



# 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!

June 2026

*Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren*

Vol. 53 No. 06

## Serving and Learning in El Salvador: My Latest Journey with Fundación Quintanilla Amaya

For many years, I have had the privilege of serving the communities of **El Salvador** through the **Fundación Quintanilla Amaya (FQA)**, a grassroots nonprofit inspired by biblical values and a commitment to reflect **Christ's love** through action. What began as Reverend Joel Quintanilla Amaya's vision to bring medical care and companionship to elders in rural areas has grown into an officially recognized NGO. Today, FQA's mission encompasses five key areas: **Health, Social Welfare, Education, Environmental Stewardship**, and **Economic Autonomy**, all focused on nurturing sustainable, holistic growth for the people we serve.

On my most recent trip, I was joined by a unique group: a coffee shop owner from **South Central Los Angeles**, a passionate public health student from **Cal State LA**,

and my older sister, **Vanessa**. Together, we set out to witness and support the incredible work that people are doing on the ground.

Our group brought unique skills and perspectives that made this trip even more meaningful:

- The **coffee shop owner** from South Central Los Angeles facilitated a **barista training** for the people at the farm. The farm recently developed a small "farm-to-table" food stand perched on a mountain top overlooking **Lake Ilopango**. This hands-on training introduced different **specialty coffee brewing methods**, sparking deeper conversations about the farm's coffee production and new possibilities for connecting with other coffee professionals.
- The **public health student from Cal State LA** joined the health team for a **community wellness visit**, offering valuable support and insight for the community living at the farm. This collaboration enriched the health team's outreach and gave our group a firsthand look at FQA's holistic approach to community wellness.

These moments of exchange and learning not only built new skills but also deepened relationships—reminding us all that mutual growth is at the heart of service.

The morning we arrived, we hit the ground running, quite literally. Our first stop was the farm, where a farm-fresh breakfast and warm, genuine smiles greeted us.

After breakfast, we set off on what was humorously described as a "small" walk around the farm. Along our route, we met several **rescued animals**, including friendly dogs, a horse, and a mule, who now enjoy a safe home on the farm. We also saw cows, ducks, chickens, and a goat, all of which have been intentionally added to the community as part of FQA's vision for **sustainability** and **self-sufficiency**.

The farm team took immense pride in showing us their impressive projects, from cultivating a rich variety of crops to harnessing water from a natural spring and

even building with recycled materials. At every stop, we heard remarkable stories of **innovation, resilience, and healing**, inspiring reminders of the power of community and God's love.

Throughout our visit, I was continually moved by the **testimonies** shared by individuals at the farm and at the other sites we visited. While I know that my words can't fully capture the depth of the transformation many have experienced, I'd like to highlight one story that especially stood out to me.

Among the many powerful testimonies I heard during my trip, **Luis's story** left a profound impression on me. In his early twenties now, Luis's journey began in hardship. At just **nine years old**, he was abandoned by his parents and left to survive on the streets of El Salvador. He spoke candidly about the unimaginable abuse he endured and the desperate choices he made as a child simply to survive. As Luis put it, "In my neighborhood, it was easier to find drugs than food," and so began his struggle with substance abuse.

Luis was a tall child, and he recognized that his size offered some protection. Still, many nights he slept with a knife in his hand, adapting to the constant dangers around him. Over the years, he encountered various people and organizations that offered support, but his dependence on drugs deepened. His teenage years were marked by further struggles.

Everything began to change when Luis was introduced to the **Fundación Quintanilla Amaya (FQA)**. He remembers his first church service, admitting he wasn't particularly interested at the time. Later that week, **Reverend Joel** asked to meet with him. He welcomed Luis into his office and said, "Son, we will walk with you. Are you ready for a change?"

Luis was ready, though he admits he didn't fully understand what change would require. Reverend Joel and the FQA team explained that true transformation would

mean letting go of pride and anger, and allowing God and the community to walk alongside him on his journey of healing and recovery.

Through the support of the foundation, Luis has gained access to **rehabilitation accompaniment, psychological support, education, employment, and health care**. These resources have helped him rebuild his life and discover new possibilities for his future.

Today, Luis is a devoted father to two young boys. After years of sobriety, he is determined to give his children a different life, one filled with presence, love, and guidance toward **faith** and **service to others**.

One memory that particularly moved me was from the kids' camp hosted by the foundation in the past. Parents write letters to their children beforehand, and the children open them at the end of the week. Since Luis is still learning to write, he sent an audio message to his stepson, Mateo. In his message, Luis said:

“Thank you for allowing me to guide you. I want you to know that I love you. Although I may not be your biological father, you know how deeply I love you and that you are my son. I will always love and support you. I am proud of you and the person you are becoming. I admire your character and your effort working on the farm with me. You are my son, and I love you.”

With tears in his eyes and a smile on his face, Mateo listened to this message. It was a testament to the healing and restoration happening within families through FQA's work.

Luis's story is just one of many, each a living example of **resilience, hope, and the power of community**.

Luis's journey is just one among many. Throughout my time in El Salvador, I heard stories from people of all ages, each marked by a deep understanding of where they have been and the healing, transformative experiences they have found through **Christ's love** reflected in the work of the foundation. What inspires me most is that many who have benefited—and continue to benefit—from FQA's support are now joining the action themselves, reaching out to others with the same love and compassion they once received.

If you feel moved, I invite you to support the ongoing work of the **Fundación Quintanilla Amaya**. In partnership with **Kind One**, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (**Tax ID: 86-3257643**) that serves as our fiscal sponsor, we are able to raise the contributions necessary to make these programs possible.

Here are several ways you can support our work in El Salvador through Kind One:

- **Zelle:** KindOneNPO@gmail.com
- **Venmo:** @KindOneCA
- **Credit Card or PayPal:** Scan the QR code
- **Check:** Payable to Kind One (please write "FQA" in the memo)

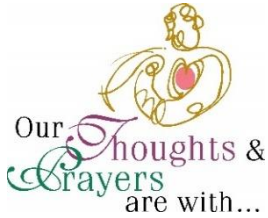


If you wish to learn more, connect with me directly. Together, we can continue to build a future of hope, healing, and sustainable transformation for communities in El Salvador.

*Rudy Amaya*

(Children/Youth Ministry Coordinator)





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 April 2026**

<b>2026 Annual Budget</b>	<b>\$288,409.00</b>
<b>Total Budget Income thru Apr.</b>	<b>\$23,600.88</b>
Giving 2026	\$17,874.56
Interest & Other Income	\$5,726.32
<b>Total Budget Expense thru Apr.</b>	<b>-\$80,739.22</b>
<b>Budget Balance thru Apr.</b>	<b>(\$57,138.34)</b>
<b>April Special Non-Budget Offerings</b>	
Inland Valley Hope Partners - BBETA	\$30.00
Women's Fellowship – FINCA	\$10.00
Phyllis Eller Memorial	\$485.20
Capital Fund	\$500.00
ICE Out of Pomona	\$940.00

**Upcoming Meetings**

**Church Board:**  
Thursday, June 18, 6:30 pm

**Executive Committee:**  
As Needed

**Music & Worship:**  
Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 pm

**Service & Outreach:**  
Tuesday, June 9, 9:30 am

**Stewards:**  
Tuesday, June 9, 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**

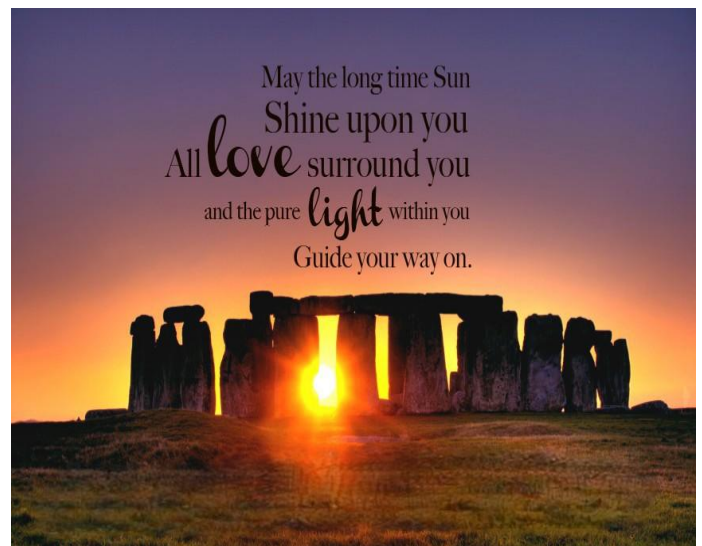
Every Wednesday at 8:00 am. in the Hillcrest Dining Room. Contact Mary Hines, 909-418-4654 for details.

**Healed and Whole**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

Harvey Good on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Sander Eller on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Rick Landrum on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Julie Wheeler on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

George Spicer on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Anniversaries**

Freddie & Galisa Brim on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Harvey & Connie Good on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Rob & Laurie McKellip on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Rick & Sandy Landrum on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

## **Giving Emphasis for June**

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphases for June are **cereal and canned or powdered milk**. Cereal is a wonderful snack or meal any time of day. Milk is a great way to add creaminess to a pasta dish, soup or sauce. 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.



The giving emphasis for June is **Bethany Theological Seminary**

**Banner articles are due by June 20<sup>th</sup>**

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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

## BDM rebuilding focuses on Hurricane Helene

**T**he 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

**S**tanding 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.

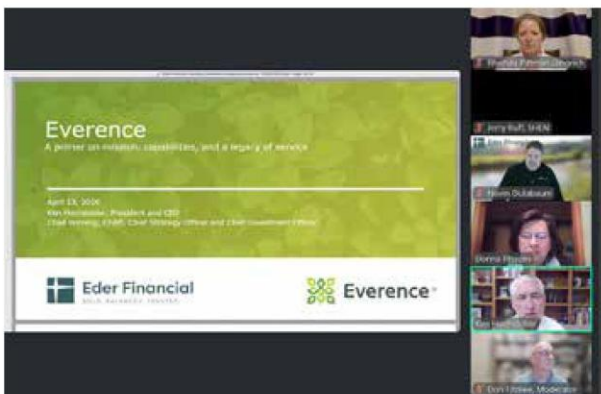
The decision endorses Everence as the Church of the Brethren's preferred provider for services being transferred by Eder to Everence, primarily employee retirement and organiza-

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*

	<b>1</b> Terry Benson Starts as Worship Music Leader	<b>2</b> Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	<b>3</b> Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Public Witness 4:30pm	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> Dennis Wallstrom Preaching	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Service & Outreach 9:30am  Stewards 3:00pm  Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	<b>10</b> Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am  Healed & Whole 7:00pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Public Witness 4:30pm	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> Familiar Stranger	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Music & Worship 6:30pm  Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	<b>17</b> Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	<b>18</b> Church Board 6:30pm	<b>19</b> Public Witness 4:30pm	<b>20</b> Church Workday 9:00am
<b>21</b> Father's Day	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	<b>24</b> Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am  Healed & Whole 7:00pm	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Public Witness 4:30pm	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> Paul Lovelace Preaching	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm				