



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 2019

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 43, No. 3

From our Pastor...

Cultivate (verb): to prepare and use for the raising of crops; to foster the growth of; to improve by labor, care, or study; to refine; to further; to encourage —Miriam Webster Online Dictionary

“Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty.” —Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You’re Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*

Lent is a season of spiritual gardening, of inviting God to unearth in us what lies fallow, what needs to be tended, and what needs to die in us in order for new life to emerge. This year, the scriptures in the Revised Common Lectionary during Lent offer us images and stories with themes of earthiness and grit. With inspiration from the folks at *A Sanctified Art*, during the season of Lent we will be “digging” into the theme of **Cultivating and Letting Go**.



Starting on March 3, in my sermons and in our worship together, I am looking forward to exploring this theme with you over the six weeks of Lent. What in our personal lives, in our faith journeys, in our experiences as a congregation are we called to cultivate, to nurture, to refine: perhaps courage or resilience or forgiveness? And what might we be called to let go of, to leave behind, in order for new life to begin: perhaps fear or self-reliance or easy answers? I pray that the season of Lent will offer us an opportunity to reflect on these themes as we together let go of that which holds us back as disciples, and instead cultivate the practices and values that reflect Jesus.

Yours in grace and peace,
Pastor Lauren



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

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

**Harvey Good
Acia Jernigan
Rochelle Lovelace**

District Prayer Calendar – March

- Mar. 3 For deepening faith as we begin the Lenten journey
- Mar. 10 The work of the COB Ministry & Mission Board and Staff
- Mar. 17 Cristo Sion Iglesia de los Hermanos (Pomona)
- Mar. 24 Nurturing and Credentialing Committee and the candidates preparing for ministry
- Mar. 31 Circle of Peace Church of the Brethren (Peoria, AZ)



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1) Nicole Bledsoe (Cook)
- 6) Paul Lovelace
- 11) Diane Deal
- 15) Carol Scott
- 20) Kenton Horner
- 23) Mary Hines
- 28) Laura Lovelace
- 30) Larry Deal
- 31) Don Overholser

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 20) Richard & Linda Hart 1959

March Host, Ushers, etc.



- Host: Jerry & Berkley Davis
- Ushers: Larry & Diane Deal
- Offering: Bill Lemon
- Hymn Leader: Phyllis Eller

All-Church Retreat Next Month

Please join us for our Annual Church Retreat on Saturday, April 13. In addition to times of worship and fellowship, in a spirit of play and joy we will be remembering our own personal spiritual and faith journeys through an activity called spiritual life mapping. Bring your imagination and your creativity! We will meet at Hillcrest in the Citrus Room from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

FROM SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphasis for **March is Canned Meat and Pasta**. As always, staple items are always needed and welcome.



Our giving emphasis for **March is One Great Hour of Sharing.**



The Church of the Brethren denomination invites its members and churches to share in quarterly special offerings. The spring offering is called the One Great Hour of Sharing. This offering provides additional support for some of the humanitarian concerns of the church, such as disaster ministries and the Nigerian Crisis Fund.

The theme of this year's offering comes from Ephesians 3:20, reminding us that God can do more than we can imagine with our offerings. Sometimes we can look back and see, often with amazement, what our "little mustard seed" has become. Who would have thought that an ordinary reed basket would save the life of the future leader of the Hebrews? Or that a foreigner's love for her mother-in-law would in time bring forth the greatest King? Or that our pennies would help so many women in poverty? Or that our support of EYN would help them reclaim their hope at the time of their greatest need?

As exciting as it is to remember these past blessings from God, what might he have in store for us if we give even our few "mites" of service, love or money? Something to pray about. Although envelopes for this special offering will be available all during March, the 17th is the designated day for the offering. May the results of your giving be way beyond your wildest expectations.

WOW Weekend of Wonder

PSWD Women's Retreat

April 5-7, 2019 — Murrieta Hot Springs

The Weekend of Wonder Women's Retreat returns to the PSWD calendar in 2019. Women are encouraged to make plans to join their sisters the weekend of April 5-7 for a time of fellowship, learning, prayer, and enjoying creation, at the Murrieta Hot Springs Retreat Center in Murrieta Hot Springs, CA (near Temecula, 40 miles south of Riverside). Experience real Hot Springs that are "Luxurious, welcoming, and always available. The hot springs are the place to relax with others, or alone, while on your retreat. The Roman Spa is filled with filtered hot springs water in an environment that is meant for you and your friends to relax and fellowship."

(www.mhsretreats.com/amenities)

Arrive at 4 p.m. for registration on April 5 and be welcomed by the Planning Team: Christi Bowman, Karen Pierson, Julie Wheeler. Dinner starts at 6:50 p.m. In addition to the adventure of relaxation, Julia Wheeler will share reflections on the Water of Life. Come join in the rejuvenation of fellowship and taking the waters. Attendees from last year's retreat came away refreshed, inspired and ready for life! Hope to see you there! Registration is Open! www.pswdcob.org/wow



Fun Facts from the Pages of Our History

When the Pomona congregation first began in 1907, the church members were described as having "a lot of faith and met their problems with trust in the Lord." Sounds like an accurate description of our congregation still today!



On the “Three Sides” podcast (ELCA, Sept. 6, 2018), Wendy Davidson, a leader at the Kellogg Company, shares how her Christianity informs her work. Because her adult faith emerged from several denominational influences, she considers variety to be a strength, not only spiritually but throughout life.

Davidson encourages her co-workers to bring their unique personalities and ideas to the table to create a metaphorical salad. “It doesn’t mean that the salad now becomes one homogenous blob; it is still distinctly the flavors of the salad ingredients,” she says. “But they’ve all found a way to come together to make something that much more flavorful than they could have been all on their own.”

Viewing church and our communities this way could be transformative. What if we welcome different people, invite ideas and resist melding everything into one giant blob? Then we can savor each “ingredient” and the resulting gourmet dish. Delicious!

**PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION
Through February 2019**

2019 Annual Budget	\$217,946.00
Giving '19	\$14,093.00
Interest & Other Income '19	\$13,693.08
Total Budget Income thru Feb.	\$27,786.08
Total Budget Expense thru Feb.	\$(29,152.27)
Plus Budget overage from 2018	\$29,304.84
Budget Balance thru February	\$27,938.65
February Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Capital Fund	\$125.00
IVHP Hunger	\$25.00
Women's Fellowship Pennies	\$40.00

The Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren seeks to glorify God and to promote Christian life and character through worship, instruction, evangelism, fellowship, and service to this community and to the world at large.

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

Sunday Worship	Sunday, 9:15 a.m.
Sunday School	Sunday, 10:45 a.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 20th of each month.

BBT president signs letter about tax code

The president of Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT), Nevin Dulabaum, has signed a letter to Congressional leaders sent by chief executive officers of denominational benefit plans. The letter sent in late 2018 concerned two sections of the Internal Revenue Code, one with potential to restrict participation in church retirement income account plans, and the other with potential to impose a tax on church parking lots.

The letter was sent by an interfaith group representing Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faith traditions. The organizations provide retirement and health benefits to more than 1 million clergy and lay workers and their families.

The letter addressed a recent position taken by the Treasury Department and IRS to ban employees of certain church-affiliated organizations from participating in church retirement income account plans offered under section 403(b)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code. Employees of church-related nursing homes, daycares, camps, preschools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and other organizations would lose access to church-based plans.

The letter also raised concern about a new business



Orin Bunnage-Coyford

income tax provision in section 512(a)(7) that would impose a tax on church parking lots.

The letter urged adoption of “well-vetted and bipartisan and bicameral” legislation introduced in the House and Senate that would make the necessary clarifications to both sections.

New theological focus at seminary is funded by AAAS grant

Bethany Theological Seminary is expanding educational opportunities at the intersection of theology and science through a \$75,000 grant awarded by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The award was received through Science for Seminaries, an initiative of the association’s Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion. The goal is to support seminaries as they integrate science into theological education and demonstrate its relevance to the life of religious communities. Recipients commit to incorporating scientific topics and themes into core curricula and to hold at least one campus-wide event.

Bethany’s new grant-funded pro-

gram is “Binocular Vision: Seeing Life through Eyes of Faith and Science.” Russell Haitch, professor of theology and human science, and Nate Inglis, assistant professor of theological studies, prepared the grant proposal and are overseeing the program. Inglis learned about the grant in the summer of 2016 when he was selected to attend an AAAS Science for Seminaries Faculty Enrichment Retreat.

“I knew that it would be a great opportunity for Bethany and that our seminary would be a great candidate,” says Inglis. “A scientific worldview and a society that is increasingly integrated with technology characterize the world in which our students are called to serve. In this setting, a basic science lit-

eracy and critical reflection on how new technology impacts our lives are topics that need to become essential parts of seminary education.”

Haitch’s course “Ministry across Generations” has used psychology in preparing students to minister to people at various stages of life, but now will give more emphasis to neuroscience. In “Introduction to Theological Reflection,” Inglis will enhance student learning with comparison of theological and scientific methods and with the integration of relevant scientific fields.

Bethany will offer a public conference on the meeting of faith and science entitled “Looking at Life,” on April 25-27 in Richmond, Ind.

Global Food Initiative supports agriculture-related projects

The Global Food Initiative of the Church of the Brethren made multiple grants at the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019. Grants support hurricane recovery for farmers in Puerto Rico, church-related community garden projects in the US and Spain, an orchard in Nigeria, a refrigeration project of Lybrook Community Ministries, and Brethren participation in a symposium in East Africa.

An allocation of \$51,605 provides long-term recovery support to **Puerto Rican farmers** who suffered damage to their farms during Hurricane Maria. The grant was recommended by the Puerto Rico District disaster response committee. The GFI manager has maintained close communication with Brethren Disaster Ministries to maintain coordination between the two programs.

Community gardens grants include \$15,000 for purchase of a used tractor for New Carlisle (Ohio) Church of the Brethren's community garden, and \$4,455 supporting the community garden of the Gijon and Aviles congregations of Iglesia Evangelica de los Hermanos (the Church of the Brethren in Spain).

An allocation of \$5,260 supports installation of an orchard fence at the headquarters of **Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria** (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). The orchard is operated by agriculture staff working in EYN's Integrated Community Based Development Program.

An allocation of \$3,000 funds one complete solar and refrigeration unit for **Lybrook Community Ministries** in Cuba, N.M. Director Jim Therrien is seeking several partners for the project to install more units in the homes of

elderly members of the community who need refrigeration for medicines and families with young children who need refrigeration for milk and formula.

Three grants support attendance at an **ECHO East Africa Symposium** by Brethren from the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$2,990), representatives from Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) in Burundi (\$2,490), and Brethren from Rwanda (\$1,830). The Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization symposium took place Feb. 12-14 in Tanzania.



Community garden of the Gijon and Aviles congregations in Spain.

Brethren Faith in Action Fund allocates grants

The Brethren Faith in Action Fund has allocated its first grants to congregations. The fund provides grants to outreach ministry projects of Church of the Brethren congregations that serve the community, strengthen the congregation, and expand the reign of God.

The fund was created by the Mission and Ministry Board with monies generated by the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. Ministries that receive grants will honor and continue the legacy of service that the center has epitomized, while also addressing the dynamics of the present age.

The fund is being managed to preserve principle. Investment performance and other factors will determine the amount of available grant money each year.

Five congregations received \$5,000 grants in 2018. Rockford (Ill.) Community Church received a grant to support its community outreach with a mobile tech and art lab. Alpha and Omega Church of the Brethren in Lancaster, Pa., received a grant for its 2018 outreach budget for a food bank, fall festival, day camp, 40-day outreach campaign, and video/Internet ministry. Sunnybrook Church of the Brethren in Bristol, Tenn., received a grant to support purchase of a radio station. Eglise des Freres Haitiens Church of the Brethren in Miami, Fla., received a grant for ministries that address basic human needs and evangelization to more than 350 families on a weekly basis. Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren in Fort Wayne, Ind., received a grant to help replace aged and dilapidated playground equipment used by a preschool that is a ministry of the congregation.

MARCH 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
			8:00 am Breakfast @ Roberta's 9:00 am Knit Wits 6:30 Stewards 7:30 pm LTG	6:00 pm Birthday Dinner		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			8:00 am Breakfast @ Roberta's 7:00 pm Choir	6:45 pm – Exec Comm		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	Pastor Lauren out of the office		BANNER ARTICLES DUE 8:00 am Breakfast @ Roberta's 7:30 p.m. Choir	6:45 pm Church Board		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			8:00 am Breakfast @ Roberta's 7:30 p.m. Praise Team (No Choir)			
31						
11:00 - Deacons						

Sunday Schedule: Worship 9:15 a.m., Sunday School 10:45 a.m.



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