

A decorative banner with a yellow background featuring a close-up of yellow flowers and a brown butterfly. The text is centered and written in a black serif font.

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 2026

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 53 No. 03

From Pastor Julie

Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins.

Matthew 9:17

Dennis and I recently returned from an anniversary trip to San Luis Obispo. We stayed at the iconic Madonna Inn. If you aren't familiar with this Americana favorite, its nicknames are "pink palace" and "mecca of kitsch." The hotel was built in the 50's and has stayed firmly placed there since. Although fun to visit, I wouldn't want to stay permanently.

This trip gave me space to think creatively about how the church can grow beyond its walls. Rudy, our children and youth coordinator, helps me think like that, too. We have started children's Sunday school, and we have pretty regular attendance at that. Rudy organized a Bring-a-Friend movie day with our kiddos. We had 10 kids! (See pictures below) We are thinking of ways to engage our people and to serve our community.

As Peggy Redman mentioned to me recently, "There's a new energy at church!"

I would agree.

I wonder if Jesus is encouraging us to make sure we prepare—actively and creatively—for the "new wine?" We still have people seeking a spiritual home, wanting to educate their children in Biblical values, and wanting to find a community where they trust folks and can belong, just as it has always been.

Please keep praying that the Spirit continues to grow and bless our little fellowship!

Pastor Julie Wheeler





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 January 2026**

2026 Annual Budget	\$288,409.00
Total Budget Income thru Jan.	\$10,811.63
Giving 2026	\$5,281.56
Interest & Other Income	\$5,530.07
Total Budget Expense thru Jan.	-\$16,706.53
Budget Balance thru Jan.	\$(5,894.90)
Jan. Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Inland Valley Hope Partners Beta	\$30.00
Capital Fund	\$500.00
ICE Out of Pomona	\$550.00
Messenger	\$29.00

Upcoming Meetings

Church Board:
Thursday, March 19, 6:30 pm

Executive Committee:
As Needed

Music & Worship:
Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 pm

Service & Outreach:
Tuesday, March 03, 9:30 am

Stewards:
Tuesday, March 10, 3:00 pm

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.

Prayers 4 Pomona

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





Birthdays

Paul Lovelace on the 7th.

Sandi Brooks on the 20th.

Mary Hines on the 23rd.

Andy Decker on the 24th.

Laura Lovelace on the 28th.

Don Overholser on the 31st.

Anniversaries

Linda & Richard Hart on the 20th.

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 March

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphases for March are **Canned Meat and Pasta**. Pasta is a filling way to fill more people with limited resources. You can add some seasonings and a can of meat to any noodle and create a meal that will fill your family. Flour and other basic baking ingredients can help stack 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.



Monetary Giving for March is the Church of the Brethren.

Anna's Closet



"Dress-a-Girl," is a program where folks come together to cut & sew dresses for orphaned girls in other countries. The dress may be the only new item of clothing they have ever owned. This would be a good time to invite people who would like to learn to sew as well. All levels of skill are encouraged to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to create community and friendship with the folks from St. Paul's.

Upcoming Sewing Dates

March 7th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

April 4th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

May 2nd, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Banner articles are due by March 20th

The *Banner* is published by the
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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.
Janet Short	Moderator
Laura Lovelace	Admin. Assistant

Haitian church members in US face end of TPS

The Department of Homeland Security moved to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians living in the US, as of 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 3. However, a US district judge ordered a stay in a last-minute ruling on Feb. 2. It is unknown how long the stay will be in effect.

The Church of the Brethren Deportation Defense Response Team called for intercessory prayer for the approximately 200 members of the Church of the Brethren, among some 350,000 Haitians living in the US, who will be affected if TPS is ended.

Effects may include loss of employment and deportation.

TPS is a government designation allowing immigrants to legally live in the US when their home countries are unsafe because of armed conflict, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary conditions that prevent a safe return. TPS has been applied to Haitians almost continuously since 2011. Its termination was announced despite the lack of safe return to Haiti, where there is ongoing violence and a severe humanitarian crisis.

Funds close out 2025 with grants

Emergency Disaster Fund

- \$120,000 for the Hurricane Melissa longterm recovery program of Église des Frères d'Haïti, aiding families affected by the storm in Haiti. Another \$5,000 extended Hurricane Melissa emergency relief to Cuba via connections made by the Church of the Brethren in Venezuela.
- \$20,000 for the Restoring Hope Campaign of Bethlehem Bible College's Shepherd Society in Gaza, aiding children who have suffered injuries and trauma.
- \$19,850 for work by the Church of the Brethren in Uganda to repair a school damaged by a severe storm.

- \$8,500 for purchase of a vehicle by the Burundi Church of the Brethren to support disaster and crisis response.
- \$5,000 for response to the humanitarian crisis in Ecuador by Fundación Brethren y Unida (FBU, Brethren and United Foundation).

Global Food Initiative

- \$35,000 for the Small Animal Microbusiness Projects of Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG) in Honduras.
- \$19,000 for the Kanembwe Poultry Farming Initiative of the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda and another \$1,780 for clean water projects.
- \$8,000 for a school gardening and

nutrition education program of FBU in Ecuador.

- \$5,000 for the Soybean Value Chain project of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria.
- \$3,410 for the Food Bank Ministry of Alpha and Omega Community Center in Lancaster, Pa.
- \$2,500 for the food pantry at Hatfield (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.
- \$2,500 for the Mountaineers' Table Ministry of Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.

Brethren Faith in Action Fund

- \$5,000 for legal expenses of immigrant families at Jesus Lounge Ministry in West Delray Beach, Fla.
- \$5,000 for a food pantry of Living Faith Church of the Brethren in Concord, N.C.
- \$5,000 for purchase of a van for food distribution by Naples Haitian Church of the Brethren in East Naples, Fla.
- \$5,000 for a Kingian Nonviolence Training led by On Earth Peace at Wichita (Kan.) First Church of the Brethren.
- \$4,667 for immigrant and refugee support by West Charleston Church of the Brethren in Tipp City, Ohio.
- \$3,333.33 for a food pantry at Miami (Fla.) Haitian Church of the Brethren.
- \$2,000 for a Live Nativity community outreach of Sangerville Church of the Brethren in Bridgewater, Va.



More than 95 volunteers from Brethren Disaster Ministries traveled from Sept. 15 to Nov. 21 to Johnson County, Tenn., to support 11 households affected by Hurricane Helene. The work was in partnership with International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Johnson County Long Term Recovery Group.



Children's Disaster Services cared for children during a first anniversary American Airlines Flight 5342 memorial in January. The memorial for 67 people killed in the mid-air collision with a military helicopter over the Potomac River took place Jan. 29. CDS sent this team of Critical Response Care volunteers at the request of the Red Cross. The team, which is specially trained to respond after an aviation incident or other mass casualty, provided children and parents with a place to find respite during the emotionally taxing day.

The Church of the Brethren Yearbook will not be published for 2025. Standing orders have been suspended after the Yearbook office was moved from Brethren Press to Mission Advancement. The 2024 edition is available to purchase at www.brethrenpress.com/product_p/year2053.htm.

Personnel

Pat Marsh retires May 29 as manager of accounting and assistant treasurer for the Church of the Brethren. She has worked for the denomination for 31 years, since January 1995 when she started as an accountant. In her most recent role, which began in April 2020, she has managed the general ledger, prepared financial statements, assisted with the organizational budget, and served as lead staff for the audit. Her extensive accounting knowledge and devotion to accuracy have been significant assets over the three decades.

Jenn Dorsch-Messler on Jan. 9 resigned as director of Brethren Disaster Ministries, after serving for more than 10 years since Feb. 24, 2015. She led the Home Rebuilding Program, nurturing a network of volunteers and supporters while also serving as representative to national disaster response groups. Her personal involvement in disaster relief included, in late 2024, a tour of areas hit by Hurricane Helene in Southeastern District. She has accepted a position on a new executive leadership team at Mennonite Disaster Service in Lititz, Pa.

Traci Rabenstein resigns on April 3 as executive director of Mission Advancement

for the Church of the Brethren to become Southern Pennsylvania District executive. She began on the denominational staff in October 2016 as a congregational support representative in Donor Relations and assumed her current role in 2023. She is an ordained minister and has been a youth director and youth pastor. Her leadership in the district has included service as moderator and board chair of Cross Keys Village—The Brethren Home. She holds a Training in Ministry certificate from the Brethren Academy.

Chelsea Skillen on Feb. 10 resigned as director of Brethren Volunteer Service after having led BVS since Oct. 24, 2022. During her tenure BVS continued to develop new models for orientation and volunteer placement, added new placement sites, began a pilot Early Enrollment Program, and moved to remote work. Her previous work for the church included two years as a BVS volunteer and service with On Earth Peace, New Community Project, and Camp Bethel. She is moving to Portugal to join her husband's publishing business.

Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred and Virginia Rendler began Jan. 26 as interim co-directors

of BVS. Witkovsky-Eldred will lead administration of BVS while continuing as coordinator of FaithX. Rendler will lead development and partner relationships while continuing as coordinator of volunteers.

Raul Rivera Arroyo began Feb. 2 as part-time administrative assistant for the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, working remotely. His prior employment included a supportive role with the Church of the Brethren in Puerto Rico. He holds a master of divinity from Bethany Seminary.

Sydney Goldsborough has begun as fulltime director of administration and communication for On Earth Peace. She first worked for On Earth Peace in 2023 as social media intern and most recently was communications coordinator.

Adam Swartz, a licensed CPA and a member of Stevens Hill Church of the Brethren, began Jan. 1 as part-time director of finance for Atlantic Northeast District.

Kay Weaver, former interim director of finance, has become district treasurer.

Erik Brummett has resigned from the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board. He was elected in July 2024.



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SUN MON TUES WED THUR FRI SAT

1 The Good News is... Great Love for God & Neighbor	2	3 Service & Outreach 9:30am Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	4 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	5	6 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	7 Anna's Closet 9:00am
8 The Good News is... Together, the Impossible is Possible	9	10 Stewards 3:00pm Music & Worship 6:30pm Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	11 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	12	13 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	14
15 Joe Vecchio Preaching The Good News is... Protection & Care for the Vulnerable	16	17 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	18 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	19 Church Board 6:30pm	20 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	21 Church Workday 9:00am
22 The Good News is... Rooted in Justice, Mercy, & Faithfulness	23	24 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	25 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	26	27 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	28
29 The Good News is... Inspiring Us to Act Love Feast	30	31 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm				