

The 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 2021

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 47, No. 3

From our Pastor...

This is both an exciting and anxious time for our congregation. After a process that has taken almost 3 years, the sale of our property at 875 Orange Grove Avenue is drawing to a close. As many of you know, we have been working closely with Crestwood Communities, a local developer who has plans to build 32 single family homes on the 3 acres. On February 10, the Pomona City Planning Commission voted 6-1 to approve Crestwood's plan for the property, and with that stamp of approval, Crestwood has set a date for close of escrow: April 22. After that time, our congregation will have 30 days to finish vacating the property.

We have several teams working right now on various aspects of this transition, including coordinating packing and storage, exploring property to lease or buy, and securing temporary office space until we find our new home. In addition, we have one team working on how we will honor and say goodbye to our building and our time on Orange Grove, and another team working to educate and inform the congregation on the neighborhood we hope to move into and the nonprofits we feel called to partner with once we are there. Read more about these teams later in this newsletter.

Times of transition and change can often bring out our worst patterns of worry, stress, and anxiety. It is only natural to experience these things. So let us remember the story of the Israelites after the death of Moses (certainly a major time of transition and change!). God spoke to Joshua, who would take up the mantle of leadership, with words of assurance to the people: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you... Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:5,9). After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Joshua would go on to lead the people to their promised home. (40 years makes our few years of transition look like a piece of cake!)

In Jesus Christ, we serve a God who understands what it's like to be human, and that includes feeling overwhelmed or stressed. There will be times during this transition period when it feels like we are moving too fast. There will be times when it feels like we are moving too slow. There will be times when you feel frustrated or upset. Don't hesitate to bring these worries to God in prayer during these coming weeks and months. Ask God for insight, patience, and above all, the peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

With you on the journey,
Pastor Lauren



...for those limited or confined for health reasons: **Cathy Banks, Faith Eikenberry, Marcheta Pletcher.**

We also uphold these members, friends and family members of our congregation who have prayer

concerns:

- Judy Brooks**
- Bill Lemon**
- Rochelle Lovelace**

District Prayer Calendar – March

- Mar. 7 Reedley Cornerstone Church of the Brethren
- Mar. 14 Remember those in PSWD who are ministry students - in Seminary, TRiM, SeBAH, and EPMC
- Mar. 21 Empire Church of the Brethren
- Mar. 28 For Love Feast gatherings that renew in us Christ’s love and humility

March Zoom Meetings

- Deacons: Sunday, March 7, after worship
- Service & Outreach: Wednesday, March 10, 10:00 a.m.
- Stewards: Wednesday, March 10, 6:30 p.m.
- Music & Worship: Thursday, March 11, 11:00 a.m.
- Executive Committee: Thursday, March 11, 6:30 p.m.
- Church Board, Thursday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

Other dates:

- Spring ahead and change your clocks on Saturday, March 13
- Banner* articles are due on March 20



Birthdays & Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

- 6) Paul Lovelace
- 11) Diane Deal
- 20) Sandi Brooks
- 23) Mary Hines
- 28) Laura Lovelace
- 31) Don Overholser

ANNIVERSARIES

- 20) Richard & Linda Hart 1959

Pomona Fellowship Property Sale

We are nearing the time for the close of escrow concerning the sale of the property of Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren. At a meeting with the purchaser, Crestwood Communities, some of the timeline was agreed to between Pomona Fellowship and Crestwood.

The close of escrow will be April 22, 2021. Pomona Fellowship agreed to be out of the property no later than May 22, 2021. We can take with us whatever items we want, provided that doing so will not endanger the structural integrity of the buildings. Lists have been created of desired items, groups or persons assigned to pack those items, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays designated as our packing days so as to not conflict with the other groups using the church facility. We have not yet found a permanent future home, so we will probably be making temporary arrangements. We are continuing to pray for God’s guidance as we set out on this new ministry path for the church.

