

A banner graphic featuring a sunset over a cornfield. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon. In the foreground, there is a lush green cornfield. The banner has a dark blue border with rounded corners.

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!

August 2026

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 53 No. 08

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!!

We had a beautiful time at Vacation Bible School for three consecutive nights mid-July. Rudy Amaya, our youth and children ministry coordinator, was at the helm of this project and he did a wonderful job! The hall was transformed into a fun summer play yard with grass, shimmering ribbons, beach balls, rainbows, and welcoming slogans. We learned new songs, read stories from the bible, made crafts, and fellowshiped through games and shared meals. We also bought and stuffed 5 backpacks for school kids for our local foodbank to give away.

A big thank you goes to Rudy who pressed his family into service for the three days: sisters Vanessa and Ruth, and also Mom Alicia who prepared the evening meals. If you've ever done something like this, it is a labor of love!

Another big thank you goes out to YOU! This event was funded through the church, and your generous donations made it possible to make this event free to the community and yet robust and exciting!

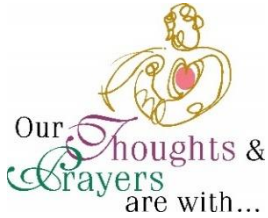
May the Lord bless the hands that made it possible and bless the young children who attended. Amen!

Pastor Julie Wheeler

Pastor







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 June 2026

2026 Annual Budget	\$288,409.00
Total Budget Income thru May	\$108,215.71
Giving 2026	\$27,449.56
Interest & Other Income	\$80,766.15
Total Budget Expense thru May	-\$123,202.14
Budget Balance thru May	(\$14,986.43)
May Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Inland Valley Hope Partners - BBETA	\$30.00
Capital Fund	\$500.00

Upcoming Meetings

Church Board:

Thursday, August 20, 6:30 pm

Executive Committee:

As Needed

Music & Worship:

Tuesday, August 11, 6:30 pm

Service & Outreach:

Tuesday, August 4, 9:30 am

Stewards:

Tuesday, August 11, 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.

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.

Dear God,

*As we send our children back to
school, we pray for Your protection
and guidance. Keep them safe from
harm, both physically and
emotionally. Help them to find friends
who will support and encourage them.
Give them wisdom as they face
challenging situations. And help them
to always remember that You are with
them, no matter what.*



Birthdays

Gary Deal on the 3rd.

Crystal Sankey on the 13th.

Brittany Herndon on the 15th.

Londyn Brim on the 18th.

Twila Pruitt on the 23rd.

Hannah Munday on the 30th.

Anniversaries

John & Janet Short on the 5th.

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 August

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphases for August are **beans and tomato products (not fresh)**. Beans and rice with some spices is a great meal that's easy to make and affordable. A can of chili beans and cream cheese mixed together makes a fanatic spread or dip that can be used on anything. 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 August is
Habitat for Humanity.

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

The *Banner* is published by the
Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Address: 242 E. Alvarado St.

Pomona, CA 91767

Office: 909-629-2548

Pastor Julie: 909-720-9832

Office email: office@mypomonachurch.org

Pastor Julie email;

pastorjulie@mypomonachurch.org

Rudy Amaya email:

cymc@mypomonachurch.org

Website: mypomonachurch.org

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

Second L.E.A.D. Conference held at Ephrata

Hebrews 11:8 was the theme of the second Church of the Brethren

L.E.A.D. Conference held at Ephrata (Pa.) Church of the Brethren on May 1-3, organized by the denomination's Discipleship and Leadership Formation staff. Attendance included 112 people in person and 8 online.

Michaela Alphonse, pastor of Miami (Fla.) First Church of the Brethren, opened the gathering with a challenging sermon reflecting on the need for church leaders to obey God, no matter the cost.

A wide variety of workshops were held in three languages—English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole—with leadership from more than 20 presenters from across the Church of the Brethren.

Three keynote messages by Tod Bolsinger expounded on the concept of following God's Spirit into unknown places and situations. An author, professor, and former pastor, Bolsinger drew



Tod Bolsinger, the keynote speaker for the 2026 L.E.A.D. Conference.

on illustrations from scripture and from history to describe how the church in North America in 2026 finds itself in uncharted territory.

"What got us here won't get us there," was his common refrain, meaning that the landscape of the culture has

shifted and Christianity is not the dominant influence it once was. Bolsinger noted that relying on old methods and patterns that served the church well in the past may not be as effective in sharing the unchanging Gospel within our rapidly changing world.

Global Church of the Brethren Communion meets in Spain

After many meetings on Zoom with the delegates and alternates, the Global Church of the Brethren Communion met in person on Spain's northern coast in April. The last in-person meeting of the communion was in 2022 in the Dominican Republic. A number of representatives did not get visas to enter Spain, so a Zoom connection was provided for those who could join online.

The Gijón congregation of Iglesia Una Luz En Las Naciones, where pastor Santos Terrero started his ministry 20

years ago, hosted the meeting. He serves as president of the Global Church of the Brethren Communion.

Each day began with a time of devotions and prayer led by various countries. "State of the church in action" reports were shared and topical sessions were held around a theme from Acts 4: "The authority of the church in the face of opposition."

To ground the assembly in shared history and theological heritage, secretary Alexandre Gonçalves traced the development of the communion by naming the "five pillars" of its global vision:

- Affirming autonomy
- Embracing indigenous churches
- Mutual sharing of resources
- Practicing servant leadership
- Sharing core Brethren values while respecting cultural differences

The communion voted unanimously to accept the Church of the Brethren in Burundi into the global fellowship. The group also heard updates on contacts with house churches in Cuba and interest from Iglesia de Los Hermanos Comunidad de Fe of the Dominican Republic.



The Global Church of the Brethren Communion representatives from around the world spent an afternoon helping out with the Gijón congregation's food bank ministry.

\$500,000 grant supports Brethren Disaster Ministries

The Church of the Brethren has been awarded a half-million dollar grant to support Brethren Disaster Ministries. The grant was received from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its initiative, "Hope After the Storm: Capacity Building for Faith-Based Disaster Relief Organizations." It will support "a three-year program expansion and improvements to US-based programs," said Roy Winter, executive director of Service Ministries.

The grant will support Brethren Disaster Ministries goals of strengthening US programs and increasing volunteer participation. To expand, the program needs more volunteers to support children after disasters, rebuild homes, and provide onsite leadership, and needs to update systems, communications, and tools to increase volunteer recruitment and participation. The funds also help purchase two new vans.

Winter emphasized that continued financial support of Brethren Disaster Ministries programs will be important during the three-year grant cycle, as the grant does not fund normal operations.



The planning team for National Older Adult Conference 2027 (from left): Dennis Webb of Illinois and Wisconsin District, intercultural coordinator; Heidi Berkenbosch of Northern Plains District, workshop coordinator; Kim McDowell of Mid-Atlantic District, worship co-coordinator; Glenn Bollinger of Shenandoah District, hospitality coordinator; Christy Waltersdorff of Illinois and Wisconsin District, NOAC coordinator; and Ilexene Alphonse of Atlantic Southeast District (wearing a special stole for Haitian Flag Day), worship co-coordinator.

Legal and Mutual Aid Fund reaches goal of \$250,000

The Deportation Defense Response team has announced that its Legal and Mutual Aid Fund achieved a goal of raising \$250,000 by Easter weekend. The fund aids church members affected by immigration enforcement. As of April, more than 95 grants had been distributed via more than 30 congregations. A new goal has been set to raise \$400,000.

Personnel

Madalyn Metzger and **Rhonda Pittman Gingrich** have been named to new interim leadership positions on the denominational staff following the retirement announcement of Wendy McFadden, longterm publisher of Brethren Press and executive director of Communications.

Madalyn Metzger on June 15 began as part-time interim executive director of Engagement and Communications, moving to fulltime July 13. She will lead Communications and Mission Advancement. She was moderator of the 2024 Annual Confer-

ence and has had a lifelong involvement with the Church of the Brethren. Most recently she has been chief marketing officer at Everence. She will work remotely from northern Indiana and be onsite regularly at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Rhonda Pittman Gingrich begins in August as part-time interim leader of Brethren Press, in addition to her work as director of Annual Conference. She will provide leadership in a time of discernment of how Brethren Press may best be supported moving forward. Her responsibilities for Annual Conference will be shared by Debbie

Noffsinger, Conference assistant, who has transitioned from part-time to full-time.

Michelle Martinez began April 27 as manager of Accounting and assistant treasurer at the Church of the Brethren General Offices. She is a graduate of the University of Phoenix with a bachelor of science in accounting and a master's in business administration. Previously, she worked at the Village of Niles, Ill., as senior accountant manager.

