

Our Ministries, Our Story



Vision

Guided by scripture, heritage and the Holy Spirit, we are committed to creating spiritually healthy New Testament congregations who covenant and network together to further the Kingdom of God.

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Atlantic Northeast (ANE) District,

With great joy, we share this report highlighting the meaningful work God is accomplishing through our district ministries. These stories reflect how we continue to live out our shared vision—faithfully offering our time, talents, and resources in service to one another and our communities in the name of Jesus Christ.

More than budgets, bylaws, and buildings, we are the body of Christ—living His story so that all may come to know His love, grace, and the abundant life He offers.

Across the district, churches are being revitalized, new ministers are answering their call, those in need are receiving care, and new opportunities for spiritual growth are emerging. We invite you to take a few moments to read about these developments and prayerfully consider how you might also be called to serve.

We give thanks to God for your continued support of the ministries throughout the Atlantic Northeast District. Your prayers and partnership make a vital difference.

We encourage you to remain in prayer for each member, every congregation, and all aspects of our district's work—that we may remain faithful to our shared purpose in Christ. Our mission is ongoing, and we look forward with hope and anticipation to all that God has in store for us.

If you have any questions or would like to explore ways to become more involved in the life and ministry of the district, please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the district staff or board.

Director of Discipleship Ministries Report

In his role, Stan Dueck relates to the Church Development, Nurture, and Witness & Outreach Commissions



Introduction

I joined the Atlantic Northeast District staff on October 1, 2025, as Director of Discipleship Ministries. My first year has been devoted to listening, learning, building relationships, and discerning where God is already at work across our district.

Three commitments have shaped my ministry during this first year: **listening, equipping, and connecting**. Listening to the hopes and challenges of pastors, congregational leaders, and commission members has helped identify opportunities for ministry. Equipping leaders and congregations has guided the development of practical opportunities for spiritual growth and leadership development. Connecting people, congregations, commissions, and ministry partners has strengthened relationships and fostered greater collaboration across our district.

I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome extended by pastors, congregations, commission members, district staff, and district leadership. Together, we have begun laying a foundation that I believe will strengthen congregations, encourage leaders, and nurture a healthy, flourishing Atlantic Northeast District for years to come.

Listening

A significant part of my first year has been spent listening to congregations and learning the unique opportunities and challenges facing our district.

Highlights include:

- Worshipping, preaching, and providing pastoral support in several congregations, with additional preaching engagements scheduled throughout 2026.
- Participating in the partial reopening celebration at Brooklyn First Church of the Brethren and continuing conversations supporting its renewed ministry.
- Don Mitchell and I represented the district at the CLIHDANE evangelism conference and attended Inhabit 2026, an intercultural gathering focused on faithful community engagement.
- Encouraging congregations to explore Brethren Faith in Action grants as resources for local outreach and community ministry.
- Assisting with the district Older Adult Luncheon in partnership with the Older Adult Committee.

These opportunities have deepened my understanding of our congregations and reinforced the importance of relationships as the foundation for effective discipleship ministry.



*CLIHDANE Conference.
Photo by Daniela Montenegro Velez*

CLIHDANE is the district's community of Latino congregations. Leadership Team: Mayra Calix (Alpha & Omega), Leonor Ochoa (Ebenezer), and Joel Peña (Alpha & Omega)

Director of Discipleship Ministries Report (cont.)

Equipping

Equipping leaders and congregations is central to the ministry of discipleship. During this first year, several new initiatives were launched or developed to strengthen leadership and congregational vitality. These initiatives are complemented by ongoing conversations with pastors and congregational leaders that continue to identify emerging needs across the district.

- Walking Together in Leadership launched as a virtual roundtable for Moderators and Board/Leadership Team Chairpersons. More than twenty leaders participated in conversations centered on encouragement, networking, and shared learning. The enthusiastic response has led to plans for continued gatherings this fall, with additional virtual roundtables being developed for other congregational leadership groups.
- In partnership with the Ministry Commission and Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center, planning is underway for a Spiritual Gifts Workshop, led by Josh Brockway, to help participants discover and develop their spiritual gifts.
- Evangelism for Non-Evangelists is being developed to provide practical, relational approaches to sharing faith, with the potential to expand participation to neighboring districts.
- KNV Training 4 Youth was designed to equip youth in conflict transformation and anti-racism. Although insufficient registrations required postponement, the Nurture Commission affirmed the vision and recommended incorporating the training into a future district youth event.
- I accepted an invitation to teach the Church of the Brethren Ventures course, Leading Through the Storm: Leadership Wisdom for a World That Got Different, in early 2027.

In addition, I have sought to connect congregations with resources that support healthy ministry, including opportunities through the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), We Rise International, and Together in Worship.

Connecting

Strengthening connections across our district has been another important focus of this ministry.

Working alongside district commissions has provided opportunities to encourage collaboration and support ministry across many areas.

Nurture Commission

- Supported planning for the district youth retreat and encouraged emerging connections among youth from several congregations.
- Partnered with the Older Adult Committee in planning the annual Older Adult Luncheon and now looks forward to the Older Adult Coffee House on October 20 at Lancaster Church of the Brethren.

Brethren Disaster Ministries

- Assisted with volunteer coordination, expense processing, and transportation logistics for congregations serving disaster response projects.
- Eleven Atlantic Northeast congregations participated in BDM projects during 2026.



Director of Discipleship Ministries Report (cont.)

Church Development Commission

- Recommended Seeds of Faith funding for Un Nuevo Renacer.
- Affirmed the completion of the Arbor Park church-planting project.
- Continued supporting Brooklyn First Church of the Brethren as it renews its ministry.

Witness & Outreach Commission

- Supported Barnabas Fund grants for Alpha & Omega, Brooklyn, Germantown, and Harrisburg First, all of which received Stewardship Commission approval.
- Affirmed a district Spanish-language learning opportunity led by Marianne Fitzkee.
- Participated in a presentation by Jeff Bach, Bob Kettering, and Richard Kyerematen exploring ways to strengthen lay leadership in Germantown and other urban congregations.

These partnerships continue to strengthen the ministry of our district by connecting people, ideas, and resources for greater impact.

Continuing Growth

Serving the district well requires continual learning. This year I completed or have ongoing participation in the following areas of ministry and professional development:

- Team Development Essentials, focusing on team coaching, value creation, and high-performing leadership teams. Phase One concluded in July, with Phase Two beginning this fall.
- Conflict Resolution and Restorative Practices through Advoz.
- Neuroscience-Informed Leadership Certification, integrating current brain science with leadership development and decision-making.
- Attending the 2026 CCDA National Conference in Richmond, Virginia, where workshops will highlight best practices in Christian Community Development and provide opportunities for networking and collaboration with ministry leaders.

These experiences continue to enrich my work with congregations, commissions, and district leadership.

I continue serving as Interim Associate Minister at Palmyra Church of the Brethren, preaching regularly, supporting congregational outreach, church leadership, and facilitating staff development. This ministry continues to enrich and inform my district responsibilities, and it is anticipated that my call with the congregation will conclude in 2027.

Looking Ahead

As I begin my second year of ministry with ANE, I remain committed to listening well, equipping faithfully, and connecting intentionally so that our congregations are strengthened, our leaders are encouraged, and together we bear a more vibrant witness to Christ in our communities.

Thank you for the privilege of serving alongside you.

Respectfully submitted,
Stan Dueck
Director of Discipleship Ministries



Director of Intercultural Ministries Report

Sisters and Brothers,

Since my report last year, my work has been challenging.

Puerta del Cielo was facing closure. I visited the church in Reading, PA, which the pastor decided to close, instructing the treasurer to close all banking accounts and to hand over the funds, computer equipment, and documents to me. The pastor was not aware of our policy for closing churches. I reopened the church and accepted the check, which was made out to ANE, but left all documents and equipment. Further, I indicated that District Executive Pete Kontra and I would return for an official vote on whether to close or remain open. Our scheduled meeting was canceled due to inclement weather; however, we met with the remaining seven members in attendance, and they agreed to remain open and reevaluate in six months. Carmen Lopez, a member and former church planter, agreed to provide leadership. Jimmy Ortiz, long-time member and moderator, has been extremely helpful in all processes. ANE owns the building. I'm pleased to report that the church is alive, growing, excited, and spirit-filled. "Good News."

Another disappointing and challenging situation was that our newest project—Arbor Park, located in Lancaster—chose to disassociate. It was not a good fit. The District Board voted unanimously to approve this disassociation. All accounts held by ANE have been reconciled. We wish them well.

Good News! Un Nuevo Renacer has found a church home in Akron, PA. They are renting a UMC church.

In May, District Executive Pete Kontra, Director of Discipleship Ministries Stan Dueck, Chaplain Dana Statler, Church Development Commission Chair Lexi Aligarbes, ANE Treasurer and Interim Pastor at Brooklyn First COB Kay Weaver, and I traveled to Brooklyn, NY. We met with the leadership of Brooklyn First COB to worship, fellowship, look at the structural damage to the facility, and talk about next steps for ministry. The soft opening was a wonderful worship service led by the praise team and a message was delivered by Kay Weaver. The complete opening is yet to be determined.

Please pray for Oasis de Esperanza for they have been displaced once again. After returning to their old location for three months, damage re-occurred from the floors above. They don't plan on returning to this location and are presently worshipping in members' homes. Pastor Arlyn will be determining next steps when she returns from a sabbatical.

Other Highlights:

- Attended the Inhabit Conference with Stan Dueck. Focus: empowering individuals to practice faith, build community, and seek renewal in their local neighborhoods
- Staff, Church Development Commission, and IMAC Meetings
- Visits to Nuevo Amanecer in Bethlehem, PA; Un Nuevo Renacer in Akron, PA; Ebenezer in Lampeter, PA; Light of the Gospel in Staten Island, NY; Puerta del Cielo; and Oasis de Esperanza
- Zoom meetings with fellowships and congregations
- Speaking and listening to those who express interest in starting a church in ANE

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,
Don Mitchell

In his role, Don Mitchell works closely with the Church Development Commission



Church Development Commission



We are committed to church planting, rebirth, and revitalization of existing congregations by connecting and resourcing time, talent, and treasures of all district congregations.



Church Development Commission: Lexi Aligarbes (Chair), Ryan Braught, Stan Dueck (Director), Jeff Keller (Secretary), Don Mitchell (Director), Shawn O'Brien, Jazmin Quijano

The Church Development Commission has had an active year. We continue to carry out the work of equipping and encouraging projects, fellowships, and congregations in our district.

Praise Reports:

At the beginning of the year, the commission supported Oasis de Esperanza. We have been able to provide financial assistance after their worship space was damaged by water. We were also able to send their pastor to a conference to learn more about discipleship and ministry that is relevant and contextual.

Un Nuevo Renacer will celebrate its one-year anniversary at its new church building in Akron, PA. With the commission's help, the congregation's pastoral staff and leadership team applied for and received funding from the Seeds of Faith Fund to support their ongoing ministry efforts. This process not only strengthened our relationship between the congregation and the district but also provided an opportunity to share information about other grants and financial resources for congregations in our denomination.

Church Development

Brooklyn First held its first in-person worship service since the closure of its building and serious capital projects began. Members of the district staff, commission, and community were all able to fellowship and celebrate with Brooklyn First during this trip. This visit also included a site visit of the Brooklyn Peace Center and a growing relationship with other Anabaptist ministries in the city.



Brooklyn First's Sanctuary

Continued Prayers:

This past year we navigated a fellowship's decision to disaffiliate. A letter was sent to the district office regarding a request made by the project, Arbor Park. After consideration from their leadership team, they felt it necessary to stop the process of becoming a congregation with the Church of the Brethren and ANE District. Although we were saddened by their request, we acknowledged that we were not the best denominational home for the worshipping community.

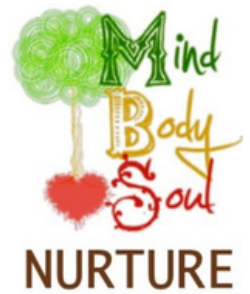
We continue to support fellowships looking to become congregations such as Ebenezer. We are increasing our resources around by-laws and meeting with leadership teams to support the establishment of healthy church organizational structures.

Moving Forward:

To help us continue prioritizing mutually supportive relationships between congregations and the commission, we are working toward several goals.

- Growing closer relationships with the district's church plants, fellowships, and projects through more regular, personal contact – including aiming for at least annual in-person or virtual check-ins.
- Listening for the "felt needs" of congregations so that support and resources are shaped around what congregations actually need to thrive and revitalize, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Reviewing metrics such as annual giving and budgets, alongside personal relationships, to help the commission evaluate the long-term health and capacity of church plants.
- Beginning a review and update of the district's New Church Process Guide, asking what still serves our plants well, what's missing, and how it can better balance support with accountability.

Nurture Commission



The Nurture Commission shall provide opportunities and encouragement for Christian education within the congregations of the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren and shall also facilitate support and advocate for the spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational health and vitality of the district's congregations.



