

District Executive Minister Report
District Board Meeting - February 24, 2018 - Covington Church of the Brethren

With our January meeting being postponed due to weather, it has been since September for a regular meeting and a report from me. Reactions and fallout from Annual Conference continues but has slowed a bit. We are continuing plans for our district meeting as a result of these reactions, with our focus to be on staying together in the midst of the turmoil. Repeating from my September report - "We can choose to focus on that which has potential to pull us apart, or we can choose to focus on the ministry and mission given to us by God. Now, more than ever, the call for us to work at a compelling vision to move forward together to "continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together" is critical. I feel we have already been doing this for Southern Ohio and hope our journey continues as we discern the leading of the Spirit among us. In these uncertain times in our world, our country and even in our denomination, there are these encouraging signs of God's movement within us. As followers of Jesus, may we be empowered by the strength and presence of God's Spirit in all of us."

I continue to meet with congregations either as a preacher or for ongoing relationship contact or for various issues. Since my last full board report in September,

- * met with West Milton congregation as we looked to the future of ministry there.
- * celebrated 200 years of ministry with the Salem congregation.
- * attended worship at Trinity and installed their new pastor, Arnold Collett.
- * met with West Charleston leadership several times for interviews with candidates for new co-pastor
- * preached at Beaver creek as pastor Barb Sayler was on vacation.
- * along with some members of the district board, led worship at the Brethren Retirement Community Chapel service.
- * met with Bear Creek leadership several times to discuss some new vision for continuing ministry which also included an interview with a pastoral candidate.
- * attended and participated in an event at the Brethren Heritage Center with guests from Nigeria.
- * preached at Bear Creek while interim pastor Fred Bernhard was away, also attended Bear Creek council meeting to discuss new vision for ministry and to share information regarding upcoming vote for pastoral leadership.
- * conducted call vote at West Charleston for new co-pastor, Caleb Kragt; the call was extended and accepted.
- * attended meet and greet at Bear Creek with pastoral candidate, conducted call vote the next day for new pastor, Angela Asamoah; the call was extended and accepted.
- * preached at Cedar Grove as pastor Tony Price was on vacation.
- * preached at Stonelick and conducted ordination service for pastor Sie Brock who had completed the EFSM ministry training program.
- * attended worship and installed new co-pastor, Caleb Kragt, at West Charleston.

- * attended worship and installed new pastor, Angela Asamoah, at Bear Creek.
- * met with Painter Creek leadership to discuss pastoral transition and new ministry opportunities.

We currently have several congregations in some stage of pastoral search. Nan Erbaugh and Fred Bernhard each had served as interim at Bear Creek until they called Angela Asamoah as their new pastor. Good Shepherd continues being served with a long term interim in partnership with Bethany Theological Seminary and the district; Musa Mambula, a EYN pastor currently at Bethany as international scholar in residence, is serving at Good Shepherd. Prince of Peace continues in the long term intentional interim agreement with Doug Veal; West Charleston called Caleb Kragt to fill the opening on their pastoral staff. I express appreciation to each of these persons as they assist in ministry in these congregations and we send best wishes to those pastors beginning new ministries. I have had numerous contacts with pastors and other church leaders on a variety of topics related to their ministries and/or role within the district. I've also met with minister's groups as they gather for study and fellowship. John Warner from BRC and I continue our relationship and friendship as we share in ministry together.

My duties on the Council of District Executives include being the CODE representative to the Mission and Ministry Board and serving on the denominational Leadership Team. I am also the Council secretary which means that I am part of the Council's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met in October hosted by our BRC. The Mid-West CODE group also met in October at Camp Mack in Indiana. The Mission and Ministry Board also met in October in Elgin as did the denominational Leadership Team. The Council of District Executives held their winter meetings in Florida in January followed by a 2 day meeting of the denominational Leadership Team. My term as secretary and representative to MMB and Leadership Team ends at the conclusion of Annual Conference this summer. The make up of the Council has changed rather dramatically over the past year or so with some new colleagues beginning; your prayers for this changing nature of the Council is appreciated.

I continue to meet with our commissions as often as possible to share in the ongoing work. Our teams continue their fine work of ministering to the pastors and congregations of the district in addition to ministry for the district at large. I deeply appreciate the dedication, energy and commitment of those serving on our commissions, as well as other committees and the board in roles throughout the District. It is important that we express our appreciation for one another as we serve together. Camping and retreat ministries have a number of summer events planned after a busy fall and winter. Appreciation is also expressed to our paid and volunteer staff for all their hard work; we have a great team working together for Southern Ohio/Kentucky.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve for and with you all in Southern Ohio/Kentucky, even and especially in the midst of these rather uncertain times. I deeply

appreciate our teamwork in ministry as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus. May we be ever mindful that we need to proceed in an attitude of prayer, of openness to God's Spirit and of continuing the journey as the people of God, filled with grace, love and peace. May we be aware of the presence of God as we seek to fulfill the mission God has given us.

Blessings!

Dave Shetler, District Executive Minister, Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Church of the Brethren