

coordinates with the state, local and tribal governments, and the private sector during domestic natural or man-made disasters.

- **Retirees have a new option for tax-free giving to the church or church agencies through the Pension Protection Act of 2006.**

Those age 70-and-a-half or older may give up to \$100,000 in 2006-07 directly from an individual retirement account (IRA) without reporting the gift as income.

Previously such gifts would be taxable. Gifts must be made on or before Dec. 31, 2007, and transferred directly from the IRA by its administrator or trustee. Some funds are ineligible to receive such gifts including charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and donor-advised funds. For more information contact one of the funding staff of the Church of the Brethren General Board or the Brethren Benefit Trust, or a personal financial advisor.

- **The US federal budget for 2007 calls for cuts in domestic human needs programs so that more money can be allocated for defense, said an Action Alert from the Brethren Witness/Washington Office.**

The alert supports a call for action by the faith community from Domestic Human Needs, an ecumenical faith-based working group. The budget will be finalized in the upcoming "lame duck" session of Congress. The alert listed how budget cuts will affect domestic human needs programs including cuts in job-training programs for the fifth year in a row; cuts in the budget of Head Start of \$140 million less than the program would need to provide a 2006 level of service; a cut of \$43 million for child care, primarily provided through the Child Care and Development Block Grant, likely to cause 11,000 children to lose assistance; funding for Pell Grants for low- and middle-income students of \$725 million below the 2006 level plus inflation; funding for the National Institutes of Health that is \$351 million below the 2006 level plus inflation. The office is providing a sample letter expressing these concerns to send to a local newspaper or to members of Congress. Contact the Brethren Witness/Washington Office at 800-785-3246 or washington_office_gb@brethren.org.

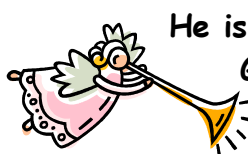
- **A workshop titled, "A Faithful Response: Supporting and Welcoming Those Who Choose Military Service or Conscientious Objection,"** was held Nov. 11 at Messiah Church of the Brethren in Kansas City, Mo.

On Earth Peace staff Susanna Farahat and Laura Partridge of the American Friends Service Committee, along with Kansas City pastors Barbra Davis and Sonja Griffith, provided leadership for the day-long peace retreat sponsored by the Kansas City Metro Parish. Sessions included "Christian Nonviolence," "Military Recruitment/Conscientious Objection," "Sharing Stories in Community," and "Welcoming Veterans Home."

- **The National Council of Churches has released a report giving churches "bright ideas for reducing utility bills and caring for creation."**

Lighting, heating, and housing activities comes at a cost to a church's bottom line and negatively impact the environment and human health, the NCC said in a release about the report. "Bottom Line Ministries that Matter:

Congregational Stewardship with Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Technologies" outlines how congregations can save money as they reduce carbon emissions that lead to global warming. The report promotes moral and financial stewardship and gives examples of how churches successfully saved \$8,000-\$16,000 a year using energy efficient technologies. Download from www.nccec.org/network (user must sign up for the network to download resources) .

 **He is born, the divine Christ Child.
Greet Him with gaily resounding pipe
and drum.
He is born, the divine Christ Child.
Join in song, for the Lord has come.**

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp

