Lovelace directed the delegates to page 4 of the Business Book and documents on the table for the agenda. The minutes of the 2023 Conference are Exhibit A on page 49 of the Business Book.

Kim Boardman (Modesto) moved and Janet Short (Pomona Fellowship) seconded to approve the agenda and minutes. Approved, unanimous.

G Assignment of Committee to Certify the Accuracy of the 2024 Minutes: Paul Lovelace

Gail Heisel, Janet Short, and Linda Davis were appointed as the committee to certify the minutes.

H Introduction of Denominational Guests

Russ Matteson introduced David Steele, Church of the Brethren, Inc., General Secretary; Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, Church of the Brethren staff member; Nate and Jen Hosler, keynote speakers; Erik Brummett, Edward Cesar, and Barbara Daté, Mission and Ministry Board Members; Erin Matteson, Part-Time Pastor Full-Time Church circuit rider; Lori Current, Bethany Seminary; Arlyn Morales, Brethren Academy; Marcus Mahling, Mennonite Insurance Services; and Dava Hensley, 2025 Annual Conference Moderator.

I Report from Annual Conference Moderator: Dava Hensley

Dava Hensley spoke about the 2025 Annual Conference that will be held in Greensboro, North Carolina. She presented the logo and the theme: Faith Working Through Love. She invited everyone to come to Greensboro for the 2025 Annual Conference.

Business Items

J Introduction of the Ballot: Norma Sexton

Norma Sexton directed the delegates to page 53 of the Business Book, plus an updated ballot. Norma presented the names of the nominees and their positions. There were no nominations from the floor.

Cady Laycook (South Bay) moved and Susan Price (Empire) seconded to receive the ballot as a slate and approve by affirmation. Approved, unanimous.

The following people were elected to the Pacific Southwest District 2025 positions:

Moderator Elect: Don Shankster

Program Committee: Cheryl Crane

Nominating Committee: Barbara Brandt

Clerk: Laura Miller

Policy Board at Large: Bill Himes, Gail Heisel, Marvin Ramos, John Keeling, and Carlos Padilla.

K New Business Item: Paul Lovelace

Paul Lovelace directed the delegates to Page 62 of the Business Book. Paul explained the South Bay Church of the Brethren and Journey affiliation.

There was a recommendation from the Policy Board to approve dual affiliation and a DBA for the South Bay Congregation. There was no discussion. **Approved, unanimous.**

Reports from Denominational Agencies

XII. Church of the Brethren, Inc. Report

1 David Steele, Church of the Brethren, Inc., brought greetings from the Ministry and Mission Board and Church of the Brethren staff. He explained that a video report is available online and a written report is available at the registration table and on page 43 in the Business Book. David expressed appreciation for the work the PSWD does for the Denomination.

2 The Director of Ministry, Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, was introduced. She highlighted some activities.

3 Nancy introduced Arlyn Morales, who spoke briefly about the Spanish training programs of the Brethren Academy.

XIII. Bethany Seminary Report

A. Lori Current directed the delegates to pages 38-41 of the Business Book. A video was shown about Bethany Seminary, and Lori gave an oral report.

XIV. Know to Grow

A. Paul Lovelace introduced a commercial for Know to Grow 2, a social media support program offered by PSWD.

District Board Reports

XV. Policy Board Chair Report: Jay Irizarry

A. Jay Irizarry directed the delegates to page 20 of the Business Book.

- 1 B. Jay explained the several committees on which the Board Chair serves.
2 C. Jay highlighted several items, including the South Bay/Journey affiliation, the organization
3 of Iglesia del Salvador Viviente, and the Tucson funds.
4 D. Jay enjoyed being able to hear about different congregations and noted that the Policy
5 Board held one meeting at Centro Ágape en Acción in Los Banos.
- 6 **XVI. Ministry Commission Chair: Julia Wheeler**
7 A. Julia Wheeler thanked the members of the commission for their work.
8 B. Her report is on Page 21 of the Business Book.
9 C. Julia explained that the work of the Ministry Commission revolves around ministers, both
10 licensed and ordained.
11 D. Julia highlighted that the preconference event this year was an ethics workshop, which is
12 held every five years, and that the Pastor/Spouse/Family retreat was held in June.
- 13 **XVII. Stewards Commission Report: Jonas Funderburk**
14 A. Jonas thanked the members of the commission for their work.
15 B. His report is on page 22 of the Business Book.
16 C. Jonas explained that Ministry and Improvement funds were approved for Bakersfield and
17 Prince of Peace, and a property was purchased for the Las Vegas congregation.
18 D. A big project was loan support for the Circle of Peace worship center.
19 E. Jonas answered a question about the payment status of the mortuary renter at the Los
20 Banos property.
- 21 **XVIII. Business Item: Budget Report**
22 A. Russ Matteson directed the delegates to pages 57 and 58 of the Business Book for the 2025
23 Operating Budget.
24 B. This was presented to the Policy Board in August.
25 C. Insurance and staff salaries are a large portion of the budget.
26 D. Interest on loans will be a more significant portion of the income.
27 E. Jay Irizarry introduced the Operating Budget proposal and the Church Planting Support
28 Budget.
29 F. There was a recommendation from the Policy Board to the Conference for the adoption of
30 the 2025 Operating Budget and the 2025 Church Planting Support Budget as presented.
31 **Approved, no opposed, one abstention.**
32 G. Jay Irizarry introduced the 2026 Operating Expense Maximum.
33 H. There was a recommendation from the Policy Board to the Conference that the expense
34 maximum for the 2026 Operating Budget be \$495,000. **Approved.**
35 I. Russ answered questions about the total assets of the District and about the income on line
36 4301 - Notes Receivable Interest / Fees.
- 37 **XIX. District Executive Minister Report: Russ Matteson**
38 A. Russ directed the delegates to his report on pages 12-14 of the Business Book.
39 B. Some highlights of Russ's oral report included:
40 1. Russ thanked the Prince of Peace congregation for hosting this conference.
41 2. Russ thanked Iris Berumen for her translating work.
42 3. Russ explained that PSWD has a disaster response team that has served at several
43 disasters. A recent project was in Kentucky. Children's Disaster Childcare response
44 has had some teams work after local fires and Hurricane Helene. Russ encouraged
45 those interested in disaster relief to check with the PSWD office for opportunities to
46 be involved.

4. PSWD has partnered with a number of congregations with grants or funds. Resources are available to encourage congregations to try new things. The Congregational Vitality Task Force has funds to provide grants.
5. Russ discussed the Know to Grow 2 Program to help congregations with social media strategies to improve connections within their local areas.
6. Russ thanked the congregations for the receptions he receives when visiting and thanked his wife, Erin, for her support.
7. Russ explained that Gilbert Romero has been working with the licensed ministers who are on their way through their training programs.
8. Russ thanked the people who worked on the various boards and committees.
9. The pastors of PSWD were shown appreciation with a round of applause.

XX. Table Conversations

- A. Russ introduced a time of table talk and shared that the Policy Board would welcome the tables' thoughts around two different areas of ongoing conversation.
- B. The first is that the Tucson COB property was sold several years ago. It was agreed that the funds were to be held in case a church plant might be possible in Tucson. That time restriction is now up. Russ asked the delegates to discuss ways those funds could be used.
- C. The second is the possible creation of an Associate District Minister Intern position that would provide individuals an opportunity to learn more about District level work in the church and develop potential candidates for DE positions in our district and across the denomination.
- D. Tables were asked to record their sharing and get those comments to Russ following the meeting.

XXI. Reports Via Zoom

- A. On Earth Peace:
Laura Hay explained that On Earth Peace is celebrating 50 years. On Earth Peace was created to search for better ways to settle conflicts. Laura directed delegates to a written report on pages 36-37 of the Business Book. Laura highlighted several items in the written report.
- B. Eder Financial:
Lynnae Rodeffer directed the delegates to a written report on pages 34-35 of the Business Book. Eder Financial supports congregations and church workers with investment, retirement plans, and insurance programs. Lynnae explained several plans that can assist paid church workers and clergy.
- C. Standing Committee Report: Shawn Carothers:
Shawn Carothers described the function of the Standing Committee.
The delegates were directed to pages 14-15 of the Business Book for his report.
- D. Program Committee Report: Paul Lovelace:
Paul Lovelace thanked those who worked on the committee to host this conference today.

XXII. Final Thoughts of the Moderator: Paul Lovelace

- A. Paul Lovelace thanked everyone for their participation in the conference.
- B. Paul was presented with a parting gift to thank him for his service to the PSWD as Moderator.

XXIII. Passing of the Gavel

- A. Paul Lovelace passed the gavel to Norma Sexton.

XXIV. Consecration of New Board Members

- A. The new and continuing board members were consecrated.

1 **XXV. Consecration of Incoming Moderator and Moderator-Elect**

2 A. Norma Sexton and Don Shankster were consecrated for service in the year ahead.

3 **XXVI. Adjournment**

4 The conference was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

5

6 _____
Minutes recorded by Laura Miller, Clerk

7

8 In July, 2025, the draft copy of the minutes was examined and given preliminary approval by committee
9 member Gail Heisel (La Verne), Janet Short (Pomona Fellowship) and Linda Davis (Church of
10 the Living Savior).

Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren

November 2025 – November 2026 Ballot

Candidates are listed alphabetically by last name.

CVCA=Central Valley California, SOCA=Southern California, AZ/NV= Arizona & Nevada

Incumbent=Nominee is finishing an elected term to the same position; Unexpired Term=finishing another person's term.

Moderator-Elect

Vote for 1 Two year term

	Cady Laycook, Journey South Bay - SOCA

Program Committee

Vote for 1 Three year term

	Jonathan Roblero, Salvador Viviente - CVCA

Nominating Committee

Vote for 1 Three year term

	Robert Morris, Modesto - CVCA

District Board of Administration Youth & Young Adult Representatives

Nominating Committee was unable to find Youth /
Young Adult representatives for this ballot.

District Board of Administration

At-Large Representatives

Vote for 3 Three year term

	Ruth Rivera, Principe de Paz - SOCA
	Jack Meek, La Verne - SOCA
	Orlando Roman, Iglesia Cristiana Elohim - AZ/NV

AZ/NV Section Representative

Vote for 1 Three year term

	Dean Sabo, Circle of Peace - AZ/NV

Pacific Southwest District - Church of the Brethren Background Information for the 2025 - 2026 Ballot

Candidates are listed by office, alphabetically by last name.

Descriptions of each office are condensed from the PSWD Constitution: www.pswdcob.org

Moderator-Elect (vote for 1): The two year term begins immediately. In addition to being an officer of District Conference, the Moderator-Elect serves on the District Board of Administration, the District Conference Program Committee, and chairs the Nominating Committee.



Catherine Laycook Age: 71
Congregation: Journey South Bay

Vocation: Retired Case Manager / Advocate and Minister

Church Experience: Member of Leadership Team in congregation, Sunday School teacher, member PSWD Program and Arrangements Committee, Annual Conference delegate, ordained minister

Vision Statement: My vision for PSWD is for us to continue to model unity as a witness to the Church of the Brethren. I also desire that our district grow more mutually supportive, connected and inclusive and embrace the gift of our diversity of language, culture and faith journeys. I also hope that the district can empower and encourage congregations to greater creativity and faithfulness in their witness to the reign of God and embody the good news of life in Christ Jesus as Savior, Master and Lord.

Nominating Committee (vote for 1): The three year term begins immediately. Members may not serve successive terms. Nominating Committee presents to the District Conference a ballot for each vacancy.



Bob Morris Age: 73
Congregation: Modesto CoB

Vocation: Retired Church of the Brethren Ordained Minister

Church Experience: Because we live 75 miles from the closest Church of the Brethren (Modesto), we are not able to be involved in the life and ministry of that church as often as we would like. On occasion, I have provided preaching ("pulpit-supply") there when the pastor was away. We also attend a Presbyterian Church where we live in Concord

and where I have participated in team leadership for a grief group.

Vision Statement: God loved/loves the world so much that he sent his son, Jesus, into the world to save people from their sins. Jesus, the Christ, died on the cross and rose again to save sinners and to establish the fellowship of forgiven sinners, like me. The Church of the Brethren has been uniquely positioned to clarify the meaning of believing in Jesus as Savior and Lord and of following his example and by emphasizing his teachings in the Gospels and throughout the New Testament. While other church organizations (denominations) may emphasize gaining political power in a bid to control society and culture, we, on the other hand believe in the power of love and the power of influence in our witness to the world God loves. We constantly call upon sisters and brothers, young, old, and in between, new or experienced, to serve in the various capacities available for service and ministry.

Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B

Program Committee, District Conference (vote for 1): The three year term begins immediately. The Committee is responsible for planning the District Conference program, obtaining leadership, and making all necessary arrangements for the conference, in cooperation with on-site representatives.



Jonathan Roblero Age: 31

Congregation: Iglesia del Salvador Viviente

Vocation: Worship Leader and Church Team Member

Church Experience: I currently serve as a worship leader at my local church, where I help lead and plan worship services regularly. I'm passionate about creating an atmosphere where people can encounter God through music. This will be my second time participating in a district-level event, and I'm excited to continue growing and serving alongside others in our district.

Vision Statement: My vision for the District is to see a united and Spirit-led community of churches working together to raise up strong leaders, equip the next generation, and build spaces where people genuinely encounter God. I believe worship plays a vital role in this — creating moments of connection, healing, and clarity as we seek God together. The District can be a place where ministries support each other, creativity is encouraged, and every church — big or small — feels seen and empowered to grow in their calling.

PSWD Board of Administration: The term begins immediately. The purpose of the Board is to manage and administer the religious and business activities of the District, as authorized by the District Conference.

PSWD Board of Administration: At-Large Representatives Vote for 3 (three year term)
Board members must be a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the district for at least one year prior to election and must have demonstrated leadership ability.



Ruth Rivera Age: 41

Congregation: Príncipe de Paz

Vocation: SA, DV, HT hospital crisis intervention manager and policy analysis

Church Experience: I am one of the leaders at Principe de Paz. I have been a Sunday school teacher for children 4-6 years old. I have also been mobilizing our major community outreach events at our church with Operation Christmas Child and clothes drive for the holiday giveaway to Central California farmworkers. I was also part of our missionary committee in the past and would go to Tijuana to provide some aid and help at one of the local churches and orphanage.

Vision Statement: My vision to the district is to be able to demonstrate unity and uplift as many voices as possible in the churches to spread the love of God to our communities, during a much needed time of healing, when so many people have been told that God and church is not a place for that they belong. Being able to connect to the communities and surrounding areas of our churches. Build a larger fellowship amongst the churches in the District.

Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B



Jack Meek Age: 72

Congregation: La Verne CoB

Vocation: Professor Emeritus, University of La Verne

Church Experience: I have served in several positions of the LaVerne COB, including Envisioning commission, By-Law Revisions, Pastoral Search Committee, Church Board. I served as the LVCoB representative to COB Annual Conference.

Vision Statement: I wish to contribute to the management and administration of the religious and business activities of the Pacific Southwest District as outlined in the District bylaws. My vision is to continue to enable and strengthen our district churches in pursuit of individual and collective objectives that also enhance the Church of the Brethren.



Orlando Roman Age: 64

Congregation: Iglesia Cristiana Elohim

Vocation: Pastor's Assistant / Husband of Pastor Luz Roman

Church Experience: I work alongside Pastor Luz Roman in the Planting ministry of the first Church of the Brethren in Las Vegas. Member of the Church of the Brethren Deportation Defense Response Steering Committee.

Vision Statement: My Vision is that our district of the Southwest of the church of the Brethren can embrace the Hispanic ministry with greater commitment, recognizing the cultural and spiritual wealth that the Lord has put in our midst. I want to see our congregations working together to support, train and raise new leaders who speak the language of the heart of our people. In particular, I long for young people to be inspired, motivated and disciples so that they take the torch of the gospel with courage, continuing the mission of Christ with passion, creativity and fidelity, thus ensuring that message of salvation continues to transform lives from generation and generation.

AZ/NV Section Representative (vote for 1): Board members must be a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the district for at least one year prior to election and must have demonstrated leadership ability.



Dean Sabo Age: 74

Congregation: Circle of Peace

Vocation: Realtor

Church Experience: I currently serve as a member of the PSWD Stewards Commission. Locally I assist with Facilities at Circle of Peace in Peoria, AZ (as a handyman), and I am in charge of a group of men that prepare and serve supper for around 50 men at the House of Refuge Sunnyslope every other month.

Vision Statement: To help maintain a cohesive body of believers that promotes peace and keeps Jesus Christ and God's Kingdom ahead of all petty differences.

PSWD Board of Administration: Youth & Young Adult Representative Vote for 1 (one year term)
Youth members must be at least 15 years old and less than 24 years old as of December 31 of the year elected.

Nominating Committee was unable to find Youth / Young Adult representatives for this ballot.

Pacific Southwest District 2026 Operating Budget and Church Planting Support Budget, and 2027 Operating Expense Maximum

In the pages that follow you will find the proposed 2026 PSWD Operating Budget, the 2026 Church Planting Support Budget, and the recommended 2027 Operating Expense Maximum from the Policy Board.

2026 PSWD Operating Budget

In the spreadsheets that follow are the proposed 2026 District Operating Budget. The Policy Board is recommending a budget expense of **\$491,746**. This is an increase of \$7,100 from the 2025 District Operating Budget, and lower than the 2026 Operating Expense Maximum (\$495,000) set at last year's District Conference. In general, most areas are flat or slightly down, reflecting our experience over the years since the end of the pandemic.

Some notes regarding the proposed budget by category:

- Congregational Development
 - The district continues to provide and pay for hosting space and domain name management for most of our churches.
 - The Ministry Partnership Funds provide key support to churches working in high poverty areas and with encouraging new ministry efforts through the Jesus in the Neighborhood and New Ministry Opportunity grants here.
- Pastoral Leadership and Support
 - Support here is for the training of licensed ministers through the appropriate training program. Students attending Bethany, doing SeBAH, EPMC, or TrIM are able to do so with only needing to cover the costs of books for the classes thanks to district support.
 - Significant funding supports the annual pastor and spouse or family retreat. This provides a welcome break and space for connection of those leaders serving our congregations.
- District Empowering Ministry
 - Real costs of doing District Conference have increased some, and the travel costs for the District Board to meet in person have increased. However, these times of in-person connection and relationship are very important to our working and being the church together.
- District Operating Ministry
 - The work of our District staff represented in this portion of the budget plays key roles in helping congregations in connecting to resources, supporting Boards and pastors, and working with congregations in pastoral transitions or evaluating future steps in ministry.
 - Property and liability insurance costs have moderated after a sharp increase a few years ago.
 - Staff compensation is even, but this reflects a more accurate accounting of the time worked by hourly staff. The category reflects a 2.6% COLA increase for non salary scale employees, and the District Executive remains on scale. It also includes anticipated increases to health insurance.

The anticipated deficit for 2025 is **\$220,046**. This is the lowest projected deficit in at least 10 years. It is also below the operating deficit target of \$300,000 that the Policy Board established in 2016 and has reaffirmed over the years.

The change that leads to this result is an increase in interest received based on loans to congregations. We are providing significant loan support to Circle of Peace for their new building, loan support for church facilities in Los Banos and Las Vegas, and we also have new loans in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range with several congregations. Having our money in helping churches is where it should be. The loans represent investment in repairs, remodeling, and expansions that will allow churches to grow their reach into their neighborhoods. It also

means we have significantly reduced our amount invested with Eder Financial, and the needed return on the remaining investments needs to be close to 10% to cover the anticipated deficit.

2026 Church Planting Support Budget

There are currently five active Church Plants in the district (Las Vegas, Los Banos, McFarland, Pasadena, and Waterford). **The budget for church planting in 2026 is \$48,300.** This is a decrease of \$44,000 from 2025. These funds are used in a variety of ways depending on the needs of the various projects including church resourcing, utilities and facility cost assistance, and tax support. The decrease is because the facility loans for Los Banos and Las Vegas were reduced with money from the sale proceeds of the Tucson property several years ago and so we are not using Church Planting budget funds to help subsidize these payments. The funds for the Church Planting Budget come from the proceeds of sales of former district properties (primarily New Harvest Lindsay and Koreatown).

Action Item: The Policy Board recommends to the District Conference the adoption of the 2026 Operating Budget and the 2026 Church Planting Support Budget as presented.

Pacific Southwest District Church of the Brethren Income & Expense Summary - Proposed 2025 Budget

		2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Proposed
Contributions Income	4100	26,317	23,875	24,375	32,300	30,300	27,300
Interest and Other Income	4200	91,905	64,923	64,377	108,100	191,800	233,200
Participation Income	4600	10,118	10,643	17,514	12,400	11,200	11,200
Total Operating Income		128,340	99,441	106,266	152,800	233,300	271,700
Congregational Development Ministry	5005	32,251	24,832	13,661	46,750	47,500	47,250
Pastoral Leadership & Support	5300	23,096	35,709	30,483	35,000	33,200	29,800
District Empowering Ministry	5500	10,802	21,128	35,793	36,200	34,850	40,850
Partnership & Property Ministry	5700	18,156	18,219	17,563	18,400	18,185	18,000
Service Ministries	6300	5,822	4,279	6,363	6,800	6,800	6,300
District Operating Ministry	6500	334,696	320,769	301,138	334,371	344,132	349,546
Total Operating Expenses		424,823	424,936	405,001	477,521	484,667	491,746
Operating Deficit		-296,483	-325,495	-298,735	-324,721	-251,367	-220,046

Budget

Exhibit C

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN							2020-2026, District Bud		
2020-2026, District Budget Overview									
Power Church Report Levels		PC	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1	2	3	4	Line #	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
INCOME		4000							
MINISTRY INCOME		4010							
CONTRIBUTIONS INCOME		4100							
	Individuals	4110	2,790	2,077	750	2,075	2,231	2,000	2,000
	Congregations	4120	26,637	24,240	23,100	22,000	21,983	28,000	25,000
	Church Closure Contribution	4125	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Groups	4126	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal Temp Restricted Income	4700	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	CDS Children's Disaster Rapid Response	4135	100	0	25	300	0	300	300
	Other Income	4140	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Contributions Inc.		4100	29,527	26,317	23,875	24,375	24,214	30,300	27,300
INVESTMENT INCOME		4200							
	CHECKING/MONEY MKT INCOME	4210	25,162	6,336	5,687	4,292	1,028	1,000	500
	NOTES REC. INTEREST/FEES	4301	34,309	31,453	28,583	29,681	82,210	160,350	202,700
	Investment Property Income	4400	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
	MISC. INCOME	4550	220	24,116	654	404	455	450	0
Subtotal Investment Income		4200	89,690	91,905	64,923	64,377	113,692	191,800	233,200
PARTICIPATION INCOME		4600							
	DIST CONF INCOME	4610	1,850	6,075	6,554	9,207	7,564	7,600	9,200
	EVENTS INCOME	4630	863	4,043	4,089	8,307	4,403	3,600	2,000
Subtotal Participation Income		4600	2,713	10,118	10,643	17,514	11,967	11,200	11,200
TOTAL INCOME			121,930	128,340	99,441	106,266	149,873	233,300	271,700
EXPENSES		5000							
MINISTRY INVESTMENTS		5001							
CONGREGATIONAL DEV MIN		5005							
	WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT	5020	2,241	1,871	882	2,317	2,583	2,500	2,250
	Ministry Partnership Funds	5180	46,866	30,380	23,500	11,344	27,558	45,000	45,000
	Cong Minister Support Grants	5100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Congregational Dev Min		5005	49,108	32,251	24,382	13,661	30,141	47,500	47,250
PAST'L. LDRSH & SUPPORT		5300							
	TRIM (TRAINING IN MIN)	5310	245	477	232	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
	SEBAH & EPMC	5315	3,020	2,649	3,584	3,976	3,017	4,000	3,800
	BETHANY THEO. SEMINARY	5320	4,400	5,565	3,939	4,774	0	5,000	5,000
	PASTORS' RETREAT	5325	606	12,930	23,915	18,541	14,877	18,000	16,000
	MINISTER'S WORKSHOP	5330	0	1,225	3,240	2,042	1,178	2,500	2,500
	OTHER DISTRICT WORKSHOPS	5335	300	0	500	0	0	500	500
	MINISTER'S ETHICS TRAINING	5336	70	0	0	0	1,924	1,200	0
	PROF. GROWTH SUBSIDY	5338	0	250	300	150	0	1,000	1,000
	TEMP RESTRICTED EXPENSES	7943	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Past'l. Ldrshp & Support		5300	8,641	23,096	35,709	30,483	20,996	33,200	29,800
DISTRICT EMPOWERING MINISTRY		5500							
	DISTRICT CONFERENCE	5520	1,945	2,089	10,341	15,964	21,445	10,000	14,500
	MINISTRY COMMISSION	5540	546	458	2,851	331	275	2,000	750
	STEWARDS COMMISSION	5560	0	3,237	0	1,725	0	500	250
	BD OF ADM & WORK GROUPS	5600	2,589	1,271	5,911	8,572	10,165	9,600	11,600
	NURTURING/CREDENT.COMM	5630	11,101	0	1,350	6,612	0	7,500	8,500
	RESOURCE MATERIALS	5650	185	274	675	89	637	750	750
	INTER-CULTURAL MINISTRY	5660	500	261	0	0	2,038	2,000	2,000
	NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE	5670	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
	Youth Activity & Cabinet Expense	5680/7	0	712	0	0	1,200	0	0
Subtotal District Empowering Min		5500	19,366	10,802	21,128	35,793	38,259	34,850	40,850

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN								2020-2026, District Bud			
2020-2026, District Budget Overview											
Power Church Report Levels				PC	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1	2	3	4	Line #	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Proposed
				<u>NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE</u>	5670	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	2,500
				<u>Youth Activity & Cabinet Expense</u>	5680/7	0	712	0	0	1,200	0
				Subtotal District Empowering Min	5500	19,366	10,802	21,128	35,793	38,259	40,850
				PARTNERSHIP & PROP. MIN	5700						
				<u>DENOMINATIONAL ASSESSMENT</u>	5710	1,430	1,280	1,264	1,251	1,295	1,400
				<u>STANDING COMMITTEE</u>	5720	306	306	2,860	2,536	2,453	3,000
				<u>UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE</u>	5725	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
				<u>ECUMENICAL COUNCILS</u>	5730	250	250	250	0	500	500
				<u>COUNCIL OF DIST EXECS</u>	5740	385	360	0	405	585	600
				<u>PROPERTY & LEGAL</u>	5800	4,130	11,960	9,845	9,370	29,395	8,500
				Subtotal Partnership & Prop. Min	5700	10,501	18,156	18,219	17,563	38,227	18,000
				SERVICE MINISTRIES	6300						
				<u>DISASTER RESPONSE</u>	6310	0	5,822	4,256	5,032	5,215	6,000
				<u>CHILDREN'S DISASTER SERV</u>	6320	0	0	23	0	0	300
				<u>Other Dist Service Opportunity</u>	6350	0	0	0	1,331	1,743	0
				Subtotal Service Ministries	6300	0	5,822	4,279	6,363	6,958	6,300
				DIST. OPERATING MINISTRY	6500						
				<u>OFFICE SPACE & UTILITIES</u>	6520	17,357	20,907	20,604	19,687	23,035	19,700
				<u>EQUIPMENT & MAINTENANCE</u>	6600	650	6,038	3,489	426	403	2,000
				<u>SUPPLIES/PRNTG/PUBLICAT'N</u>	6650	4,937	5,188	5,292	2,304	1,711	2,000
				<u>POSTAGE AND MAILING</u>	6670	1,703	1,084	1,830	1,312	2,004	2,000
				<u>INSURANCE</u>	6680	15,750	16,280	17,830	17,830	26,833	24,000
				<u>AUDIT AND PROF. FEES</u>	6700	26,039	41,925	25,483	33,664	30,245	35,500
				<u>STAFF SALARIES</u>	7000	180,016	185,043	180,637	162,290	173,200	185,926
				<u>STAFF BENEFITS & RCWF</u>	7100	32,643	31,846	31,748	31,699	35,849	47,920
				<u>STAFF TRVL-PROF GROWTH</u>	7500	11,178	24,653	33,660	31,646	29,680	30,300
				<u>NEW LIFE/PUB ETC & Misc.</u>	7750	2,859	1,732	196	281	317	400
				Subtotal Dist. Operating Ministry	6500	293,132	334,696	320,769	301,138	323,276	349,546
				Subtotal Ministry Investments	5001	380,747	424,823	424,485	405,001	457,857	491,746
TOTAL EXPENSES						380,747	424,823	424,485	405,001	457,857	491,746
EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES						(258,817)	(296,483)	(325,044)	(307,984)	(251,367)	(220,046)

2027 Operating Expense Maximum

The recommendation for 2027 of \$500,000 is a \$8,000 increase over the 2026 budget. The Board will work hard to keep focused on priorities and to bring back a strong plan that prioritizes needs and works to be fiscally responsible. The Board has previously indicated that \$500,000 in operating expenses feels like a maximum outlay, and so we will need to evaluate that number and how we are using resources as we move forward beyond 2027.

Action Item: The Policy Board recommends to the District Conference that the expense maximum for the 2027 Operating Budget be \$500,000.

Action to Organize Iglesia Cristiana Elohim as a Fellowship

In early 2017 Pastora Luz Roman and a few others began to meet for worship in a room they rented in a home in Las Vegas. Luz had met the Church of the Brethren many years ago in Pennsylvania, and while her family was living in Boston she had a vision to plant a church in Las Vegas. She reached out to Brethren connections in the east who put her in touch with Gilbert Romero and the Pacific Southwest District. The group was recognized as a Project in early 2018, and Luz was licensed to the ministry soon after that. The church group has met in several different locations over the last many years (and online during the 2020 pandemic). In 2023, with the help of the district, a property was purchased on S Decatur Blvd and with a year of design and remodeling they moved into their new home in June of 2024. Growth is challenging in Las Vegas as many people are passing through, but over the last few years a good core group has been established and this year they have worked to create bylaws and are ready to move to this next step in their development towards being a congregation.

Action Item: The Policy Board recommends to the District Conference to organize Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (Las Vegas) as a fellowship.



Pacific Southwest District – Church of the Brethren

Locations / Dates / Moderators of District Conferences

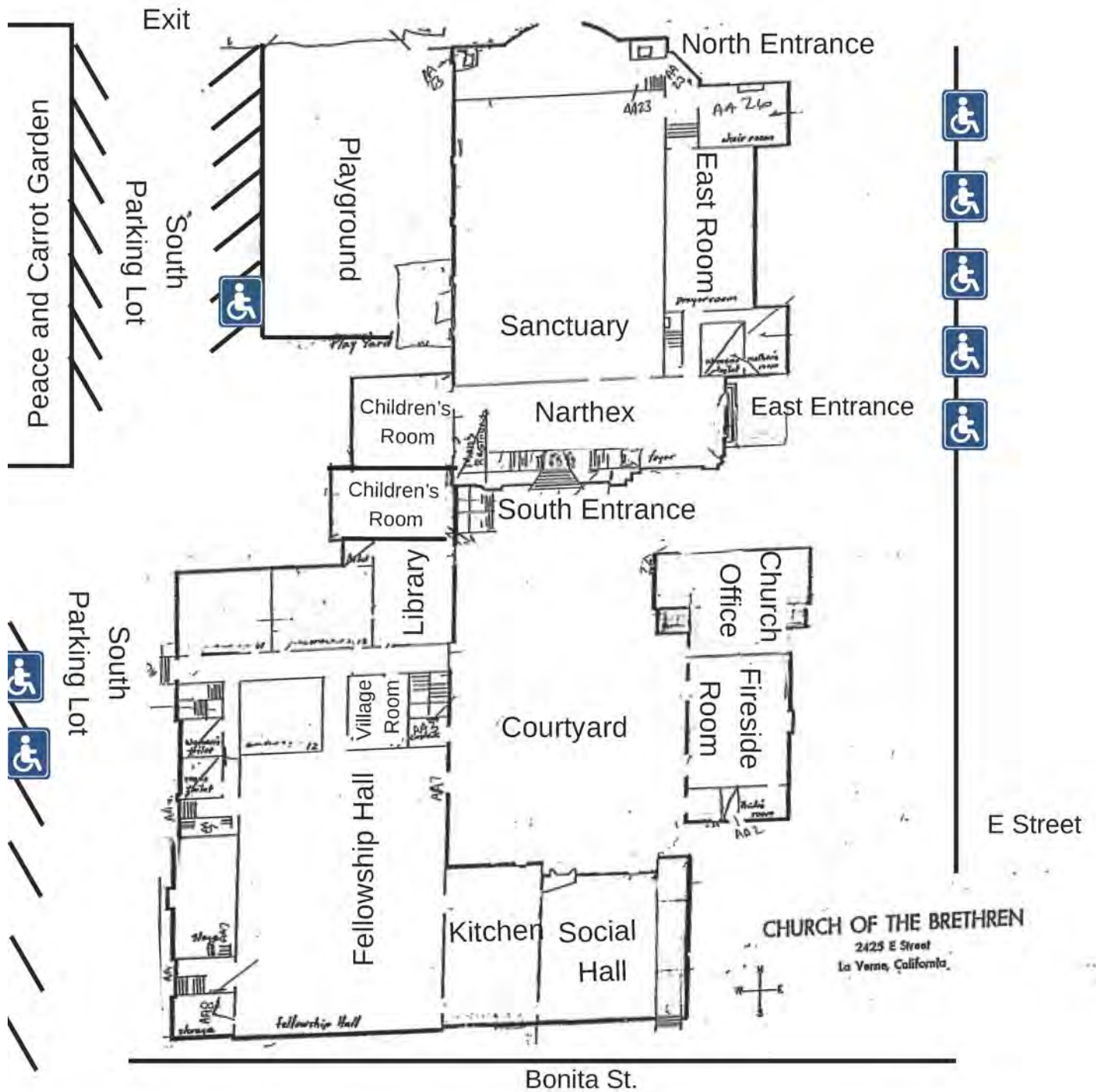
1964	La Verne	August 28-30	R. Truman Northup
1965	Modesto	October 15-17	Marvin Belcher
1966	Forest Home	October 14-16	Leland A. Nelson
1967	Fresno	October 13-15	Lowell K. Brubaker
1968	Long Beach	October 11-13	R. Truman Northup
1969	Bakersfield	October 10-12	Edward K. Ziegler
1970	Phoenix First	October 9-11	Jerry Davis
1971	Modesto	October 15-17	Harold D. Fasnacht
1972	La Verne	October 13-15	Duane Wyles
1973	Fresno	October 11-13	Paul E. Miller
1974	Pasadena	October 11-13	John W. Hunter
1975	Empire	October 10-12	Ida S. Howell
1976	Long Beach	October 15-17	Marvin A. Belcher
1977	McFarland	October 7-9	D. Eugene Lichty
1978	University of La Verne	October 13-15	Norman N. Glick
1979	Modesto	November 9-11	Arthur M. Baldwin
1980	Phoenix First	October 24-26	LaVon Rupel
1981	Fresno	October 16-18	C. Wayne Zunkel
1982	Pomona Fellowship	October 15-17	Barbara Enberg
1983	Empire	October 14-16	Irven Stern
1984	South Bay	November 9-11	Galen Snell
1985	McFarland	November 8-10	Dwayne Brubaker
1986	Imperial Heights	October 17-19	Robert E. Keim
1987	Prince of Peace, Sacramento	October 16-18	Jerry Davis
1988	Long Beach	October 7-9	W. Donald Clague
1989	Modesto	November 3-5	Richard L. Landrum
1990	Phoenix First	October 12-14	Sherlo Shively
1991	Glendale (CA)	October 11-13	Harold J. Forney
1992	Waterford	November 13-15	Donald E. Fancher
1993	La Verne	October 8-10	Myrna L. Wheeler
1994	Fresno	November 11-13	Pat Royer
1995	County of San Diego	October 6-8	Lowell Brubaker
1996	Modesto	October 11-13	Milton H. Ewert
1997	Pomona Fellowship	October 10-12	Peggy Redman
1998	South Bay / Imperial Heights	September 18-20	Jerry Davis
1999	Phoenix First	October 8-10	Karen Walters
2000	Sacramento / Live Oak	October 13-15	Belita Mitchell
2001	Bakersfield	October 5-7	Sherlo Shively
2002	La Verne	October 4-6	George Sparks
2003	Community Brethren, Fresno	September 19-21	Bill Wagoner, Honorary; Myrna Wheeler, Acting
2004	Pomona	October 29-31	David Hurlbut
2005	Modesto	October 7-9	R. Jan Thompson
2006	Papago Buttes	October 27-29	Joe Schechter
2007	La Verne	October 12-14	Mary Kay Ogden
2008	Community Brethren, Fresno	November 7-9	John Price
2009	Sacramento	November 6-8	Jim Martinez
2010	Hillcrest, La Verne	November 12-14	Felton Daniels
2011	Hillcrest, La Verne	November 11-13	Karen Walters

2012	....	Hillcrest, La Verne	.....	November 9-11	.....	Jack Storne
2013	....	Scottsdale, AZ	.....	November 8-10	.....	Jim LeFever
2014	....	Hillcrest, La Verne	.....	November 7-9	.....	Erin Matteson
2015	....	Hillcrest, La Verne	.....	November 13-15	.....	Eric Bishop
2016	....	Modesto	.....	November 11-13	.....	John Price
2017	....	Hillcrest, La Verne	.....	November 10-12	.....	Sara Haldeman-Scarr
2018	....	Hillcrest, La Verne	.....	November 9-11	.....	Karen Pierson
2019	....	Scottsdale, AZ	.....	November 8-10	.....	Bob Morris
2020	....	Virtual on the web	.....	November 9-15	.....	Mary Kay Ogden
2021	....	Virtual on the web	.....	November 7-14	.....	Al Clark
2022	....	University of La Verne	.....	November 11-12	.....	Cheryl Crane
2023	....	University of La Verne	.....	November 10-11	.....	Judy Minnich Stout
2024	....	Prince of Peace, Sacramento	..	November 8-9	.....	Paul Lovelace
2025	....	La Verne	.....	November 7-8	.....	Norma Sexton

PSWD Board of Administration Chairs District Executive Ministers

	Board Chair	Executive Minister
1964 – 1965	Jacob T. Dick	Glen H. Bowlby
1966 – 1967	Arthur M. Baldwin	Glen H. Bowlby
1968	Herbert W. Hogan	Glen H. Bowlby
1969 – 1971	Herbert W. Hogan	R. Truman Northup
1972 – 1973	Forrest V. Groff	R. Truman Northup
1974 – 1977	J. Calvin Keeling	R. Truman Northup
1978 – 1981	W. Donald Clague	R. Truman Northup
1982 – 1983	S. Loren Bowman	R. Truman Northup
1984 – 1985	Marlin Heckman	Irven & Pattie Stern
1986 – 1989	James Walters	Irven & Pattie Stern
1990	Janice Fralin	Irven & Pattie Stern
1991	Roger Richer	Irven & Pattie Stern
1992	Todd Hammond	Irven & Pattie Stern
1993	Gregg Moser	Irven & Pattie Stern
1994	R. Jan Thompson	Glenn Stanford (<i>interim</i>)
1995	R. Jan Thompson	Gene Hipskind
1996	Tom Bryant	Gene Hipskind
1997 – 1999	Jonathan Shively	Gene Hipskind
2000 – 2001	Ernest Snyder	Gene Hipskind
2002	Sara Haldeman-Scarr	Gene Hipskind
		Richard Hart (<i>interim</i>)
2003	Sara Haldeman-Scarr	Richard Hart (<i>interim</i>)
		Dean Kieffaber (<i>interim</i>)
		Bryan Boyer
2004 – 2006	Paul Lovelace	Bryan Boyer
2007	Jim Davis	Bryan Boyer
2008	Bill Johnson	Bryan Boyer
		Richard Hart (<i>interim</i>)
		Mary Kay Ogden (<i>interim</i>)
		Randy Yoder (<i>interim</i>)
		Don Booz (<i>December</i>)
2009	Myrna Wheeler / Thomas Dowdy	Don Booz
2010	Thomas Dowdy / Don Fancher	Don Booz
2011 – 2013	Don Fancher	Don Booz
2014	Marye Martinez	Joe Detrick (<i>interim</i>)
2015 – 2016	Marye Martinez	Russ Matteson
2017 – 2021	Nelda Rhoades Clarke	Russ Matteson
2022 – 2023	Erik Brummett	Russ Matteson
2024 – 2025	Jeremiah Irizarry	Russ Matteson

Map of the La Verne Church Facility





La Verne, Church of the Brethren, 2425 "E" Street, La Verne, CA