~~Jerry Davis
Sale Liaison

Transition Teams

You might be thinking, “Wow! Pomona Fellowship is sure busy these days.” And you’d be right! In addition to the regular work of our church commissions, including the Stewards Commission who is coordinating the property sale and our storage/packing process, we have formed additional teams to guide us through various aspects of our transition time. Here is a little more about who has been called to serve on each team and what their tasks are:

Logistics team: Chaired by Paul Lovelace, members include Linda Hart, Janet Short, George Spicer, Jason Cohen, and Pastor Lauren

This team has been tasked with exploring our future building needs, both in the short-term and long-term. This has included building a list of what our congregation will need in a future space, as well as having conversations with our two partners (Community Partners 4 Innovation and Inland Valley Hope Partners) about what they envision needing in a future space with us. This team is pursuing real estate agents who can help us look for available properties to lease or buy, as well as potential temporary space for the church office and worship until we have a permanent place to which to move.

Education team: Chaired by Peggy Redman, members include John Stewart, Graham Lovelace, Richard Hart, Shirley Ness, Linda Lovelace, and Pastor Lauren

This team has been tasked with educating our congregation on both the area we hope to move into, and the two community nonprofits we desire to partner with (Community Partners 4 Innovation [see more information on Community Partners on page 6] and Inland Valley Hope Partners). This team organized a prayerful neighborhood mapping exercise, where members of our church spent time walking or driving through the area in which we’d like to live and serve, filling out a worksheet describing what they saw. The team prayed through data collected through this exercise. This team is also working on how our church can continue to learn more about our partners through guest speakers and other actions.

Spiritual transitions team: Chaired by Laura Lovelace, members include Yvonne Belcher, Bill Lemon, Diane Deal, and Pastor Lauren

This team has been tasked with helping our church family honor and say goodbye to our space on Orange Grove Avenue, through tangible memories, virtual programs, and in-person opportunities. The team is working on a way to celebrate our organ one last time, as well as acknowledge and give thanks for our relationships with Iglesia de Cristo Sion and Eden Mission Church, with whom we have shared our building for years.

If you are not serving on a team, you still have an important task: prayer! Please be praying for the work of each of these teams during this transition time, that they might be guided by the Holy Spirit.

If you have any questions about our transition and/or the work of these teams, please contact Pastor Lauren or the team chairs.

Hurrah for HI

As natural disasters and civil unrest, along with global population increase, so does the need for short term and long term assistance. If your mailbox is anything like mine there are so many requests that it is impossible to answer them all. Choices must be made.

Heifer International (HI) is one choice that Pomona Fellowship has embraced. Dan West, an Indiana farmer who was doing relief work in Spain in the 1930s, was deeply troubled by the lack of milk for babies and young children. He brought his concern to a district men's meeting, and Heifer International was born. The early emphasis was to provide a local source of protein (like milk) that could be depended upon rather than the dry milk that was not always available.

Over the years the variety of animals has increased, from rabbits and chickens to water buffalo and camels, depending on the country, conditions and need. Most animals are multi-purpose. Consider sheep. They provide milk, wool for clothing, fertilizer for the garden, offspring for another family, and finally meat for food and hide for clothing.

So successful has this program been that many other denominations not only support it but think they started it, or have one similar to HI. It really doesn't matter as long as the help and training are given to those who need it. Pomona Fellowship includes HI in the Service and Outreach budget, makes their Christmas catalogues available, and often does something special, like the basket of chicks and rabbits several years ago. Since we have not been meeting at church this was not possible, but if you wish to give, you can do it with your regular offering; just be sure to mark it for HI. One person, one family, one community at a time is helped.

Thank you.

~~~Phyllis Eller  
Service & Outreach Commission



## PSWD Zoom Compelling Vision Bible Study

Join sisters and brothers from across the PSWD on Zoom for weekly Bible study related to the proposed Compelling Vision for the Church of the Brethren. The

sessions will take place on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. PST beginning on March 3. The study will be led by District Executive Minister Russ Matteson and will use the 13 sessions that have been prepared by the Compelling Vision Working Group. Sessions will last no more than 75 minutes.

To register and receive the Zoom link, click here: <https://bit.ly/37qNzXx>

You do not need to attend every session, but we certainly encourage you to participate as often as possible. The study guide can be found at this link and you are encouraged to download the study prior to each session:

<https://www.brethren.org/ac/compelling-vision/bible-studies/>

## District Moderator Invites History Conversations

Al Clark, 2020-2021 District Moderator, is neither a pastor nor a preacher, but he is a historian trained in European and American history. He has conducted hundreds of



oral history interviews on California and university history, and he has inaugurated the PSWD Oral History Project as his way of visiting churches virtually during this pandemic year. He hopes to collect memories not only of past and present leaders, but also of members across the district. All of the interviews that he conducts will be placed in the PSWD history archives for future historical use. Basically, he wants to record what you would like to have remembered about the district and your church. Interviews will be conducted by Zoom, and most will last less than an hour. Al will be reaching out to schedule interviews, but he also hopes that you will contact him at [aclark@laverne.edu](mailto:aclark@laverne.edu). Let us build the PSWD historical archives together!



## 2021 Annual Conference Will Be Virtual

The Annual Conference Office has announced that the 2021 Conference will take place June 29 - July 4, but rather than gathering in Greensboro, NC, the event will be online. Registration for the conference will begin on March 2 and the cost for delegates will be \$305. Non-delegates can register for the conference at a cost of \$99. This year's reduced price of \$99 for non-delegates provides access to the business sessions, insight sessions, networking groups, concerts, Bible studies and more.

All five worship services will be available free of charge to all registered and non-registered persons.

Please check out [www.brethren.org/ac2021](http://www.brethren.org/ac2021) for more information about Annual Conference, including leadership, themes, schedule, concerts and much more. New information is added regularly so check back often.

### PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION Through January 2021

|                                             |                     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>2021 Annual Budget</b>                   | <b>\$220,891.00</b> |
| Giving '21                                  | \$6,545.00          |
| Interest & Other Income '21                 | \$5,921.21          |
| <b>Total Budget Income thru January</b>     | <b>\$12,466.21</b>  |
| Total Budget Expense thru Jan.              | \$(14,639.21)       |
| Plus Budget overage from 2020               | \$4,224.32          |
| <b>Budget Balance thru Jan.</b>             | <b>\$2,051.32</b>   |
| <b>January Special Non-Budget Offerings</b> |                     |
| Capital Fund                                | \$120.00            |
| Women's Fellowship                          | \$125.00            |
| Inland Valley Hope Partners Beta            | \$355.00            |
| Berkley Davis Memorial                      | \$210.00            |

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#### Services & Activities

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday Worship over ZOOM     | Sunday, 10:00 a.m. |
| Bible Study over Google Meet | Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. |

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. Lauren Seganos Cohen | Pastor           |
| Janet Short               | Moderator        |
| Acia Jernigan             | Admin. Assistant |

The *Banner* is published once a month. Articles and announcements to appear in the next issue of the *Banner* are due in the church office by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## Meet the newly renamed Community Partners 4 Innovation!



The Pomona nonprofit rebrands following a renewed commitment to its founding principles.

POMONA -- February 22, 2021 -- Pomona-based social justice organization UrbanMission Community Partners announces a new name, a new look and a deepened commitment to the organization's formative principles: transform, restore, empower and be well. Now bearing the name Community Partners 4 Innovation (CP4I), the radically inclusive nonprofit works side-by-side with neighbors and city organizations to capitalize on the strengths of the community.

"The challenges brought by 2020 encouraged us to fine-tune our purpose and place. In a neighborhood hard-hit by the pandemic, we were called to hone our most important work which is urban farming, community wellness, and restorative justice," said co-founder Reverend/Farmer Stephen Yorba.

Along with the name change, CP4I introduces a meaningful new logo designed by friend and artist Michele Molina. The butterfly image represents both the organization's transformation and the transformation that occurs when we work collaboratively and interdependently to effect positive change.

"Partnerships and interdependence are at the heart of Community Partners 4 Innovation," said Reverend Nora Jacob, Restorative Justice Director and Acting Executive Director. "We believe that effective partnerships are at the heart of what creates well-being, justice, restoration, and resilience -- in the community, as well as in individuals."

The nonprofit is dedicated to creating and supporting thriving communities by transforming hope and belief into action. This is demonstrated through CP4I's ongoing Community Wellness program which includes fostering greater access to clean food and providing nutrition and environmental education to all. Through these efforts, CP4I is proud to have donated more than 60,000 pounds of organic produce to the most vulnerable districts in Pomona.

CP4I has also had an impact in Restorative Justice (RJ) and Restorative Practices (RP) collaborations underway in Pomona and beyond. Since 2014, its staff has facilitated intensive small groups for those in prison-based RJ circles at California Institution for Men in Chino, and has provided leadership in community-based reentry navigation with more than 2,500 returning citizens after their release from incarceration. In addition, CP4I is active in newly developing Restorative Practices circles in Pomona, teaming with others to encourage restoration and re-building of community through this alternative to the criminal justice system.

These projects exemplify CP4I's movement for greater wholeness in a fragmented world. CP4I will continue its work building partnerships, connecting resources and transforming ideas into practical reality. About Community Partners 4 Innovation: Community Partners 4 Innovation (CP4I) was formed by community members brought together in 2014 by the desire to develop partnerships throughout our neighborhood and areas of connection that would promote greater wholeness, sustainability, and empowerment.

For further information please visit:

[www.cp4i.org](http://www.cp4i.org)

## Youth cabinet is named

The **National Youth Cabinet** has been named for the years 2021-2022:

- Haley Daubert, Montezuma Church of the Brethren, Dayton, Va.
- Elise Gage, Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren
- Giovanni Romero, York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill.
- Luke Schweitzer, Cedar Grove Church of the Brethren, New Paris, Ohio
- Benjamin Tatum, Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va.
- Isabella Torres, Iglesia Un Nuevo Renacer Fellowship, Mountville, Pa.



courtesy of Aant Saibed

## EYN churches attacked at Christmas

In a **Christmas Eve attack by Boko Haram** on the town of Garkida in northeast Nigeria, four churches were set ablaze, five people were killed and many injured, five people were reported missing, and the Garkida General Hospital was looted, among other destruction.

Located in the Gombi area of Adamawa State, Garkida is the site of the first mission work in Nigeria by the Church of the Brethren and is the founding community of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).

Another Christmas Eve attack targeted Pemi, a village in the Chibok area of Borno State, where seven people were killed, an EYN church and houses were burned, and EYN evangelist Bulus Yakura was abducted.

At least three more communities along the Biu Road were attacked Dec. 26, with three churches and many houses destroyed.

## Annual Conference pivots to online

The **Program and Arrangements Committee** has announced that the 2021 Annual Conference will be an online event, responding to pandemic conditions.

“While we know that meeting in person eventually will be safe again,” said the announcement, “we sadly do not believe that it will happen in time to safely have an in-person event at the end of June 2021. We are nevertheless excited about the new opportunities an online gathering offers. . . . We are throwing wide the doors to thousands of Brethren who never before have been able to participate fully in Annual Conference.”

Worship services will be open to all, free of charge.

A one-time price of \$99 is offered for nondelegates to register for business sessions, insight and equipping sessions, networking events, a virtual concert, and resource sessions and Bible studies led by featured speakers Tod Bolsinger and Michael Gorman.

Delegate fees remain at \$305 and include access to the whole Conference, the right to vote, and participation in “table talk” about the proposed compelling vision.

## General secretary issues statement on Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol

**A statement from David Steele, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren,** issued following the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol and Congress:

“Wednesday was Epiphany, the day marking the arrival of the Magi, seekers of the young Prince of Peace. Yet the violent actions in our nation’s capital revealed the violence of Herod rather than the peace of God.

“While the Church of the Brethren has always had an ambivalent relationship to institutions of power and government, we have consistently sought *‘the things that make for peace’* (Luke

19:42). Brethren address the government on matters of justice in our commitment to care for all people, and we participate in nonviolent protest when necessary. But the recent actions were not nonviolent protest. They laid bare racism and hatred, and breached the country’s democratic processes.

“May we together confess our brokenness, that the deep divisions within our country are also present in our church; and commit to pray for the healing of our country and our church as we all together pray and work for the peace of Christ—the shalom of God.”



Cheryl Bunnhaugh-Coffey

*Present for the 2020 presentation of the benefit check were (from left) LeAnn Harnist, MAA board; MAA general manager Kimberly Rutter; Church of the Brethren general secretary David Steele and treasurer Ed Woolf; Karl Williams from Brotherhood Mutual.*

## Insurance benefit supports Ministerial Assistance Fund, compelling vision

The Church of the Brethren Leadership Team has distributed a Ministry Partner Program payment of \$50,000 from the Mutual Aid Agency (MAA) and Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company: \$25,000 went to the Ministerial Assistance Fund; \$24,000 went to the compelling vision effort for technological support for Annual Conference and translation of documents into Spanish and Kreyol; \$1,000 went to the Finance Office for related expenses.

## Disaster rebuilding reduced to one site at a time

Brethren Disaster Ministries projects are reduced to one rebuilding site at a time through 2021, because of pandemic surges. The Hurricane Florence recovery site in Bayboro, N.C., will close at the end of March. The tornado recovery site in Dayton, Ohio, will reopen after Easter.

## Personnel notes

**Erika Clary** has been named coordinator of National Youth Conference 2022, to serve through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS). From Brownsville Church of the Brethren in Knoxville, Md., she recently completed degrees at Bridgewater (Va.) College. She served on the National Youth Cabinet in 2018.

**Victoria Ehret** began Jan. 25 as interim district executive for Atlantic Southeast District. She has been serving the district as director of ministry in a quarter-time position.

**Sonja Sherfy Griffith** has resigned as district executive of Western Plains District, as of March 31. She started in the half-time position on Jan. 1, 2010, also continuing to pastor First Central Church of the Brethren in Kansas City, Kan. Her leadership in the denomination has included participation in the Cross-Cultural Ministries Team. In 2011, she received the Revelation 7:9 Diversity Award recognizing her as one of those who helped found the Intercultural Consultation.

**William (Bill) Kostlevy** will retire as director of the Brethren Historical Library

and Archives on April 17. He has been the Church of the Brethren archivist for almost eight years, since March 1, 2013. During his tenure, BHLA has responded to more than 3,000 requests for information and hosted more than 500 researchers and more than 1,000 visitors to the archive. His service to the denomination included leadership of the Church of the Brethren Historical Committee.

**Pauline Liu** has been named to a position coordinating volunteers for BVS, a job she held as an interim starting July 20, 2020. Previously, she worked as BVS orientation assistant for three months beginning May 18, 2020, and from 2018 to 2019 was a BVS volunteer at a LArche community in Ireland.

**Meghan Horne Mauldin** has been named to fill the unexpired term of Carol Yeazell on the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board. Yeazell resigned from the board for personal reasons. Mauldin is a member of Mill Creek Church of the Brethren in Tryon, N.C. From 2008 to 2009, she was a BVSer and assistant coordinator for the former Workcamp Ministry.

**Angelo Olayvar** joined the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C., in January as an intern. He is a junior at Eastern Mennonite University hoping to pursue a career in human rights law.

**Shawn Flory Reppogle** has been named executive director of Organizational Resources in the Finance Office of the Church of the Brethren, a job he held as an interim starting April 13, 2020. He holds degrees from Bridgewater (Va.) College, Bethany Seminary, and Friends University. An ordained minister, he was moderator of Annual Conference in 2010.

**Hannah Shultz** resigned as coordinator of short-term service with BVS on Jan. 27 to accept a position with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light. During her year-and-a-half with BVS, since Aug. 5, 2019, she shifted the former Workcamp Ministry online in response to the pandemic, helped recreate it as Faith Outreach Expeditions (FaithX), supervised BVSErs who serve as assistant coordinators, and worked to design in-person, hybrid, and online options for short-term service events.