

The banner features a night sky with stars and a crescent moon over a mountain range. In the foreground, there are two tents, one yellow and one orange, and a campfire with a bright flame. The text is centered over this scene.

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!

July 2026

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 53 No. 06

Terry Benson

It has been six long months since we last had a permanent worship music leader. We worked hard on our job description, sent it out to the world... and waited... and waited. I found myself tacking up our job description in all manner of places: music stores, university music departments, and practice halls. Then I posted it in Christian restaurants and attended other churches to press it into the musician's hands. We had a nibble or two, but nothing that fit. In desperation, I talked about this position everywhere I went and always had the description in my back pocket.

One of those conversations led me to call Terry Benson. I almost didn't call because getting Terry would be like getting a Corvette when you expected a VW Bug. "Would he even consider us?" I wondered.

God has a beautiful way of blessing a situation, and I certainly feel blessed! I am proud to announce that we have hired Terry Benson! (I may have even done a backflip when no one was watching!) Please enjoy the following narrative to give you a view into who Terry is.

July Wheeler

All my life music has been a core part of who I am. As a kid, I loved singing in church and could never understand why so many people around me seemed disconnected from the hymns they were singing. Growing up, I was always involved in singing or playing an instrument whenever the opportunity arose -- most of my musical activity was in the context of faith and religion.

At age 17 I joined with two friends to form a folk trio, the "Wayside Three", playing upright bass. We performed throughout Southern California, wherever churches and youth groups would have us. After High school, I learned guitar and began to write personal songs and music for singing scripture, always interested in sharing the Gospel through song.

Eventually I was called to be a pastor of a tiny church in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and from there my love for music and my love for God found a perfect blend. Out of necessity, I began learning to play the piano (by ear) in my musically challenged churches and found great inspiration in the

explosion of contemporary worship and praise music in the late nineties and early 2000's.

In 1998 I was called to join the pastoral team of North Hills Church in Claremont, where my new bride, Diana Irizarry and I met Dr. Dennis Wallstrom. For nearly 20 years we collaborated in ministry and did life together with an amazing leadership team. One of our greatest joys was witnessing the wedding of Dennis and Julie Wheeler a few months before our retirement.

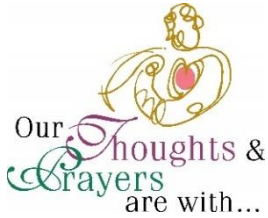
In every step and turn and surprise of my journey I have always had a sense of God's purpose and leading. Nothing has been accidental, and whether I understood what was happening or not, I know God has always been present and powerful in my life.

Nowhere was this more evident than when out of the blue, Diana received a text from Julie a few months ago. "I have a proposal for Terry (not an indecent one!)" it read. It was a "God- moment" because Julie was "proposing" that I consider helping Pomona Fellowship with the very thing I thought was for me in the past: leading worship and sharing the Gospel through song.

As Diana says, it's always a quiet voice, a phone call, or a text – God speaks to us in such unexpected ways! My answer to Pastor Julie's invitation was and is a resounding, "Yes!" I am honored and blessed to be a part of what God is doing in Pomona and in the lives of Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren!

Terry Benson

Worship Music Leader



those limited or confined for health reasons: **Cathy Banks.**

We also uphold these members, friends and family members of our congregation who have prayer concerns: **Bill Lemon & Messiah Brim.**

**PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION
Through May 2026**

2026 Annual Budget	\$288,409.00
Total Budget Income thru May	\$81,970.88
Giving 2026	\$26,244.56
Interest & Other Income	\$55,726.32
Total Budget Expense thru May	-\$102,479.90
Budget Balance thru May	(\$20,509.02)
May Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Inland Valley Hope Partners - BBETA	\$30.00
Phyllis Eller Memorial	\$100.00
Capital Fund	\$500.00
ICE Out of Pomona	\$672.63
Messenger	\$14.50

Bible Study

Every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. over Google Meet. Contact Sander Eller, sandereller@gmail.com, for details.

Breakfast Fellowship Group

Every Wednesday at 8:00 am. in the Hillcrest Dining Room. Contact Mary Hines, 909-418-4654 for details.

Healed and Whole

On the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month Healed & Whole meets for Dinner & Bible Study at Julie and Dennis' house, 845 Hillcrest Dr. Pomona, at 7:00 pm.

Public Witness

Join us for a public prayer vigil held in Pomona. We meet every Friday on the corner of Garey & Mission at 4:30 pm. For more information, please contact Pastor Julie, 909-720-9832.

Upcoming Meetings

Church Board:

No meeting in July

Executive Committee:

As Needed

Music & Worship:

Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 pm

Service & Outreach:

Tuesday, July 14, 9:30 am

Stewards:

No Meeting in July





Birthdays

Maya Sankey on the 1st.
Jamie Herndon on the 2nd.
Candace Cook on the 4th.
Galisa Brim on the 4th.
Rob McKellip on the 9th.
Alan Lara on the 17th.
Karen on the 20th.
Linda Hart on the 23rd.
Fabian Lara on the 25th.
Brandon Sankey on the 29th.

Anniversaries

Richard & Natashua Uranga on the 11th.
Jessica & Andy Decker on the 27th.

If you would like to be included in the Birthdays & Anniversaries, please send an email to office@mypomonachurch.org with the information you wish to include.

Giving Emphasis for July

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphases for July are **lunch box foods and school supplies**. Peanut butter and jelly or honey is a great classic lunch box food that brings back memories. Crackers and chicken and tuna are also a great lunch box item. Flour and other basic baking ingredients can help stock a pantry and create many food options. For all canned food please provide pop-top cans if possible. As always, staple items, including spices, baking items like flour, baking soda, yeast, socks and feminine products are always needed and welcome. Thank you for your continued support.



The giving emphasis for June is
Camp La Verne

***Banner* articles are due by July 20th**

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Services & Activities

Sunday Worship

10:00 a.m. in the St. Paul's Parish Hall

Sunday School

Elementary Children 9:15 am

Bible Study on Google Meet

Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

Fellowship Breakfast Group

Wednesdays, 8:00 a.m.

Healed & Whole Bible Study

2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.

Julie Wheeler

Pastor

Rudy Amaya

Children/Youth Ministry Cor.

Terry Benson

Worship Music Leader

Janet Short

Moderator

Laura Lovelace

Admin. Assistant

BDM rebuilding focuses on Hurricane Helene

The Brethren Disaster Ministries Rebuilding Program has a new focus on recovery from Hurricane Helene in North Carolina. This April, the program began serving survivors in Ashe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties.

Previously, the program had helped Helene survivors through a two-week project in Spruce Pine, N.C., in May 2025, and a project in Johnson County, Tenn., from September to November 2025.

In Ashe County, a two-week

project was carried out working with the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

In Henderson and Transylvania Counties, an eight-week rebuilding project began April 12. Volunteers are working in partnership with Henderson County and Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity, and the Transylvania County Habitat chapter.

Additional Hurricane Helene recovery sites in North Carolina may include a 10-week site in Yancey County beginning June 7.



Donald Robinson

A new home being built by Brethren Disaster Ministries volunteers in Henderson County, N.C., for a Hurricane Helene survivor.

Standing Committee acts on transition from Eder to Everence

Standing Committee approved two documents related to Eder Financial's transition of services to Everence Association Inc. in a Zoom meeting on April 13. The meeting of the Standing Committee of district delegates to Annual Conference was led by moderator Don Fitzkee.

Eder is an Annual Conference agency which, along with predecessor organizations, has been in existence for 83 years as a Church of the Brethren organization. Everence is a financial services nonprofit that is a ministry partner to the Mennonite Church USA.

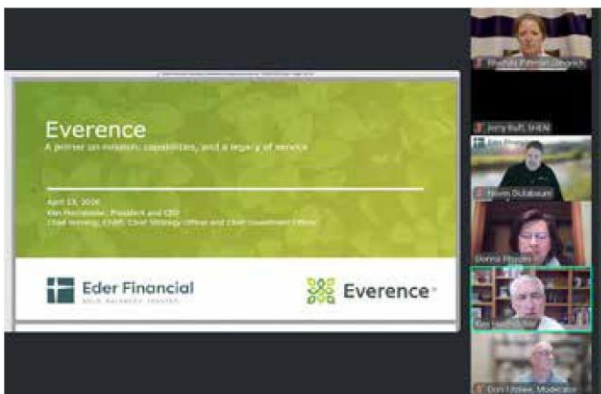
The decision endorses Everence as the Church of the Brethren's preferred provider for services being transferred by Eder to Everence, primarily employee retirement and organiza-

tional investing. Standing Committee approved an interim Memo of Understanding (MOU) for a Resource Partnership between the Church of the Brethren and Everence and a "Certificate of Secretary" as legal foundation. The documents outline how Everence proposes to serve the Church of the Brethren, its members, and institutions pending approval of a final agreement with Annual Conference in 2027.

With the interim MOU, the Church of the Brethren authorizes transfer of the Eder Retirement Plan, its assets, and existing participants to the Mennonite Retirement Trust; shifts institutional investment management to Everence; and grants Everence access to gatherings of the Church of the Brethren at the denominational and district levels. Everence will not have agency status with Annual Conference but will be a "resource partnership."

Eder cited changing demographics, financial realities, and challenges from the COVID pandemic as reasons for the transition. The pool of full-time, benefits-eligible pastors in the Church of the Brethren is significantly reduced, said a release. "Approximately 70 percent of Church of the Brethren congregations are served by part-time pastors who are unable to access full benefit packages. As a result, only about 200 congregations currently have employees actively contributing to the Eder Retirement Plan. ... At the same time, the organization's staffing, product offerings, and service expectations have expanded, creating financial pressures that are no longer sustainable."

Most Eder employees are expected to be let go by the end of 2026. They are receiving severance packages and professional help with job placement.



Everence leaders presented information about their organization during the special meeting of Standing Committee.

Grants

Emergency Disaster Fund:

■ **\$95,000 supports the Nigeria Crisis Response through 2026.** After 12 years, 2026 will be the last year of an annually planned program. Going forward, grant requests from Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) will be considered case-by-case.

The 2026 plan focuses on resettlement in Nigeria of families from a refugee camp in Cameroon, including repair or rebuilding of 30 homes, assistance to 800 households, and scholarships for 60 children. An additional \$10,000 was added to the planned grant for newly displaced families affected by Boko Haram violence following the US missile strikes against terrorist groups in December 2025.

■ **\$25,000 supports aid by the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD)** for families displaced by the war between Israel and Hezbollah. LSESD's relief arm, Middle East Revive and Thrive, developed the plan for at least 10,000 families needing assistance.

Global Food Initiative:

■ **\$20,000 supports a goat and chicken farming project of the Church of the Brethren in Uganda.** The project trains people in livelihood development and

supports improved nutrition for vulnerable communities including those related to Radiant Star Orphanage and Junior School.

■ **\$6,990 supports an agricultural training component at the Great Lakes Bible School.** The school is a ministry of the Rwanda church. Students will receive practical training in sustainable and low-resource farming practices.

■ **\$4,576 supports Farming God's Way in the Church of the Brethren in Burundi.** Trainings are for a holistic model that combines faith and creation care with regenerative agricultural practices.

Brethren Faith in Action:

■ **\$5,000 to Iglesia el Buen Pastor,** Blacksburg, Va., supports families facing immigration issues.

■ **\$5,000 to Monte de Hermon,** Bassett, Va., supports families facing job loss and a reduction of hours.

■ **\$5,000 to Mountain View Fellowship Church of the Brethren,** McGaheysville, Va., helps fund a commercial-grade sign with message board.

■ **\$5,000 to Onekama (Mich.) Church of the Brethren** supports ECHO His Love programs for those experiencing homelessness.

■ **\$5,000 to Troy (Ohio) Church of the Brethren** supports a Laundry Outreach project.

FAITH COMMUNITIES SAY NO TO HISTORIC
\$1,500,000,000,000
PENTAGON BUDGET



The Office of Peacebuilding and Policy signed an interfaith letter opposing the proposal for a \$1.5 trillion budget for the Pentagon. "Our traditions are united by a shared moral conviction," the letter said, in part. "This proposed budget would represent a staggering 50 percent increase over the already enormous \$1 trillion dollar FY 2026 Pentagon budget—at a moment when millions of Americans are losing access to health care, food assistance, and other vital support."

■ **\$5,000 to Union Grove Church of the Brethren,** Muncie, Ind., supports a paper pantry.

■ **\$4,800 to Ridgeway Community Church of the Brethren,** Harrisburg, Pa., supports a monthly drive-through breakfast ministry.

■ **\$3,900 to Potsdam (Ohio) Church of the Brethren** funds community outreach events in 2026.

■ **\$2,500 to Camp Emmaus,** Mount Morris, Ill., supports renovation of volleyball and basketball courts and a campfire-picnic area.

Personnel

Huma Rana on March 27 resigned as director of Financial Operations for Eder Financial, to accept an offer with the Salvation Army. She began with Eder in July 2015.

Eder Financial on April 2 concluded the work of three staff: **Russ Chrusciel**, director of Retirement Benefits, an employee since 2022; **Beth Martin**, Marketing director, an

employee since 2022; and **Felicia Kaplan**, Content Marketing manager, an employee since 2024.

Michelle Martinez began April 27 as assistant treasurer and manager of accounting for the Church of the Brethren at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. She holds an accounting degree and a master of business administration.

Risa E. Dickson has been named president of the University of La Verne, Calif., after being interim president since 2024. The ULV board affirmed her leadership following input from the university community prioritizing experienced leadership, continuity, and stability, among other priorities.

Tim Courtright has resigned as executive director

of Camp Swatara in Bethel, Pa., effective Sept. 5.

Andrew Hamilton, Southeastern District executive, will represent the Church of the Brethren on the board of Churches for Middle East Peace. He follows Nathan Hosler, director of the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, who served on the CMEP board for 14 years.



Post this page

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SUN MON TUES WED THUR FRI SAT

			<p>1</p> <p>Pastor Julie at Annual Conf.</p> <p>Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Pastor Julie at Annual Conf.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Pastor Julie at Annual Conf.</p> <p>Office Closed for Independence Day</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p> <p><i>Peace</i> By Lucero Rojo-Sankey</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am</p> <p>Healed & Whole 7:00pm</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Public Witness 4:30pm</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p> <p><i>Annual Conf. Report</i> By Pastor Julie & Israel Macario</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Service & Outreach 9:30am</p> <p>Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Public Witness 4:30pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Church Workday</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Music & Worship 6:30pm</p> <p>Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am</p> <p>Healed & Whole 7:00pm</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Public Witness 4:30pm</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Public Witness 4:30pm</p>	