

The Banner

We are a sharing, loving fellowship of Christian believers, rooted in biblical faith, that actively seeks and celebrates God. We desire to praise, love and serve with all our hearts in our faith community and to reach out to our neighbors, continuing the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, together.

In God we find the source of all our joy. Hallelujah!

March 2022

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 48, No. 3

From Our Pastor...

Beginning March 6, join us for our Lenten worship series entitled God on the Move: exploring God's work through the travels and teachings of Jesus.



Jesus never stayed in one place for very long. His earthly ministry was one of moving from one place and encounter to the next. He also moved through every part of the human experience, encountering everything from temptation, to joy, to suffering, and even death. This series will help us reclaim the movement of Jesus' ministry from temptation to condemnation, through his teaching and miracles, and finally through the story of his death and resurrection.

Writer Jessica LaGrone says, "As we encounter the life and ministry of Jesus, we cannot stay the same. We ourselves are moved to grow and change as followers and imitators of the Gospel." The comforting truth of Lent is that as we delve deeper into our own self-examination, we find that we are not alone. God is still on the move in our lives, walking with us every step as we travel the road to Easter.

Hope you will join us!
Pastor Lauren



...those limited or confined for health reasons: **Cathy Banks, Faith Eikenberry, Marcheta Pletcher.**

We also uphold these members, friends and family members of our congregation who have prayer concerns:

**Judy Brooks
Bill Lemon
Rochelle Lovelace**

District Prayer Calendar – March

Mar. 6 Remember those in PSWD who are ministry students - in Seminary, TRiM, SeBAH, and EPMC
Mar. 13 Iglesia Príncipe de Paz (Santa Ana)
Mar. 20 Circle of Peace (Peoria, AZ)
Mar. 27 Cornerstone Community Church (Reedley)
Church of the Brethren

PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION Through January 2022

2022 Annual Budget	\$196,085.00
Giving '22	\$6,160.00
Interest & Other Income '22	\$3,385.50
Total Budget Income thru Jan.	\$9,545.50
Total Budget Expense thru Jan.	\$(14,796.04)
Budget Balance thru January	\$(5,250.54)
January Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Inland Valley Hope Partners Beta	\$125.00



BIRTHDAYS

- 6) Paul Lovelace
- 11) Diane Deal
- 20) Sandi Brooks
- 23) Mary Hines
- 28) Laura Lovelace
- 31) Don Overholser

ANNIVERSARIES

- 20) Richard & Linda Hart 1959

Upcoming Zoom Meetings

Service & Outreach, Tuesday, March 8, 10:00 a.m.
Stewards, Tuesday, March 8, 6:30 p.m.
Music & Worship, Wednesday, March 9, 11:00 a.m.
Executive Comm. Thursday, March 10, 6:30 p.m.
Church Board, Thursday, March 17, 6:00 (early time to meet with Ian Bishop from Ameriprise)
Banner articles are due on March 20

Every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., **Bible Study** over Google Meet. Contact Sander Eller for details.

Fond Farewell....

We are pleased to share that we have found a buyer for our organ, which we have been paying to keep in storage for almost a year. The buyer is Jared Cicon Sr. of Claremont. He is a frequent shopper at the thrift store at Hillcrest. He plans to try to resell the organ, and if he cannot find a buyer he will sell it for parts. This is bittersweet but we are thankful for this answer to prayer. As a reminder, you can celebrate the beauty of the organ by re-watching or listening to last year's virtual organ concert at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7of37Y_X2UA

From Service and Outreach

Pomona Fellowship Support of Church of the Brethren Ministries

We recently received a thank you from our national headquarters for sharing the love of God with others – near and far – through our support of the mission and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Together, we expand Christ's mission by training disciples, developing and calling leaders, and transforming communities.

The CORE MINISTRIES strengthen congregations, pastors, leaders, and members to reveal Jesus in the neighborhood in the United States and partner with Brethren and sister churches around the world. Contributions to Core ministries provides support for the programs and services provided by Discipleship Ministries, Global Mission, Service Ministries, Peacebuilding, Brethren Volunteer Service, Workcamps, and the Office of Ministry.

INDEPENDENTLY-FUNDED MINISTRIES enable the emergency disaster fund, children's disaster services, the global food initiative, and the Nigeria crisis fund.

Pomona Fellowship donates to the Core Ministries of the Church of the Brethren through our budgeted giving of \$1,200 annually. In March of each year, the church encourages individuals to give additional support to these ministries through a giving emphasis they have called "The One Great Hour of Sharing."

In the past we have given everyone a special offering envelope so that they could participate in giving additional funds in the regular offering collection. Last year and this year we are not doing that. However, if you want to give support beyond our budgeted support you can send your donation to our church office and indicate if you want to support the Core Ministries or one of the Independently Funded Ministries. Then our treasurer will send it to the Elgin office.

~~~Jerry Davis  
Service & Outreach Commission



Whether we gaze with longing into the garden or with fear and trembling into the desert, of this we can be sure — God walked there first! And when we who have sinned and despoiled the garden are challenged now to face the desert, we do not face it alone; Jesus has gone there before us to struggle with every demon that has ever plagued a human heart. Face the desert we must if we would reach the garden, but Jesus has gone there before us.

—James Healy

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#### Services & Activities

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday Worship over Zoom     | Sunday, 10:00 a.m. |
| Bible Study over Google Meet | Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. |
| Rev. Lauren Seganos Cohen    | Pastor             |
| Janet Short                  | Moderator          |
| Acia Jernigan                | Admin. Assistant   |

The *Banner* is published once a month. Articles and announcements to appear in the next issue of the *Banner* are due in the church office by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.





Zachary Munn/ENY

## EYN struck by new attacks

**V**iolent attacks have marred the start of the new year for Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).

On Jan. 15, an ISWAP/Boko Haram attack on the town of Kautikari in Chibok Local Government Area of Borno State killed at least 3 people and burned 2 EYN churches and at least 26 houses. The 5 people abducted ranged from age 9 to age 20, with one of those kidnapped having been able to escape. The churches that were burned were EYN No 1, Kautikari and EYN LCC Mission Road.

On Jan. 20, an attack on the community of Pemi in the Chibok Local Government Area of Borno State killed 1 person and burned the main auditorium of the Pemi EYN church, 6 shops, 8 houses, and other properties. The attackers abducted 17 children, including a 4-year-old boy.

## Faith groups urge peace in Ukraine

**With the threat of a Russian invasion** looming in Ukraine, faith groups wrote to Congress and the Biden administration calling leaders to protect human lives and prevent war. The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy was one of those signing the letter. "Rather than relying on militaristic approaches, our leaders must invest in efforts to sustain peace and prevent harm to those who would suffer the most from the devastating and long-term impacts of conflict," the letter said.

## Bridgewater mourns deaths of officers

**The Bridgewater (Va.) College community** is mourning the deaths of police officer John Painter and campus safety officer Vashon "J.J." Jefferson, who were shot and killed on the college campus on Feb. 1. The two men were coworkers and close friends. A former student was charged in their deaths.

General secretary David Steele sent a letter of condolence to Bridgewater president David W. Bushman: "Our church and its members reach out with Christian caring during this time of grief for the officers' families, the college's students, faculty, and staff, as well as the town and the entire community that has been touched by this tragedy," the letter said. "We realize that you are mourning a deeply personal loss, while also walking through a time of great fear and anxiety that will have repercussions for some time to come—in particular for students and staff and their families."

Classes were canceled throughout the week of the shootings and mental health counseling was made available to all students.

Several special events were held in honor of the two officers and to support the community, including gatherings to sing the school's alma mater, "Bridgewater Fair," an ecumenical prayer gathering at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, and a request for prayer, scripture, and encouragement for the young adults affected by the tragedy, posted on Facebook by the Youth and Young Adult Ministry office.

The college has established a John Painter and Vashon "J.J." Jefferson Memorial Student Support Fund.



## Conference prepares COVID plan

**T**he Program and Arrangements Committee has published a COVID-19 response plan for the Annual Conference to be held July 10-14 in Omaha, Neb.

“One of our top priorities is caring for the health and wellbeing of all Conferencegoers,” the committee wrote. “The Program and Arrangements Committee developed the following plan in consultation with epidemiologist Dr. Kathryn Jacobsen and physician and former Program and Arrangements Committee member Dr. Emily Shonk Edwards.”

The committee decided not to implement a vaccine requirement but the plan strongly encourages vaccinations for everyone who is eligible. Vaccines will be required for key leadership and others who may need the flexibility of removing masks while speaking. Vaccines will be required for anyone volunteering with the early childhood program. COVID tests are encouraged for all Conferencegoers within 24 hours of arrival. Those receiving positive test results should stay home and will receive a refund of their registration fee.

See [www.brethren.org/ac2022/covidresponse](http://www.brethren.org/ac2022/covidresponse).

## Devotional breaks sales records

The 2021 Advent devotional from Brethren Press, *Do Not Be Afraid* by Angela Finet, broke sales records for the devotional booklets. More than 7,000 copies were sold. Brethren Press has offered seasonal devotionals for Advent and Lent for almost 20 years, since the first was published for Advent 2002. From 2019 to 2021, unit sales grew by 13 percent. More than 400 churches and individuals now participate in a subscription program to receive the devotionals at a discount.



## Personnel notes

**Bill Scheurer** completed almost 10 years as On Earth Peace executive director before the organization restructured in late 2021 and eliminated the position. Scheurer's term of service was shaped by crisis and challenges and the work of clarifying the organization's identity. He supported staff work on an internship program that led to more than 90 interns participating since 2016; supported the adoption of Kingian Nonviolence as a core framework; helped prompt the agency to recreate its values,

vision, and mission statements; helped create a three-year set of strategic priorities (2020-2022); and provided leadership for the decision to join the Supportive Communities Network of the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBTQ Interests in 2019. During his tenure, Scheurer served a term as board chair for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and continued relationships with organizations resisting the militarization of youth and supporting conscientious objection.

**Sherry Chastain** resigned

Dec. 31, as program assistant for Children's Disaster Services (CDS). She worked for CDS for more than four years, beginning on May 23, 2017. Her previous work at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., was for IMA World Health.

**Lauren Bukszar** started Jan. 10 as a part-time database support specialist in the Information Technology team for the Church of the Brethren, working out of the Brethren Service Center and her home in Maryland.

**Kay Gaier** and **Anna Lisa Gross** have been named co-interim executives for South/Central Indiana District, in a half-time position that started Jan. 17. Gaier will focus on supporting pastors and congregations, connecting with district committees and teams, and continuing orientation and educational opportunities for pastors. Gross will focus on pastoral and congregational transitions and will represent the district with the Council of District Executives and other organizations.

## Brethren Benefit Trust announces changes

**Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT)** made two changes beginning Jan. 1, related to its strategic goals to adapt to denominational demographics and societal pressures. BBT adopted a work-from-home model for all staff, allowing all positions to be remote from centralized office space at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., and began implementing a new organizational structure.

The former seven-person management team has been succeeded by a four-person executive team consisting of the president; CFO and vice president of Investments; vice president of Products and Services (retirement, insurance, organizational investing, and client relations); and vice president of Vitality (data, IT, marketing, sales, communications, human resources, and special project management).

The following staff changes have been made: **Loyce Borgmann** is leading the Client Services team, on which **Steve Mason** also serves. **Ed Shannon** is product director for Pension. **Jeremiah Thompson** is product director for Insurance. **Dan Radcliff** is product director for Organizational Investing. Other directors include **German Gongora** (IT), **Huma Rana** (Finance), and **Tammy Chudy** (Special Projects). **Scott Douglas** retired at the end of January.