Nurture Commission: Stan Dueck (Director), Sam Frankhouser, Karen Hackett (Chair), Allison Huber, Pat Leiter (Secretary), Jamie Nace (Vice Chair)

Women's Fellowship

We encourage fellowship among our ANE District women through our ANE District Women's Fellowship and events.

The **ANE Women's Spring Fellowship** took place at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren (COB) on Saturday, March 21, 2026. Ann Van Hine, the widow of a firefighter killed on September 11, 2001, was our speaker. Her theme for the day was "Stillness in a Chaotic World." Her message to us was one of finding ways in our busy lives to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). She shared with us her story of resilience and her journey of faith. The day was so inspiring for all who attended. Wendy Allshouse, from the Mountville COB, shared special music with us. 88 women attended. The next Women's Spring Fellowship will take place on March 13, 2027.



2025 Women's Camp



The ANE District Women's Cabinet also hosted a two-day **Women's Camp** on Friday and Saturday, August 14-15, 2026, at Camp Swatara. Marie Monville served as the speaker for this event. Her theme was "Our Comeback Stories," based on the Book of Ruth. The weekend was filled with worship, hymn singing, crafts, Bible study, and more. It is a wonderful time of fellowship! In 2027, Women's Camp will take place August 20-21 at Camp Swatara.

Nurture

Older Adults in the ANE District

We have been working with the ANE District Older Adult Committee to organize events for this growing segment of persons in our district.

The **4th Annual Older Adult Coffee House** took place last fall on October 21, 2025, at the Lancaster COB. Those who attended enjoyed an afternoon of coffee, tea, cookies, and a presentation by Pastor Dave Weiss of Springfield COB. Pastor Dave shared his gift for painting and speaking with the topic of "Bear Fruit." His presentation explored fruitfulness and fruit-bearing found in the Bible. A great time of fellowship and refreshments was had by all who attended. Next year's coffee house will be on Tuesday, October 20, 2027.



Coffee House



Spring Luncheon



The **Annual Older Adult Luncheon** was held on May 6, 2026, at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland. 104 brothers and sisters from 19 different congregations attended. Our 2026 Annual Conference Moderator, Don Fitzkee, brought greetings and a short message to those gathered. The Ridgeway Brass entertained us with many styles of music. Our lunch, the entertainment, and time of fellowship provided a great afternoon.

ANE District Youth Activities

We offer support to our ANE District youth and youth advisors by offering a variety of youth events throughout the year.

➔ On November 21-23, 2025, seven advisors and seven youth participants from Hempfield, Stevens Hill, and Lititz Churches of the Brethren traveled to Washington, D.C. for their annual **Thanksgiving Service Project Partnership**. The group partnered with Widow's Pantry and St. Stephen's Baptist Church to serve a large group of individuals at a shelter in the D.C. area. Following the Saturday service project, they had an opportunity to do some sightseeing in the city. On Sunday morning they worshipped at St. Stephen's. Next year's youth service weekend is slated for November 20-22, 2026.



Washington, D.C. Service Weekend Participants

Nurture

→ In January 2026, York First COB provided host facilities and meals for the **annual Repeat Retreat**, a winter youth event that originated in 2024 as a District Youth Retreat at Lancaster COB. This year marked a significant milestone, drawing participants from nine congregations spanning three different districts (Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, & Southern PA). The group traveling farthest was from Manassas, Virginia. Other attending congregations included Annville, Harrisburg First, Lancaster, Lititz, Myerstown, Stevens Hill, and Spring Creek. The event achieved its largest turnout yet, with 46 youth and 17 advisors in attendance! The weekend centered around three enriching sessions designed to explore the Church of the Brethren tagline: Simply, Peacefully, Together. Attendees additionally participated in a service project and plenty of fun group activities (see below).



→ Youth from Lancaster, Lititz, Hempfield, and Stevens Hill traveled to National Youth Conference (NYC) in Estes Park, Colorado, July 18-23, 2026. Rachel Johnson from the Mechanic Grove COB served as one of the NYC coordinators.

→ In April 2026, youth from the Stevens Hill, Swatara Hill, Myerstown, and Heidelberg congregations attended an event together.



*April
Youth
Gathering*

→ In June 2026, the Lititz COB invited youth from the Stevens Hill and Hempfield congregations to go roller skating. The Lititz Church rented the Mt. Gretna Rink. Lancaster was also invited but was unable to attend because it was their VBS week.

