



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!

April 2026

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 53 No. 04

From Pastor Julie

When Pomona Fellowship started hosting the ICE OUT Coalition in December of 2024, I had no idea how far-reaching this work would be. I've met and become friends throughout the community who are working towards equity and fairness in our city. I've met Christians, atheists, activists, wildcards, documented, undocumented, police officers, city employees and electeds. It has been my honor to open up space for a group of people who are doing the thing the Bible tells us to do – care for the vulnerable. Pomona Valley Spiritual Leaders for Justice has formed to do the work of the church. They are a boon to me. I've been asked to train rapid responders in our own city and for our denominational meetings. I've marched with people I would never have met. I've joined in marriage people I would have never met.

My life has changed because of this ugliness in our nation. "But where sin spread, God's loving-favor spread all the more." Rom. 5:20

I have been interviewed by On Earth Peace and then recently, by the Claremont Courier, which I'd like to share with you. Please forgive the leftist leaning of this publication. That is beyond my reach. I wanted you to be aware of how Pomona Fellowship is being seen by the surrounding community.

by Mick Rhodes | editor@claremont-courier.com

Last August, I wrote it was only a matter of time until President Trump's poorly trained, lawless Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection goons would shoot and kill someone. Back then they were just beginning their clumsy siege, swaggering through Democratic cities throwing people around and detaining and deporting children and legal U.S. citizens without a hint of due process.

Well, here we are six months later, and it's much worse than any of us could have imagined.

The masked and anonymous cosplaying tough guys (and gals) killed two protesters in Minneapolis this month. Renee Good's last words were, "That's fine, dude. I'm not mad at you." Seconds later, Good was shot four times by ICE agent Jonathan Ross. As Good lay mortally wounded, her brains splattered all over the inside of her Honda SUV, Ross strolled away and said, "Fu\$#in' bitch."

Alex Pretti's last words were "Are you OK?," uttered to a woman he was protecting from a gang of advancing ICE agents who had just pepper-sprayed them. A second later the gang shoved him to the ground and shot him 10 times in the back. The primary shooter then said "Boo-hoo," as he walked away. Seconds later, ICE agents approached Pretti's body, turned it over, and cut through his clothing with scissors. But they weren't administering CPR: they were counting the bullet holes, according to eyewitnesses.

Pretti's as of yet unidentified killer or killers have since been transferred to another city, ironically, "for their safety," where they are free to continue terrorizing at will, with no accountability.

This is America.

Though these horrific killings — some have called them executions — took place in Minneapolis, we are all in mourning for our country, for what this lurch toward fascism means for our children and grandchildren. The anxiety, fear, and terror are being felt across state, political, racial, religious, and ideological lines, including here in Claremont. And this is exactly what Trump and his allies want; they want us afraid and cowed into compliance. But as the brave people of Minneapolis have shown us by showing up to protest and bear witness in frigid, sub-zero temperatures for weeks, that is simply not going to happen.

Julie Wheeler, pastor at Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren in part of the community group ICE Out of Pomona, which has been assisting people affected by President Trump's immigration crackdown for more than a year.

Many people turn to their faith in times like these. Here in Claremont and the surrounding communities, religious leaders are feeling their congregations' pain, and some are mobilizing to be of service to our immigrant neighbors.

Julie Wheeler is the pastor at Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren. In December 2024 she began hosting the community group ICE Out of Pomona, a coalition made up of representatives from the Pomona Day Labor Center, Latino & Latina Roundtable, Gente Organizada or "organized people," and from Cal Poly Pomona, University of La Verne, Western University, Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, Pomona Unified School District's teacher's union, and others.

The coalition has since been raising awareness and advocating in and around Pomona. The group prints informational flyers and other materials, and trains and organizes people for ICE patrols and rapid response. Communicating via encrypted Signal chats, when an incident is reported rapid responders observe, record, get detainees' names, advise them of their legal rights, and educate their families.

“Many of them are resident aliens. Many have citizenship,” Wheeler said. “They have some sort of paperwork. And it does not seem to matter.”

The coalition isn’t just raising awareness. It’s also raised a considerable amount of money. The City of Pomona made a \$100,000 “compassion fund” donation. The Hilton Corporation has donated another \$100,000, and private donors have kicked in about \$50,000. Along with funding ICE Out of Pomona’s advocacy, the group has recently begun dispersing \$500 checks to families affected by ICE raids.

“Five hundred dollars will not take you far,” Wheeler said. “It won’t get you rent. It won’t buy a lawyer. But it is something.”

Wheeler urges people to write and call their Congressional representatives and make their displeasure heard in other ways. “There’s a bill being passed as to how much money do we throw at this organization we call ICE,” she said. “Put a sign up. Talk to people.”

Perhaps the most alarming component of Trump’s cruel and deadly immigration crackdown is that millions of Americans — including the vast majority of Republican members of Congress — still support it. Wheeler is among those who are having a difficult time accepting this.

“As a pastor, I am very, very, very clear: Old Testament and New tell us to watch out, be careful for the foreigner, the oppressed, the widow, those that are in jail,” she said. “These are the people that actually are blessed. These are the people that are on the please-care-about list.”

Jacob Buchholz, who along with his wife Jen Strickland is co-pastor at Claremont United Church of Christ, said several of their congregants work with nearby community organizations helping people directly impacted by ICE raids.

“Every day they are working with families who are scared to leave their homes, families who are being ripped apart, who’ve been picked up at jobsites,” Buchholz said. “While there’s not sort of the intense foot soldier presence [in Claremont] like there is in Minneapolis, ICE is still around picking

folks up, ripping families apart, and congregants are seeing that and doing their best to do something about it.”

Buchholz urged people to stand up and speak up.

Jacob Buchholz, who along with his wife Jen Strickland is co-pastor at Claremont United Church of Christ. Several of their congregants work with nearby community organizations helping people directly impacted by ICE raids.

“We’re only going to get through this with community,” he said. “Standing with each other, being someone willing to speak out, whether that is with your family and friends or through social media, the people you talk to in line at the grocery store ... being able to just be in solidarity by saying ‘This isn’t right. It doesn’t have to be like this. We can do better.’ That’s a way that anyone can do something. And it’s through that kind of collective community that we do see change. We’re already seeing the Democratic Party roll back in terms of them funding [the Department of] Homeland Security, making announcements that they’re not going to fund the bill ... So, we’re already seeing the immediate impact of these protests.”

Wheeler, like Buchholz and Strickland, has a unique perspective as the leader of a like-minded progressive religious congregation. Under the greater umbrella of Christianity however, the connection is frayed.

“What I’m very concerned about is we have Christians” who support ICE, she said. Wheeler recalled a recent public vigil for Renee Good during which a man drove up and shouted, “I think ICE is doing the work of God.”

“I didn’t even know what to say,” Wheeler said. “I’m not going to flip him off. We were very kind and just said, ‘Bless you, sir. Hope you find salvation.’ I just don’t know what to say to that.”

Asked how people can help, Wheeler had simple advice.

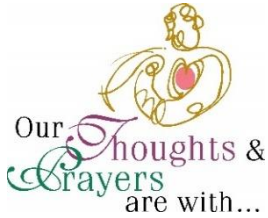
“I think the thing I’d say is don’t look away,” she said. “When you’re white, it’s just easy to look away; it’s too hard, too taxing. We’re too anxious. Whatever. Don’t look away. Trump will come and go,

but as Jesus says, the poor will be with us forever. And so, how do we make sure we're doing something about that consistently?"

ICE out of Pomona is organizing a rally and march on President's Day, Monday, February 16, likely at the corner of Mission and Garey avenues, where it will hand out 5,000 whistles people can use to alert folks to ICE activity. For more info and to confirm the location, go to [instagram.com/iceoutofpomona](https://www.instagram.com/iceoutofpomona).

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 February 2026**

2026 Annual Budget	\$288,409.00
Total Budget Income thru Feb.	\$15,549.88
Giving 2026	\$9,823.56
Interest & Other Income	\$5,726.32
Total Budget Expense thru Feb.	-\$37,173.35
Budget Balance thru Feb.	(\$21,623.47)

Upcoming Meetings

Church Board:
Thursday, April 16, 6:30 pm

Executive Committee:
As Needed

Music & Worship:
Tuesday, April 14, 6:30 pm

Service & Outreach:
Tuesday, April 7, 10:30 am

Stewards:
Tuesday, April 7, 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

Ethan Decker on the 10th.

