

District Executive Minister Report

District Board Meeting - September 15, 2018 - West Milton Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren is now moving forward to discover, define, and live into a compelling vision. There will be meetings in all the districts to work at this together, with the meetings for our district the first weekend of November. Our Connections Commission is working with the Compelling Vision Process Team to finalize these arrangements. As we consider our mission statement - Working Together, Empowering Disciples - I am hopeful through this process we can capture a vision to carry out our mission. There is certainly evidence of our mission being carried out; the various ways our congregations are working together, an urban ministry team beginning its work, camping and retreat ministries, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Brethren Retirement Community, the ministries led by our commissions, congregations discovering new life. As we continue to serve and work together in ministry and mission here in Southern Ohio/Kentucky, may we seek the guidance of the Spirit, be inspired by the love of Jesus, and be filled with the grace of God. Even as we face uncertain times in our world, our country and even in our denomination, there are these encouraging signs of God's movement within us, may we be faithful.

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 May,

- * met with Trotwood leadership to explain the urban ministry team concept.
- * preached for the 5th Sunday joint worship of Troy, Pleasant Hill and West Milton as they also welcomed Good Shepherd to this partnership.
- * participated in the 3 listening sessions led by the Brethren Retirement Community regarding their proposed new organizational structure.
- * met with Eversole leadership as we discern both current future pastoral leadership needs and structure.
- * met with leadership of the Brethren Heritage Center regarding district documents, including materials related to Camp Woodland Altars.
- * met with New Carlisle leadership as we prepare for pastoral transition next spring with the retirement of current pastor, Andrew Wright.
- * met with potential pastoral leadership for Good Shepherd.
- * met with John Sgro about some potential partnerships for Oakland and for the district.
- * preached on two occasions for Trotwood while pastor Jen Scarr was serving with Christian Peacemakers Teams.
- * met several times with Brookville leadership regarding pastoral sabbatical and future ministry.
- * conducted an interview with Good Shepherd regarding pastoral services.
- * met with the New Carlisle congregation to outline pastoral transition issues.
- * met with Urban Ministry Team as we continue this journey.

We currently have several congregations in some stage of pastoral search. Good Shepherd is considering an option for future pastoral care; Prince of Peace will welcome new co-pastors, Katie and Tim Heishman, in October, long term intentional interim Doug Veal will conclude his service this Sunday; Painter Creek is being served by regular pulpit supply as a partnership with Oakland is being explored. 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 are now serving on the Ministry Advisory Committee and maintaining the Counsel's website. The Mid-West Council will be sponsoring a new pastors retreat in a few weeks at Camp Mack, I am the convener for this retreat and the following meeting of the Mid-West Council. The Council continues to be a place for us to network and support each other.

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 had a great summer, with numbers up in most of our camps, and last week's Women's Retreat had a significant increase over last year's registration. 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 continue to be amazed at witnessing the variety of ways we serve together to "continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together." 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