→ Spring Creek invited ANE churches to “tag along” to Knoebels when the church had their church day there.

→ Mount Wilson also invited some churches to participate in a couple of youth evenings this past spring.

The Nurture Commission is very encouraged by these gatherings and will continue to work with our youth advisors and youth to assist them in helping to make these events happen.

Ministry Commission



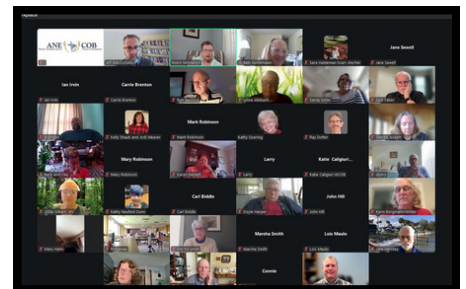
The District Ministry Commission supports people in ministry in the Atlantic Northeast District. The commission is responsible for guiding and supporting people exploring a calling to set-apart ministry and those who then pursue the path to credentialed ministry.



Ministry Commission: Kelly Bernstein (Recording Secretary and Staff Support), Ray Dotter (Chair), Nancy Hess (Vice Chair), Pete Kontra (District Executive), Naomi Kraenbring, Mark Nichols, Dana Statler (Secretary)

During the commission's monthly meetings, we interview candidates for licensing and ordination to ministry and review their written statements. We plan educational events, receive updates on pastoral placements, and pray in support of ministers in the district and their needs. Throughout the year, the commission recommends to the district board ordination of individuals, ordination renewal, or other appropriate actions.

In April 2026, we conducted a successful online workshop that explored how part-time ministry models can strengthen congregational vitality, empower lay leadership, and reimagine ministries for today's challenges. Called "**Better with Less**," the workshop attracted 44 participants including those from ANE congregations, other Church of the Brethren districts, and the Mennonite Church USA.



We continue to offer support through prayer to the district's pastors at our meetings. Prayer requests are shared, and we pray for a group of ministers with cards mailed to each minister on our list for the month. To recognize and celebrate credentialed clergy, the commission held its **annual Minister Appreciation Event** June 12 at the Ephrata Church of the Brethren. About 50 ministers and their family members enjoyed fellowship and good food.

Ministry

An annual licensed minister review and renewal process allows licensed ministers to report on their educational and ministry journeys and receive affirmation for their continued call to ministry. Planning continues for Licensed Minister Connections gatherings. They will be a way to encourage, support, and appreciate the district's licensed ministers who are working towards ordination.

During 2025, the commission conducted the denomination's **five-year renewal of ordination credentials**. We continued to work in 2026 with a handful of ministers whose ordination renewal was not final to fulfill their missing requirements.



Ministry Activity August 2025-July 2026

Ordained

Kevin Zurin (Florin)
C. Franklin Iyasere (Providence)
Matt Kramer (Lancaster)
Nicki Habecker (Cornerstone)
Jason Haldeman (Elizabethtown)

10 Years in Ordained Ministry

Matt Ross (District Office)
Josiah Ludwick (Harrisburg First)
Brian Berkey (Mechanic Grove)
David Willauer (Parker Ford)
Karen Hackett (Wilmington)

ACTS Graduates

Tom Strubel (Ephrata)

20 Years in Ordained Ministry

Rob Eshelman (Ephrata)

Bethany Graduates

Joseph Buohl II (Mountville)
Desiree Weaver-Spidel (Elizabethtown)

25 Years in Ordained Ministry

Greg Bidgood Enders (Elizabethtown)
Liz Bidgood Enders (Elizabethtown)

Interims Served

Brian Berkey, Wilmington
Ron Bohannon, Lancaster
Enten Eller, Ridgeway
Rebecca Fuchs, Lancaster
Karen Hackett, Wilmington
Sara Haldeman Scarr, Ambler
Nancy Hess, Lancaster
Scott Major, Skippack
Kay Weaver, Brooklyn First
Stan Dueck, Palmyra

50 Years in Ordained Ministry

Jim Beckwith (Elizabethtown)
Ken Bomberger (Providence)
Galen Hackman (Ephrata)
John Kolle (Harmonyville)

In Memoriam

Ken Gibble (Ridgeway)
Lewis Powell (Mountville)
Earl Ziegler (Lititz)
Levi Ziegler (Lititz)

Placements

Kirby Dubble (Paxton)
Calvin Roop (Heidelberg)
Nancy Hess (Lancaster)

thank you

Witness & Outreach Commission



The ANE District Witness and Outreach (W&O) Commission seeks to encourage and network with congregations to proclaim the love and power of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit through the witness of the faith and outreach to our communities and world. We join hands with congregations to faithfully love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27).



Witness & Outreach Commission: Stan Dueck (Director), C. Franklin Iyasere, Donna Parcell (Co Vice Chair), Tim Speicher (Chair), Gina Strouse (Secretary), Adam Ulm (Co Vice Chair)



The ANE District continues to be a strong supporter of **Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM)**. With the help of funding from the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction, the commission can cover some or all the travel costs for ANE church groups traveling to BDM worksites. Those who have traveled to a BDM worksite to serve for a week or more report that this is a meaningful way to reach out to those in need. Participants meet many interesting people and see firsthand the difference that BDM efforts are making. This is a great ministry opportunity for all congregations to encourage each other to consider being a part of this very important service and outreach ministry.



Volunteers from Spring Creek serving in West Jefferson, NC, April 2026

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is a special ministry of BDM. Volunteers are trained to travel to disaster locations as second responders and care for children directly impacted by disaster such as a flood, hurricane, or tornado. Those who complete a course will have the opportunity to become certified CDS volunteers able to serve at the site of a future disaster. This is a wonderful opportunity for all people to make an immediate difference for families impacted by a disaster.



Witness & Outreach



The **Peace & Justice Committee** promotes and encourages the work of the Church of the Brethren for peace and justice for all people. Articles in the district's *ANE Today* newsletter highlight resources for a variety of peace and justice concerns, such as making a commitment to conscientious objection, dealing with immigration concerns, becoming a church for all abilities, and more. Congregational contacts for Peace and Justice projects are needed to facilitate communication throughout the district.

The W&O Commission oversees two important funds offering financial support to our district churches.



The **Barnabas Fund** has been established to share the blessings of financial resources with those who express a ministry-driven need. This fund seeks to encourage the ministry of congregations through grant-based investment strategy that seeks Kingdom-based results through shared resources, fiscal accountability, ministry planning, and economic partnering. There are four urban churches who have traditionally received funding through annual applications to the Barnabas Fund. For 2027, Alpha & Omega, Brooklyn First, and Harrisburg First have been approved to receive \$28,000 each, and Germantown was approved to receive \$24,000.

Helping Hands



The **Helping Hands Benevolence Fund** supports congregations who are responding to natural disasters and social ills in their communities.

ANE District churches are encouraged to work together to support neighboring congregations in their needs. **Church 2 Church** is a community building ministry that allows churches with needs to partner with churches who are interested in a service project. Possible projects might include painting, landscape clean-up, or cleaning out rooms in the church. The work being done is meant to offer encouragement and a spiritual boost to a congregation with needs it cannot meet on its own. Please be in touch with the W&O Commission if you would like to be a part of this ministry outreach effort.

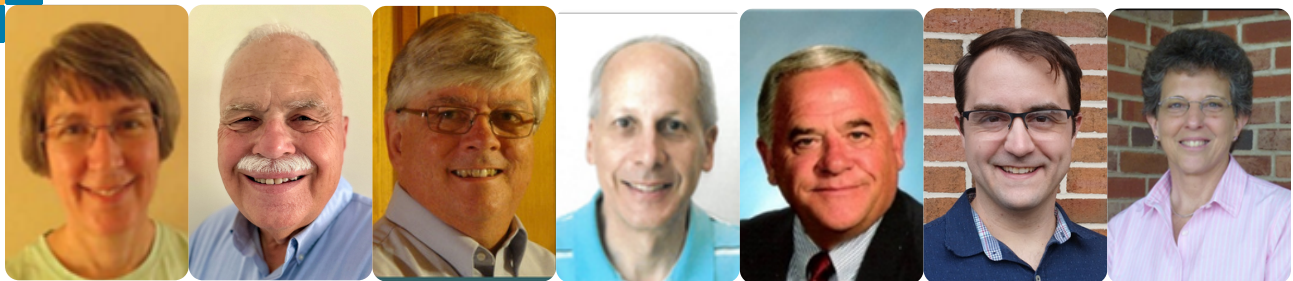


Stewardship Commission



The Stewardship Commission is committed to providing important ongoing financial support/funding to all the ANE commissions as they work within the covenant and strengthen it by their actions and decisions holding us all accountable for holistic stewardship practices.

The primary purpose of the Stewardship Commission is to be responsible for the financial assets and affairs of the ANE District. We receive, invest, protect, and maintain the assets entrusted to the District. This includes disbursement of funds as well as monitoring and growing financial holdings in support of the ministries to the congregations, fellowships, and projects within the scope of the ANE District.



Stewardship Commission: Barb Coffman (Vice Chair), Ken Creighton, Ray Flagg (Assistant Treasurer), Brian Rice (Chair/Secretary), Ken Rutt, Adam Swartz (Director of Finance), Kay Weaver (Treasurer)

Accomplishments for the Commission:

- Prepared the 2027 Ministry Investment Plan (MIP) of \$536,765, which was approved by District Board on June 23, 2026. The 2027 MIP is \$10,504 higher than 2026 (about 2%), driven almost entirely by normal increases to staff salaries and benefits.
- Contracted with Hostetter & Hostetter to complete a compilation of our 2025 finances. The compilation is complete and will be reviewed by the commission at their July meeting.
- Approved numerous grants from the Facilities Assistance Fund, the Seeds of Faith Fund, and the Barnabas Fund, detailed later on in this report.

Stewardship

Current Financial Status:

Five meetings held in 2026 (through May 18) with the following highlights:

- See Treasurer Report included in conference materials
- Continuing trend of monthly deficits and shortfalls to 2026 MIP being funded from reserves (see below)
- May year-to-date (YTD) ministry results compared to 2025
 - Congregational support \$7,000 lower than 2025
 - Total income - \$15,000 lower than 2025
 - Total expenses - \$32,000 more than 2025
 - Net income (loss) - \$105,000 funded from reserves
- \$3.1 million in assets as of May 2026
 - A significant portion of assets were contributed to ANE without restrictions, except that are used for ANE ministries. ANE is utilizing in accordance with contributor intentions.

Preserving Our Heritage:

The Bucher Meetinghouse

Since the congregation previously responsible for the maintenance of the Bucher Meetinghouse and cemetery has withdrawn from the Church of the Brethren, responsibility for the property, in accordance with the deed, now falls to the Atlantic Northeast District. ANE has also received funds designated for the upkeep of this historic site. On May 31, 2026, Bob Kettering led the annual hymn sing in the meeting house, which was attended by 61 people. An offering of \$922 was collected to support ongoing property maintenance. The ANE Stewardship Commission has appointed a committee to oversee the care of the property. If you are interested in serving on this committee or assisting with maintenance efforts, please contact the district office.



The Bucher Meetinghouse

The Germantown Trust

On Christmas Day, 1723, the first American Brethren baptism happened in the Wissahickon Creek in Germantown, PA. That event precipitated the first congregation to be formed in America. In 1770, the first Brethren meetinghouse was built by the congregation on Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia. The Germantown congregation continued meeting there until 1964. At that time, the congregation was disorganized and the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board became owners of the property.



Germantown Meetinghouse

(Continued on next page)

Stewardship

The Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren became concerned for the future of the 1770 meetinghouse with its additions, the parsonage, the cemetery, and the property. In 1982, the Mission and Ministry Board formed a Trust to care for the “Mother Church” and its property. At this time the Trust is comprised of representatives appointed by the Mission and Ministry Board, the ANE District, and the Germantown congregation, with representatives sent by the German Baptist Brethren New Conference, the Brethren Church, and Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. The Trust is also assisted by staff from the ANE District and Elgin offices. The Trust meets onsite twice yearly, in the spring and fall.

The Trust was able to meet in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026 in person at Germantown.

In 1980, the meetinghouse became home to a new congregation. The Germantown COB is a multicultural, inner-city congregation that preaches the gospel, has an outreach program to the community, and is blessed with a wonderful music ministry. Pastor Richard Kyerematen continues as the pastor there and serves as a strong advocate and conduit between the congregational ministry and the work of the Trust. The Germantown congregation maintains a strong worship presence with in person and online services. We appreciate his role.

With the funds made available by the Mission and Ministry Board from the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor, several repairs and projects were accomplished. In addition to the many maintenance projects the Trust participated in funding, a major project was undertaken to upgrade security at the property. This included upgrading alarms and reglazing the window in the meetinghouse with break resistant materials. Unfortunately, the funds that were allocated to the Trust from the New Windsor sale have been exhausted and new sources of funding need to be explored. The Mission and Ministry Board has launched a fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$300,000 for the benefit of preserving the Germantown meetinghouse and cemetery.

If you have never visited, tours can be arranged. The congregation is always welcoming to visitors during their worship services. Details about services can be found at:

www.cob-net.org/church/germantown/. If you are interested in donating to the Trust, please contact the District Office for information.

On behalf of the Trust, I would like to express great appreciation to Bill Felton for the many hours that he has given to the Germantown Trust overseeing the many maintenance and construction projects at the Germantown site.

-Ray Flagg, Trust Chair

The ANE Stewardship Commission is responsible for property management; therefore, the commission is responsible for appointing four ANE representatives to serve a 3-year term on the Germantown Trust Board. The appointees are then approved by the ANE District Board and the Trust Board. Current Trust members appointed by ANE are Doug Gehr, Karen Christophel, Glenn Martin, and Ray Flagg. Also serving from ANE: Secretary – Kay Weaver, Treasurer – Ken Hackett. If you are interested in serving on the Trust, please contact the District Office.

Stewardship

Networking Together:

Stewards establish and oversee the ANE General Operating Ministry Investment Plan (MIP) and also special project funds established to provide an opportunity for congregations to financially support projects, fellowships, re-birth and revitalization of congregations, facility improvements, leadership development, and small, inner-city congregations.



Thanks to the John and Jean Stoner Estate, the commission established the **Facilities Assistance Fund (FAF)** in 2020 to support ANE congregations in improving or expanding facilities that align with their ministry-driven vision. This fund allows us to give back financially and encourage growth across the district. All

congregations are invited to apply for small grants. Since the previous District Conference report through May of 2026, the FAF has granted a total of \$60,800:

- \$8,000 to Ridgeway COB for IT infrastructure upgrades
- \$18,000 (2 applications) to Alpha & Omega COB to assist with repairs for flood damage
- \$5,000 to Lebanon COB for air conditioner replacement
- \$5,000 to Heidelberg COB for audio and video upgrades
- \$10,000 to Brooklyn First COB for foundation repairs
- \$10,000 to Alpha & Omega COB for broken sewer line repairs
- \$4,800 to Germantown COB for a new HVAC split unit



The **Seeds of Faith (SOF) Fund** exists to intentionally and effectively steward resources in support of ministry growth within the Atlantic Northeast District. Its purpose is to birth new ministries through church planting, revitalize struggling congregations nearing closure, foster leadership development, and support congregations whose growth or expansion depends on

strategic investment from the district. Since the previous District Conference report through May of 2026, the SOF Fund has granted a total of \$40,500:

- \$3,000 for ministerial student grants
- \$3,000 for a CLIHDANE weekend conference
- \$25,000 to the Deportation Defense Response Team
- \$7,500 to Un Nuevo Renacer for rent assistance for a church building
- Up to \$2,000 to provide introductory Spanish lessons for volunteers, staff, and congregational leaders

(Continued on next page)

Stewardship



The **Barnabas Fund**, formerly the Mission Church Support Fund, is the Atlantic Northeast District's most active financial support program. Stewardship Commission has assumed responsibility, along with support from the Witness & Outreach Commission, to review Barnabas applications and make grants. Each May, as the next year's MIP is developed, the team pledges over \$100,000 in monthly support to four urban congregations: Alpha & Omega, Brooklyn First, Germantown, and Harrisburg First. Support is also available to other congregations serving

communities with significant economic challenges. To qualify, these churches must have an active outreach ministry, limited resources due to circumstances beyond their control, and community needs exceeding their capacity. Because the fund's balance nearly diminishes with each annual commitment, congregations are encouraged to contribute to the Barnabas Fund—above and beyond their MIP giving—if they are able. A special thanks to all individuals and congregations who faithfully give to this fund. See Witness & Outreach Report for more information.



Germantown, Alpha & Omega, Harrisburg First, and Brooklyn First receive annual funding

Moving Forward:

Over the next several months as we pause to reflect on our bountiful blessings and the Gift given to humanity, please consider being a faithful financial partner in ANE ministries. Take time to challenge your congregation to join in and provide an additional year-end gift—not only those congregations who have fallen short of their projected giving amount, but even those who have exceeded their goal.

Many heartfelt thanks to all congregations that have provided funds, but especially to those who gave at or above the \$55 per member Fair Share amount!

Through your prayers and ANE's Ministry Investment Plan, we are networking together in the task of Kingdom-building well beyond what any one congregation can do alone!

“From Christ the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
~Ephesians 4:16”