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, providing useful services and information to assist in peoples’ decision making. BBT staff members began sheltering in place in mid-March, waiting for the danger of COVID-19 to pass, and are still working from home as of early July. 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
BBT Board Chair

Nevin Dulabaum
BBT President
The BBT Board would normally pose together for a picture at the April meeting in our Elgin, Illinois, offices. Due to COVID-19, those meetings were held virtually this year. In the spirit of our continued virtual camaraderie, we are sharing our Board photo (above) in a way that artistically represents the reality of 2020.

BBT Annual Report financials thru December 31, 2019

Brethren Pension Plan (amounts in millions)

- Community Development / 0.6
- Alternative Assets / 1.2
- International Equity / 14.6
- Short-Term / 8.9
- Fixed Income / 14.8
- Domestic Equity / 77.9
- Equity and Fixed Income / 77.4
- Target Date Funds / 33.5
- Retirement Benefits Fund / 166.5

Brethren Foundation and Brethren Foundation Funds (amounts in millions)

- Alternative Assets / 0.2
- Community Development / 0.4
- Charitable Stock / 1.4
- Gift Annuity / 1.8
- Charitable Bond / 1.6
- International Equity / 3.7
- Short-Term / 12.3
- Fixed Income / 21.8
- Domestic Equity / 42.8
- Equity and Fixed Income / 42.1
- Tactical / 60.7
Brethren Pension Plan

Making Good Decisions

Ed Kerschensteiner joined the ministry more than 70 years ago, and has been a member of Brethren Pension Plan for more than 60 of those years. He first joined in 1959 when he graduated from Bethany Theological Seminary. Ed’s story is a great example of how steady contributions over many years can prepare a pastor for a satisfying retirement.

With his schooling behind him, Ed continued his career, pastoring churches in Ohio, Idaho, Indiana, and Colorado. He returned to make Idaho his home in 1987, where he pastored Boise Valley Church of the Brethren.

In addition to ministering, Ed’s long list of service over his career includes serving as executive for the District of Idaho and representing Idaho on the General Board from 1997 to 2002. According to his personal records, he preached in 6,631 services, performed 155 funerals, and celebrated 149 weddings.

Ed grew up in Berlin, Pennsylvania, and was baptized in Flaughtery Creek near Hostetler Church of the Brethren in 1944. Called to the ministry at the age of 17, he later married Anna Lou Mazer and was ordained the following year, in 1953. The couple moved to Kansas where Ed attended McPherson College, graduating in 1956, and three years later he received his Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary.

Ed and his wife, Anna Lou, celebrate their 68th anniversary this year.
Making use of BBT’s many services

Brethren Benefit Trust is the umbrella organization for Brethren Pension Plan, Brethren Insurance Services, and our asset management and deferred gift services through Brethren Foundation Funds and Brethren Foundation. Many Brethren pastors use one or more of these services, but once in a while we hear from a pastor who is happy to relate his experience with all of them.

“I have access to short-term disability, long-term disability, and vision insurance,” said Erik Brummett, pastor of Live Oak Church of the Brethren in California, and a customer of Brethren Insurance Services. “If anything were to happen to me on the job, I would be cared for and some of my medical bills would be covered.”

Further, Erik has a great appreciation for Brethren Pension Plan. “It really makes me feel safe and comfortable for the future, so that whenever I retire, I won’t be struggling in retirement. A benefits provider in the church really takes a lot of the burden off of the pastor. If they have a family, it really makes life a little easier in the now, and can really help make life easier in the future.”

His Live Oak congregation is an asset management client of Brethren Foundation Funds. “We have had a tremendous experience with the Foundation,” Erik said. “We have a couple of different accounts. Anytime we have a question, there is always someone to answer it and guide us through the process. Recently we withdrew some money so that we could have our church painted and our parking lot redone. The staff at Brethren Foundation made that process so easy. To be able to see how we have made money on our investments has been tremendous.”

This is BBT’s calling and challenge, to continue to offer this level of service to individuals, congregations, and church organizations.
Church Workers’ Assistance Plan

Shout from the rooftops

Vandna Christina Singh, pastor of Freeport (Ill.) Church of the Brethren, was born into a Hindu family in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. She became a Christian as a young woman and was rejected by her family and persecuted for her faith. She chose to add “Christina” to her name when she was baptized. With the support of Christian friends, she became principal of a small Christian college.

When she and her husband felt the call to ministry, they were sponsored by an Indian graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, the Church of the Brethren seminary in Richmond, Indiana. After completing her Master of Divinity degree, Christina became pastor of Panora (Iowa) Church of the Brethren and later was called to pastor the Freeport congregation.

Christina is a bi-vocational minister, serving as a tutor in the local school system while pastoring her congregation. As with so many people today, it has not been possible for Christina and her husband to have health insurance through her work, so she has been purchasing it through the Affordable Care Act. Her husband, who is older than Christina and is retired, has had some health problems, so they have had a lot of hospital bills and have a high deductible.

Still, Christina was able to keep up with her obligations and her insurance payments until an error occurred that caused her insurance payment to skip a month. Although the error was not hers, and the payments resumed, Christina was told that they owed $2,864.62 for the unpaid month. A few months later, a letter arrived, stating that the amount had to be paid or coverage would be stopped. In the meantime, the pandemic had arrived in the U.S. Christina protested the payment. She asked to pay in installments. The answer was no. She appealed to the Marketplace and the appeal was denied. She was told that if the amount was not paid in a matter of weeks, she and her husband would be without insurance. Further, her tutoring work had ended. She simply did not have the money to pay the bill.

Then, during a Zoom call with Kevin Kessler, the executive for Illinois and Wisconsin District, she mentioned her insurance payment problem and asked for prayer. Kevin told her about BBT’s Church Workers’ Assistance Plan. When the BBT staff was alerted to the problem, Debbie Butcher, Employee Benefits Specialist, who handles these requests, immediately e-mailed the forms to Christina, who filled them out and returned them electronically. Within
On April 27, 1990, after almost six years of planning, the Brethren Foundation became part of the newly established Brethren Benefit Trust. It was created with $220,000 in start-up funds and offered four investment options to Brethren organizations. By fall, the first three clients had signed on. The next year, BFI reached $5 million in assets under management, and two districts had become clients. This was also the year that the Foundation began offering a deferred gifts management program.

In 1992, six congregations were added to the Foundation, and it was managing $10 million in assets. Two years later, the total AUM surpassed $25 million. By 1997, it topped $50 million and in 1998, BFI increased its investment options to six.

From the beginning, the Foundation followed socially responsible investing, a practice that BBT later re-branded as Brethren Values Investing. The Foundation continued to grow and reached $100 million by 1999. BFI also continued to increase its number of investment options, reaching 16 in 2010, and 24 by the end of 2013. From its humble beginnings, BFI now had more than $174 million in assets under management.

Then, in 2014, the Foundation was divided into two entities: Brethren Foundation Funds Inc. (BFFI), which manages organizational client assets, and Brethren Foundation Inc. (BFI), which handles the deferred gifts program for individuals.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary, Phil Stone, retired president of Bridgewater College and one of the key people in the creation of the Foundation said, “The Foundation does the immediate things we hoped could be accomplished — be a place for the church agencies, congregations, and districts to be able to place resources and have them managed carefully. That’s been done beautifully. I mean it’s just hard to imagine how you’d improve much on that.”

BFI - Brethren Foundation’s 30 productive years

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Today, the two Foundation entities celebrate 30 productive years. BFFI has 29 investment options to choose from, and serves nearly 200 organizational clients with more than $168 million under management. BFI serves nearly 150 individual clients with more than $4 million under management.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary, Phil Stone, retired president of Bridgewater College and one of the key people in the creation of the Foundation said, “The Foundation does the immediate things we hoped could be accomplished — be a place for the church agencies, congregations, and districts to be able to place resources and have them managed carefully. That’s been done beautifully. I mean it’s just hard to imagine how you’d improve much on that.”
We are really in a good position now

In 2010, several years after Dr. Gene Roop’s 2007 retirement as president of Bethany Theological Seminary, he and his wife Delora moved to Anderson, Indiana, and joined Anderson Church of the Brethren. Not long after they moved, Gene noticed that the various funds and endowments of the congregation, though very carefully managed, were invested in certificates of deposit. He suggested they might improve returns by instead using Brethren Foundation Funds to manage the money, and invited Steve Mason, director of BFFI, to visit and explain how the Foundation could help.

Shifting investments to BFFI

The congregation liked what it heard. One of the things members learned was that they could invest funds in different ways, some conservatively, some less conservatively. They opened their first account with BFFI in December 2011. In the years since, BFFI has helped them preserve and grow their money so that they always have what they need. Recently, they used the congregation’s BFFI account to cover the cost of upgrading their church sign when it needed to be replaced. This account has also funded a new roof on their building, a new boiler, resurfacing of the parking lot, and many other repairs.

Flexibility

It has been nearly 10 years now, and money has gone in and out of Anderson CoB’s Foundation Funds account, and the good news is that the present balance is significantly greater than it was at the beginning. The congregation has several different endowments and funds among its investments in BFFI — eight separate accounts in total. Some of the money is invested very conservatively. Some is invested with greater risk in order to promote greater growth. BFFI gives the congregation the flexibility to vary its investments and to move money from one fund to another.

A pleasure to work with

Delora Roop, who is treasurer of the congregation, said, “For someone who is not very tech-savvy, I’ve found the Brethren Foundation Funds website to be very user-friendly. I do electronic transfers into our accounts, and also take out distributions as we need them. It’s very easy to do.” And when the congregation needed funds quickly to pay for some major repairs, Delora noted, “The Foundation staff really went out of their way to speed up the process. I find it really a pleasure to work with them.”
Key decision

Don Apple, a long-time member of the Anderson congregation, and the CFO of a large hospital for 31 years, was ready to make the shift from the certificates of deposit to investing through Brethren Foundation — he was very familiar with it because he had served on the BBT board from 1993 through 2001. “Even though our local relationships were strong, the returns were just not very high, and we knew that BFFI could clearly surpass what we were getting locally.” Don went on to say, “In looking back, that was one of the key decisions that helped us grow our investments so that, for a church our size, we are really in a good position now.” This is at a time when there are other churches in Anderson that are in financial difficulty.

Brethren values

Further, investing according to Brethren values is supported by the congregation. BFFI follows Brethren Values Investing (see p. 10). Don observed, “It’s a real testament to the Church of the Brethren. You don’t have to sacrifice returns to keep your values in line.”

He further stated, “It’s one thing to have a relationship with a financial institution, but when you also have a religious affiliation, that really extends the trust, and that relationship can only grow stronger over time.”

Anderson Church of the Brethren has made use of its Brethren Foundation Funds investment returns to keep the church property well maintained without depleting its budget.
Brethren Values Investing

Whenever possible, assets managed for members, clients, and donors follow BVI guidelines that are consistent with Church of the Brethren Annual Conference statements. Notably this means screening out the 25 publicly traded companies that receive the most U.S. Department of Defense contracts and companies that generate 10 percent or more of their gross earnings from Defense Department contracts. Further, companies that produce more than 10 percent of their income from firearms and military weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction, abortion, alcohol, gambling, pornography, or tobacco, are screened from BBT investment portfolios, as well as companies that are egregious violators of environmental or human rights regulations.

Advocacy

The second prong of BBT’s BVI strategy is to advocate for Annual Conference positions on social issues with companies in which BBT owns stocks, influencing the ways those companies interact with shareholders and others in the global community. In 2019, BBT engaged in a variety of shareholder initiatives, including the following:

- BBT continued as the lead organization in an effort to secure the rights of indigenous peoples to free prior and informed consent regarding ConocoPhillips activities in their region.
- BBT signed an investor letter in February, encouraging the Bangladesh government to support the accomplishments of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety that was established in the wake of the Rana Plaza building collapse in April 2013, to address workplace safety in Bangladesh garment factories. BBT has been a supporter of this
initiative since the initial investor letter in 2013.

- BBT was represented in July by Boston Common in meetings with Japanese companies in BBT’s portfolio on human rights issues.

- BBT signed a shareholder letter sent by US SIF: The Forum of Sustainable and Responsible Investment to the Securities and Exchange Commission on Sept. 18 expressing concern about SEC’s stated intent to initiate a rule-making on Rule 14a-8 that will likely weaken shareholders’ rights.

Positive Investing

The third component of BBT’s Brethren Values Investing activities is positive impact investing, which means investing funds in higher-than-normal risk areas or economically depressed communities to help stimulate economic growth and redevelopment. This option is realized through investments by Pension Plan members and asset management clients in our Community Development Investment Fund.

Making a positive change

In 2020, in order to increase the liquidity of invested money, the decision was made to move to a new Community Development Investment Fund manager — Community Capital Management — to replace Calvert Impact Capital.

This change was made to increase the liquidity of invested money. Because CCM is a mutual fund, it will be easier to move money in and out of the fund than it has been with assets invested through Calvert Impact Capital, where the money has been placed in notes of a specific term, and could not be taken out until the term was completed or if the investor is willing to pay a penalty. It became problematic for Calvert Impact Capital to meet the liquidity needs of Brethren Pension Plan members.

CCM is a mutual fund that invests in marketable securities — existing mortgage-backed, municipal Bonds, etc. — that have social impact in one or more of the following areas: affordable health/rehab care, affordable housing, arts and culture, disaster recovery, economic inclusion, education, childcare, enterprise development, jobs, environment sustainability, gender issues, government-supported communities, healthy communities, human empowerment, minority advancement, neighborhood revitalization, rural community development, seniors, the disabled, sustainable agriculture, and transit development.

Brethren Values Investing has long been a keystone in BBT’s investment approach, and we are proud of our ongoing efforts to be socially responsible investors while protecting and growing the assets of our members and clients.


**Called out to serve**

Tabitha grew up in Franklin County and attended Ferrum College there. After teaching for a few years, she felt God working through other people “rather persistently” to reveal her true calling. In her words, “Ministry is not something you eagerly pursue because you think you are good at it. Instead, based on the gifts and skills others see, one is called out to serve. This happened to me over many years and through many experiences.”

**Pastoring**

A few years later, having earned a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary, she was asked to serve as interim associate executive for the Virlina District, and then went on to pastor Smith Mountain Lake Community Church of the Brethren. Her husband, Dan, was a pastor in nearby Roanoke, where he continues to pastor today.

**Planning for a family**

As a member of the Council of District Executives, Tabitha had learned from BBT staff that short-term disability insurance could be used to cover income during maternity leave. So she asked if this type of insurance could be part of her benefits package at Smith Mountain Lake CoB. When the time came to start a family, she and Dan knew that BBT’s short-term disability insurance would have her covered.

Following the counsel of Jeremiah Thompson, BBT’s director of Insurance Operations, the Rudys had started the application process early in...
August for an expected mid-October delivery. When baby Evelyn arrived in September, a few weeks early, they were glad everything was in place to cover Tabitha’s six-week maternity leave.

**BBT solves problems**

Having never used short-term disability insurance before, Tabitha sensed that the payment schedule might be off track, and she reached out to BBT to inquire about how the money was being distributed to her. “They got right to it and they were able to get answers to me really quickly,” she said.

Short-term disability insurance is a good benefit to protect against anything that puts a person out of work, and it is inexpensive. Although maternity leave is now behind them, Tabitha and Dan continue to keep it, as well as other Brethren Insurance Services products.

**Insurance helps, in a church setting**

Without short-term disability, Tabitha would have used her “special circumstance” days for maternity leave, and the church would have been paying for this, in addition to the cost of someone filling in for her. So you can see how short-term disability insurance helps the pastor and the congregation. Tabitha was able to reserve most of her special circumstance days and save the church a lot of money. The congregation was able to fill the pulpit during her leave without the burden of additional costs.

**Insurance products offered through Brethren Insurance Services:**

- Medical
- Dental
- Vision
- Medicare Supplement
- Life & AD&D
- Accident
- Long-term Disability
- Short-term Disability
- Pet
- Long-term care

**Innovative products and the future of Brethren Insurance Services**

In the past year, we have put much energy into emphasizing the special help available to our medical plan members — like concierge service, a one-call resource for all healthcare needs, including finding doctors and scheduling appointments.

The ShareCare program is a confidential health-tracking app that helps members determine how healthy they are and keeps them on track with reminders of good habits.

We also let our members know that we cover a host of holistic treatments, such as acupuncture and therapeutic massage.

Livongo is our new program for diabetes management; it provides all the tools diabetics need to monitor treatment and receive supplies.

In the first quarter of 2020, we emphasized the use of virtual medicine as an alternative to an in-person doctor visit. This became especially vital when the coronavirus pandemic caused much of the country to try to stay at home for their own safety.

Though pastors can’t currently join Brethren Medical Plan, BBT is hopeful about finding a way to offer this benefit in the near future.
BBT Board

Harry Rhodes had completed 16 years on the BBT Board, including eight years as Board chair, when he stepped down in July 2019. Jerry Patterson also bid farewell in July, after seven years with the Board. Filling the slots were Audrey Myer, elected at Annual Conference, and Russ Matteson, elected by Pension and Insurance plan members in April 2019. The Board called Donna Rhodes and Kevin Kessler as the new Board chair and vice chair, respectively.

The traditional good-bye wave from board members Harry Rhodes and Jerry Patterson, as they exit their final BBT Board meeting in July 2019.

BBT Staff

In 2019, BBT said farewell to Everett Teetor, who resigned the position of Accounting Assistant. And in August, Donna March, BBT’s Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services, announced her retirement as of December, after 35 combined years of service to Church of the Brethren General Board and BBT. In October 2019, BBT welcomed Michelle Kilbourne to begin working alongside Donna in order to take over her position in January 2020. Ovi Catanescue completed his service as an employee of BBT in June 2020.
Directory
as of June 26, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS

Donna McKee Rhodes, Chair
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

Kevin Kessler, Vice Chair
Canton, Illinois

Sara Brenneman
Hershey, Pennsylvania

Eunice Culp
Goshen, Indiana

Ron Gebhardtsbauer
State College, Pennsylvania

Eric Kabler
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Dennis Kingery
San Diego, California

Shelley Kontra
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Russ Matteson
Modesto, California

Tom McCracken
Dallastown, Pennsylvania

Audrey Myer
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

David Shissler
Hummelstown, Pennsylvania

David Steele
Ex officio
General Secretary,
Church of the Brethren Inc.

STAFF

Nevin Dulabaum
President; Ex officio of the Board

Veronica Aragon
Accounting Specialist

Jean Bednar
Director of Communications

Loyce Swartz Borgmann
Assistant Director of Client Relations

Debbie Butcher
Employee Benefits Specialist

Joven Castillo
Network Administrator

Tammy Chudy
Director of Retirement Operations

Sherri Crowe
Client Manager for Brethren Foundation

Lori Domich
Retirement Plans Specialist

Scott Douglas
Director of Client Relations

German Gongora
Director of Operations for Information Technology

Michelle Kilbourne
Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services

Fatima Kurth
Accountant / Bookkeeper

Steve Lipinski
Manager of Brethren Foundation Operations

Steve Mason
Director of Brethren Foundation, Brethren Foundation Funds, and Brethren Values Investing

John McGough
Chief Financial Officer

Diane Parrott
Administrative Office Assistant

Huma Rana
Director of Financial Operations

Lynnae Rodeffer
Director of Employee Benefits

Connie Sandman
Insurance Plans Specialist

Ed Shannon
Retirement Planning Consultant

Jeremiah Thompson
Director of Insurance Operations

Rick Villalobos
Communications Manager

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Legal Counsel
Conner and Winters
Washington, DC

Huck Bouma
Elgin, Illinois

Vedder Price
Chicago, Illinois

Investment Managers
Agincourt Capital Management
Richmond, Virginia

BMO Global Asset Management
Chicago, Illinois

Boston Common Asset Management
Boston, Massachusetts

Calvert Foundation
Bethesda, Maryland

Crossmark Global Investments
Houston, Texas

Income Research + Management
Boston, Massachusetts

Kayne Anderson Rudnick
Los Angeles, California

Marquette Associates
Chicago, Illinois

Numeric Investors
Boston, Massachusetts

Ponder Investment
Nashville, Tennessee

Boston Trust Walden
Boston, Massachusetts

Investment Consultants
Ascension Capital Enterprises
Sewickley, Pennsylvania

Marquette Associates
Chicago, Illinois

Audit Services
Legacy Professionals
Chicago, Illinois

Securities Custodian
U.S. Bank
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Depository
J.P. Morgan Chase
Chicago, Illinois

Reconciliation Agent
Nottingham Investment Administration
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Pension Plan Record Keeper
Northwest Plan Services
Seattle, Washington

Actuary, Underwriters, and Insurance Consultants
Aon Hewitt Associates
Chicago, Illinois

Delta Dental
Naperville, Illinois

EyeMed Vision Care
Mason, Ohio

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Plexus Groupe
Deer Park, Illinois

Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Ritter Insurance Marketing
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

United American
Chicago, Illinois

Arthur J. Gallagher
Risk Management Services
Rockford, Illinois

Information Technology
Global Data Vault
Dallas, Texas

Sikich
Aurora, Illinois

Sterling Network Integration
Lake Barrington, Illinois
The ministries of Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust include the affiliates Brethren Benefit Trust Inc., Brethren Foundation Inc., and Brethren Foundation Funds Inc.