Janet Short on the 11th.

Jonathan Lovelace on the 30th.

Anniversaries

James & Karin Herndon on the 16th.

Jonathan & Ceres Lovelace on the 17th.

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 April

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphases for April are **Canned Fruit & All Kinds of Potatoes (Except Fresh)**. Freezing canned fruit in water or juice makes a great treat for a hot day. Potatoes in any form are fantastic. They are a great base for all kinds of additions like spinach, cheese, bacon, chicken, onion, etc. 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 April is Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministries

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

May 2nd, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

June 6th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

July 4th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

***Banner* articles are due by May 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.
Janet Short	Moderator
Laura Lovelace	Admin. Assistant

IAF statement calls on ‘Spirit of Power and Love’

The Inter-Agency Forum meeting in Florida on Jan. 27 issued the statement “A Spirit of Power and Love” on immigration enforcement and political violence and their effects on church members. The IAF includes the Annual Conference officers and other denominational leaders.

The statement cited scripture and Brethren heritage to address concern about “the terror and disorientation that many of our churches and communities are experiencing” and “the health of our common life together.”

“At this writing, 21 members of the Church of the Brethren have been detained or deported,” it said, in part. “People in the United States are losing their lives in detention and in public, at the hands of the authorities. We write now to members of the Church to remind all of us: In the face of brutal immigration enforcement, misinformation, and political violence, ‘God did not give us a spirit of timidity but one of power, love, and self-discipline’ (2 Timothy 1:7, ISV)... When the military is asked to serve as a police force, when trusted institutions become politicized, when the integrity of elec-

tions is questioned or attacked, and when misinformation flows from official voices, we sense patterns that trouble the spirit and strain the fabric of our lives together as a country.”

Find the full text at www.brethren.org/news/2026/spirit-of-power-and-love-statement.



Founa Badet (at microphone), director of Intercultural Ministries was among leaders of a press conference and prayer service calling for the extension of TPS for Haitians.

District executives make intercultural connections

The Council of District Executives held winter meetings on Jan. 28-Feb. 1 in Miami, Fla., combining business sessions with intercultural continuing education that connected with local congregations.

CODE and several agency representatives spent time at Miami Haitian Church of the Brethren and other area congregations (Miami First, Tabernacle of the Restoration, and Unify Christian). The time included a conversation with

Intercultural Ministries director Founa Badet and Deportation Defense Response staff Vildor Archange, Bible studies on Acts 2 shared through the lenses of different cultures and languages, and attendance at the Atlantic Southeast Multicultural Festival.

In their business sessions, CODE received various reports from Annual Conference and its agencies, the Deportation Defense Response Team, and the Annual Conference Review

and Evaluation Committee, among others. The group held conversations with the Ministry Advisory Council on possible updates to the 2014 Ministerial Leadership paper and with the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee on potential revisions to denominational sabbath renewal guidelines. Bethany Seminary president Jeff Carter led a combined session with the Inter-Agency Forum on “Creating a Culture of Calling.” Another combined session with IAF explored the “New Table” process being developed by CODE and the Annual Conference agencies.

Prayers were raised for the impending end of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian immigrants, a move that was later stayed by a federal judge.



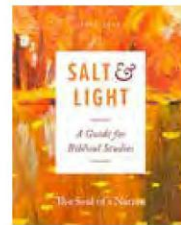
While in Florida, district executives and other denominational leaders joined in Atlantic Southeast District’s first Multicultural Festival.

Church joins amici curiae brief in Supreme Court

On Feb. 17, the Church of the Brethren joined 30 other faith organizations in an amici curiae brief in the Supreme Court in support of the plaintiffs in *Noem v. Al Otro Lado*, No. 25-5. The case challenges the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authority to prevent individuals from filing for asylum at ports of entry into the US.

Plaintiffs challenged a DHS interpretation of 8 U.S.C 1158(a)(1) that states that “[a]ny alien who is physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States... may apply for asylum.” DHS has interpreted the language “arrives in the United States” to mean that the individual must step across the border. Under that interpretation, an individual stopped right at the border is not eligible to apply for asylum.

Brethren Press, MennoMedia curriculum partnership



Salt & Light: A Guide for Biblical Studies is a new quarterly Bible study curriculum for adults produced jointly by Brethren Press and MennoMedia. It blends *A Guide for Biblical Studies* published by Brethren Press and *Salt & Light* published by MennoMedia.

Building on decades of partnership between the two publishing houses, the curriculum will be written by Church of the Brethren and Mennonite biblical scholars, pastors, and educators. A Spanish-language edition will be available in digital form. To be released quarterly beginning this fall, the curriculum will be available at www.brethrenpress.com.

Discussions begin between Eder Financial and Everence®

Eder Financial has entered into discussions with Everence® (formerly known as Mennonite Mutual Aid) to explore how the two agencies can build on a shared commitment to better serve individuals, organizations, and congregations. “Eder and Everence have come to these discussions grounded in a shared foundation of faith, values, mission, and heritage,” Eder announced.

Personnel

Wendy McFadden has announced her retirement as publisher of Brethren Press and executive director of Communications for the Church of the Brethren, after almost 45 years of work for the denomination. She started in October 1981 as managing editor of *MESSENGER* and director of News Services. Her many accomplishments have included guiding Brethren Press through the struggles that have faced all small faith-based publishers; supporting *MESSENGER* and its several editors, culminating in 2016 in her creation of an editorial team on which she is an active member; creating the Church of the Brethren annual report in its various forms including written, pictorial, video, and display; serving on committees that developed the Church of the Brethren logo and denominational tag-lines; representing the Church of the Brethren at national and international ecumenical bodies and events, most recently Christian Churches Together; leading collaborations with the Mennonite publishing house including the major children’s Sunday

school curricula Jubilee, Gather ‘Round, and Shine. She led Brethren Press’s publication of the 300th anniversary devotional *Fresh from the Word* as well as new iterations of the *Inglenook Cookbook*. She will retire on July 31.

Nancy Sollenberger Heishman retires July 17 as director of the Ministry Office, a position she has held since Nov. 6, 2017. During her tenure, she facilitated search processes for district executives for most of the 23 districts; worked with the Council of District Executives in reviewing policy and polity; worked with the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee on pastoral compensation practices; oversaw the ethics training for credentialed ministers that takes place every five years; sponsored and helped plan the Clergywomen’s Retreats; and more. The Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church program supporting multi-vocational pastors was made possible by her work to acquire and oversee grants from Lilly Foundation Inc. She is a previous coordinator of the Spanish-

Language Ministry Training Programs of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and a past mission co-coordinator in the Dominican Republic. In 2014, she was moderator of Annual Conference.

Gene Hollenberg retires at the end of 2026 as executive director of Camp Mack in Milford, Ind. He has served in the position for almost 10 years, since September 2016. His tenure included accomplishments such as facility improvements, new programs and staff, successful completion of a capital campaign, and successful pursuit of multiple grants.

Kelly Rumpf has been hired as director of camps and the Global Village at Shepherd’s Spring in Mid-Atlantic District. She and her husband, Danny, are ministry fellows at Grossnickle Church of the Brethren.

Preston Killough started Feb. 4 as an intern in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. He also is an intern at the Lombard (Ill.) Historical Society.



Post this page

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SUN MON TUES WED THUR FRI SAT

			1 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	2	3 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	4 Anna's Closet 9:00am
5 Easter: The Good News is... Alive in the World	6	7 Service & Outreach 10:30am Stewards 3:00pm Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	8 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	9	10 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	11
12 The Questions of Jesus, Mark 8:27-29	13	14 Music & Worship 6:30pm Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	15 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	16 Church Board 6:30pm	17 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	18 Church Workday 9:00am
19 Jerry Davis Preaching	20	21 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	22 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Healed & Whole 7:00pm	23	24 Prayer Vigil 4:30pm	25
26 Tom Hostetler Preaching: Creation Care	27	28 Google Meets Bible Study 7:30pm	29 Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am	30		