Adam Lane began May 27 as program assistant for Children's Disaster Services at the Brethren Service Center in

New Windsor, Md. He is a graduate of Huntington University with a bachelor's in Worship Leadership and of Bethany Seminary with a master of arts in Spiritual and Social Transformation. He and his family are members at Beaver Creek Church of the Brethren in Hagerstown, Md.

Gaston Pierre-Louis has joined the Part Time Pastor; Full Time Church program of the Ministry Office as a circuit rider. He will fill in after Founa A. Badet, director of Intercultural Ministries, steps down as a circuit rider effective July 31.



Post this page

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2026 Church of the Brethren
Annual Conference
Fort Wayne, Ind.

WrapUp



Don Fitzkee, 2026 moderator, washes the feet of Dennis Beckner, 2027 moderator (at left). The dove of peace is brought into worship (at right). Photos: Glenn Riegel

Elections and appointments

Annual Conference moderator-elect: **Amy Gall Ritchie** of Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind.

Program & Arrangements Committee: **Natasha Beaumont**, Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, Lebanon, Pa.

Pastoral Compensation & Benefits Advisory Committee: **Chad Whitzel**, Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren

Mission & Ministry Board, Area 3: **Terri Welch Luzynski**, Montezuma Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Va.; Area 5: **Gretchen Zience**, Seattle (Wash.) Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren; at large (affirmed): **Adelia A. Lucatorio**, Good Samaritan Church of the Brethren, Pa.

Bethany Seminary trustees, affirmed: **Leslie Bolser**, Richmond, Ind.; **Drew Hart**, Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren; **Keri Ladouceur**, Raleigh, N.C.; **Steve Longenecker**, Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren; **Dominick Peruso**, Huntingdon, Pa.; **Jeff Sheridan**, Richmond, Ind.; **Ben Walters**, Cincinnati (Ohio) Church of the Brethren

Eder Financial board, affirmed: **Kevin Boyer**, Plymouth (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and Etna Green Church of Christ; **Eunice Culp**, West Goshen, Ind.; **Randy Yoder**, Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pa.

On Earth Peace board, affirmed: **Susuyu Lassa**, Troy, N.Y.; **Anesu Makufa**, Leeds, the United Kingdom; **Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred**, Spruce Creek, Pa.



Resolutions on weapons transfers, 'Walking Together' with immigrants headline agenda

Two resolutions—"Walking Together: Immigration, Peacemaking, Conscience, and Supporting our Neighbors" and "Resolution on Weapons Transfer"—headed up the Conference agenda. Also on the agenda were elections, an Eder Financial report on its transition of services, and adjustments to ministerial leadership polity, among other business.

Weapons transfers: The delegates adopted the "Resolution on Weapons Transfer" with a solid majority vote.

The paper cites Matthew 5:44b-45, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. . .," calling the church to "examine and respond to the impacts of the arms industry." Reaffirming the Church of the Brethren commitment to peace "as God's will and the call of Christ" it states "opposition to the US manufacturing and sale of weapons and urges the US government to halt the sale

of arms to other countries."

One section addresses the global impact of the US arms trade, noting that "the United States is currently the world's largest exporter of weapons." Another addresses the Church of the Brethren's historic opposition to war and the defense industry, noting stated opposition to particular types of weaponry including nuclear weapons and drones.

A closing section offers recommendations for action ranging from educating about the US arms trade and the biblical call to peacemaking, to divesting from the arms industry, to public advocacy.

The resolution was adopted by the Mission and Ministry Board in March 2025, but because of the heavy business agenda of the 2025 Annual Conference it was held over to 2026.

'Walking Together': The Mission and Ministry Board brought this resolution, which was adopted with a very strong majority.

It reiterates that "care for immigrants and refugees is an essential part of the Christian and Church of the Brethren ethic of service and peacemaking" and cites biblical foundations and Annual Conference statements. Undergirding statements show the denomination's long history of caring for immigrants and refugees and involvement with civil disobedience.

(continued on p.2)

Photos by Donna Parcell & Lauren Flora





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A keynote presentation (far left) featured Angelo Mante and youth from Alive Community Outreach. The preachers (from left): moderator Don Fitzkee, Beth Jarrett, James Washington, Becky Zapata, Caleb Kragt. Photos: Glenn Riegel & Keith Hollenberg

(continued from page 1)

Noting that “Church of the Brethren history and traditions include radical discipleship, conscientious objection, and participation in civil disobedience,” the resolution indicates that in addition to serving the needs of immigrants and refugees, and doing advocacy on their behalf, more may be needed.

The resolution states, “In cases where government policies are unjust or conflict with biblical teachings, the Church of the Brethren has supported individuals to follow their conscience and in some cases, has encouraged open, nonviolent civil disobedience to such laws.”

A list of calls to action is included for individuals, congregations, districts, and the denomination. In addition, a landing page of resources to help individuals, small groups, and congregations study the resolution and concerns surrounding it is at the webpage www.brethren.org/walking-together.

Eder Financial transition: Eder Financial presented the decision and the process for moving employee retirement and organizational investing services to Everence Financial.

The move will take some months but will leave Eder with only ancillary insurance services and benevolence programs. Most of the Eder staff will lose their jobs. But because Everence is a much larger organization, pensions and investments will be well cared for, the delegates were

assured. When the Eder board and leadership realized that the demographics of the church made long-term operations precarious, they began looking for new partners and Everence was a good fit.

Everence, previously named Menno-nite Mutual Aid, has grown to serve more than 84,000 clients from many historic peace church denominations and others, and is no longer an agency of the Mennonite Church. For years, the Church of the Brethren Pastor’s Housing Fund has been administered by Praxis, a part of Everence. Consistent with shared Anabaptist roots, Everence follows similar investing values as Eder.

The transition should be completed by April 2027. The Eder board has stated its intention to bring a plan for Eder to continue as an Annual Conference agency, and the Standing Committee of district delegates has named a subcommittee to help work on a new agency covenant.

The Eder staff were recognized as the Conference acknowledged that this marks the end of an era for Eder and its predecessor organizations, which have served the Church of the Brethren for 83 years.

Adjustments to ministry leadership polity: Two adjustments to a 2014 Ministry Leadership paper were approved with the two-thirds majority required for polity. One pertains to licensed and the other to commissioned ministers.

One adjustment defines licensing as a

“provisional credential.” This is important because many states require ministers to be “credentialed” to be able to perform weddings. The change also grants more flexibility for the length of licensing being extended beyond 10 years.

The second adjustment simplifies the process for a commissioned minister to seek ordination. In Church of the Brethren polity, a commissioned minister is credentialed to serve in a particular congregation or geographical location. An ordained minister may serve any church across the denomination.

Review and Evaluation Committee:

The Church of the Brethren has undertaken a periodic review every decade to evaluate the denomination’s organizational structures and procedures, with a committee assigned to bring recommendations to Annual Conference for possible changes. This decade’s Review and Evaluation Committee, elected in 2025, presented its first interim report.

The committee is seeking feedback from various groups in the church. Districts may contact the committee to set up meetings. Individuals may email reviewandevaluation@brethren.org.

For more: www.brethren.org/news/coverage/ac2026. The Press Team: Jan Fischer Bachman, Lauren Flora, Keith Hollenberg, Daniel Murrell II, Russ Otto, Donna Parcell, Frank Ramirez, Alane Riegel, Glenn Riegel, Frances Townsend, Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford editor.

By the numbers

1,675 people registered including 389 delegates and 1,133 nondelegates onsite plus 153 virtual attendees

1 fellowship was welcomed:

- **Iglesia Cristiana Elohim** in Las Vegas, Nev., Pacific Southwest District

1 new church project was welcomed:

- **The Sanctuary** in rural Indiana, Northern Indiana District

\$54,458.29 total offerings:

- **\$13,605.63** for the **Witness to the Host City** to benefit Alive Community Outreach, with an additional **4 pallets** of material goods donated

- **\$24,334.64** for **Annual Conference** including \$14,268.05 in support of Annual Conference operations and \$10,066.59 for children and youth programming

- **\$16,518.02** for the **Core Ministries of the**

Church of the Brethren including \$9,409.70 received in an offering focused on Global Mission and \$7,108.32 in an offering focused on Discipleship and Leadership Formation

\$14,759 raised by the Silent Auction to undergird the operating budget of Annual Conference

110 units collected by the Blood Drive

4.2 percent increase in cost of living adjustment to minimum cash salary table for pastors



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

						1
2 God of the Outcasts	3	4 Service & Outreach 9:30am Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	5 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	6	7 Public Witness 4:30pm	8
9 God of the Outcasts	10	11 Stewards 3:00pm Music & Worship 6:30pm Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	12 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	13	14 Public Witness 4:30pm	15 Church Workday
16 God of the Outcasts	17	18 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	19 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	20 Church Board 9:30am	21 Public Witness 4:30pm	22
23 Blessing for those beginning a new school year	24	25 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	26 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	27	28 Public Witness 4:30pm	29
30 Terry Benson Preaching	31					