

Spring 2020

To the moderator, delegates, and members of Southern Ohio & Kentucky District, we bring greetings from the Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust Board and staff members. It is our pleasure as an agency of the denomination to serve you and to be among you when possible, whether it be in person or through technology such as Zoom!

A common theme of our most recent Annual Reports has been adaptation and change and how BBT has done both over the past years in order to provide useful services in transitional times. Funny how we thought preceding times were “transitional” before we reached 2020 and the change that has occurred due to COVID-19. We are in the midst of a global pandemic, yes, but we believe we also are in the midst of a huge cultural shift that will redefine how members and clients are served in the future. Companies that pivot and modify their business practices will have the opportunity to thrive going forward; those that hold on to their pre-March 11, 2020, methodologies could suffer.

For Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust, our resolve to adapt to changing times is firm. We are compassionate people who are called to serve others, helping them help themselves.

### **BRETHREN PENSION PLAN**

Church of the Brethren Pension Plan provides a great retirement solution for more than 4,400 current and former employees of congregations, districts, camps, and related denominational organizations. The option to select a lifetime income stream for the member and their surviving spouse sets this plan apart from many other retirement plans. The addition of investment advice services and seven new lower-cost index funds are some of the recent changes to the Plan that should help our members more effectively work toward a meaningful retirement. A robust website offers myriad tools for a person to manage their account. A friendly, helpful staff can answer your questions and assist with retirement income projections. As of April 30, Plan assets were \$358,388,420

### **CHURCH WORKERS' ASSISTANCE PLAN**

For more than 20 years, this benevolence ministry has offered financial grants to active and retired pastors and employees of congregations, districts, and camps who have severe financial need. This program allocates about 50 grants each year totaling more than \$314,000. In March, the Plan quickly adapted to the pressing needs presented by COVID-19, instituting a new, limited-time grant to help those who experienced loss of income or medical issues due to the pandemic. As of May 14, a total of 30 COVID-19 grants had been issued totaling about \$85,000.

### **BRETHREN INSURANCE SERVICES**

A number of insurance products — Life, Vision, Dental, Short- and Long-Term Disability, Long-Term Care, Medicare Supplement, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Accident, and Pet — are provided to active and retired employees of congregations, districts, and camps. They are value-based services that are supported by BBT's customer service team. Ask the BBT representative at this conference or call Jeremiah Thompson, Director of Insurance Operations, at 847-622-3368 to see if you qualify for one or more of these insurances.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL MONEY MANAGEMENT THROUGH BRETHREN FOUNDATION FUNDS**

Helping organizations manage their funds is a service that has been offered to congregations, districts, and Brethren organizations for 30 years! With fantastic staff focused on great customer service and a Web portal that allows clients to find resources, manage the transfer of their funds, and print customizable reports,

Brethren Foundation Funds manages assets of organizations from \$10,000 to more than \$10,000,000. This ministry is structured to ensure that clients have numerous investment options, many of which are compliant with Brethren Values Investing guidelines. Assets under management as of May 1 for BFFI's nearly 200 organizational clients were \$168,768,735. We can walk with your congregation and district to help you meet your money management needs. Let's talk!

### **MANAGING CHARITABLE GIFTS FOR ALL BRETHERN MEMBERS**

This ministry manages deferred gifts and offers charitable gift instruments for any Church of the Brethren member, congregation, or organization that works on stewardship of resources. Assets under management on May 1 were \$4,649,958, with nearly 150 deferred gift donors.

### **BRETHERN VALUES INVESTING**

The majority of BBT's assets under management are invested in a Brethren Values Investing manner, in accordance with Church of the Brethren Annual Conference statements. Screened from our portfolios are the 25 publicly traded companies that receive the top U.S. Department of Defense contracts, as well as companies that generate 10 percent or more of their gross earnings from U.S. Department of Defense contracts, firearms and military weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction, abortion, alcohol, gambling, pornography, or tobacco. Companies that are egregious violators of environmental or human rights regulations are also screened. We also practice advocacy with companies in which BBT owns stocks, and with other initiatives, which affect how companies interact with shareholders and with others in the global community. Lastly, we offer a Community Development Investment Fund to asset management clients and Pension members, which is used to invest monies in higher-than-normal risk areas to help stimulate economic growth in inner-city communities and redevelopment areas.

### **BBT WAS CREATED TO SERVE YOU**

BBT offers a variety of workshops and seminars that cover subjects spanning from money and debt management from a faith perspective to how pastors can pay for their medical insurance premiums tax-free, the need for employee benefits, the money management services BBT provides to organizations, what good board governance looks like, and a primer on Brethren heritage. Contact us to see which seminars might be useful to your church or organization, whether it be an in-person or online presentation.

As of mid-May, BBT staff members are sheltering in place, waiting for the danger of COVID-19 to pass. While we are uncertain what the future will bring and when we might see you again, whether this year or in the future, we remain dedicated to carrying out our duties to provide for our members and clients in every creative way possible – it just may not look like the same in the future as it did in the past!

We are a small organization with big aspirations, great employees, and a strong mission. Our resolve during this difficult year is to adapt and change and thrive, and to continue building relationships that have been a cornerstone in the 30 years we've provided asset management services, in the 65 years we've provided insurance products, and in the 77 years we've offered pension services.

**Building financial security**  
**Bettering the world**  
**Together.**

That is today's, and tomorrow's, BBT.

**Donna Rhodes**

Board Chair

**Nevin Dulabaum**

President