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CONFERENCE NETWORK

The Conference Network Team is made up of the Bishop (chair), NC Secretary, Associates (4), and District Field Directors (13). They are:

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| • Bishop Hill, Chair | • Rev. Bradley Hatter | • Rev. Ralph Owens |
| • Rev. Kirk Marks, Secretary | • Mr. Kevin Henry | • Rev. James Price |
| • Rev. Gary Brown | • Rev. Gary Kuehner | • Rev. Jeffrey Schell |
| • Rev. Jeffrey Byerly | • Rev. Marlin Lafferty | • Rev. Randall Sizemore |
| • Rev. Charles Campbell | • Rev. Gordon Lewis | • Rev. Sterling Trimmer |
| • Rev. David Carr | • Rev. Keith Miller | |
| • Rev. Leslie Cool | • Rev. Paul Miller | |

The regular schedule of meetings includes:

1. A Daily Check-In, a five minute “stand-up meeting” between the Bishop and Executive Director.
2. All the members of the CNT will participate in a 45 minute Bi-Monthly Tactical teleconference.
3. The BEDAS Group (Bishop, Executive Director, Associates and NC Secretary) holds a two-hour meeting once a month.
4. The entire CNT membership meets at least twice a year in a Strategic Meeting format.

At the beginning of the restructuring it was said that the District Field Directors (DFDs) were the key people in reviving the district system and facilitating open lines of communication. I am thankful to be able to report that our DFDs are doing a good job. One of the significant projects completed this year was the writing of a District Field Director Handbook. This “simple” project eventually resulted in a 96 page Handbook. It is believed this will help our DFDs understand their responsibilities as they assist pastors and churches in reaching their potential in carrying out the Great Commission. Special thanks to Administrative Assistant, Jodi Earhart, for working with the Bishop in the development of this Handbook.

During the course of our meetings we have discussed the NC2017 “Kingdom & Community Experience and how we can continue to coach ourselves forward in the conversation about helping churches understand the ways our communities can assist them in greater health and effectiveness. The DFDs are bringing elements of that experience into conversations when appropriate. The District Field Directors are doing a good job of helping to lead times of prayer, study, and discussion within the various districts. There is a growing sense that while we have a number of little churches, they are little churches doing important ministries. We celebrate those ministries that are impacting communities with the Good News about Jesus. We will rely on the DFDs’ as they facilitate our discussion times during the NC2018 Kingdom & Community Experience on Thursday afternoon and, once again, help to keep those conversations alive long after we leave Conference.

We are pleased that as we meet we hear stories of more pastors and churches becoming involved in district gatherings. The DFDs have continued to report that these times have been important in building a stronger vision of teamwork. We are thankful that when one of the pastors / churches experiences a time of challenge or stress the others respond and help where and when they can. Praise the Lord for local leaders who see ministry with a Kingdom point of view! The work of leading a district as well as the participation of the DFDs in both the CNT Tactical and CNT Strategic meetings fosters greater sense of community and cooperation within their district and across district boundaries.

The DFDs and Associates are working well together; and facilitating ongoing conversations individually and within the districts as a whole; providing opportunities for the Associates to engage with local leaders. I believe we are already seeing fruit come from these conversations and will see an even

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greater harvest as the conversations and relationships mature in the years to come. The summer of 2018 will see the transition of our Global Ministries Associate from Randy Sizemore to Ted Rathman. We will certainly miss Randy's perspective and input in so many areas; but look forward to hearing a new voice as Ted joins the team.

It is my joy to chair the Conference Network Team. We, as a denomination are blessed to have these men lead our denomination as they follow Christ.

Bishop Bruce D. Hill

CONFERENCE SUPPORT

The Conference Support Team invested a large amount of time in late fall and early winter working on pastoral compensation. New pastoral compensation rules are being introduced at the May 2018 National Conference for approval. New pastoral compensation forms will be available for 2019 compensation and pastoral compensation instructional videos were posted to an ECC Vimeo channel. The previous pastoral compensation rules and forms were not wrong or incorrect. The current rules and forms were what were needed for that period of the EC Church. The new rules and forms are built upon what was originally created and are mostly reformatted to fit what is needed today. Thanks to those that came before for what they created and their care and concern for the pastors of the EC Church.

The new pastoral compensation rules and forms were introduced at the 2018 pre-conference meetings resulting in some lively discussions. Thanks to everyone that attended the pre-conference meetings.

The new pastoral compensation forms are asking for the same information with the same calculations as the previous forms albeit with new formatting that has, unfortunately, resulted in an increase in the number of forms and pages. There will be two dedicated sets of forms; one set for a pastor residing in a parsonage and a second set for a pastor not residing in a parsonage. The different pastoral housing situations have unique payroll criteria that are best addressed with different forms. Also, by separating some of the calculation steps onto different forms and having more whitespace on the forms the process should be easier to follow and complete. A detailed step-by-step net paycheck calculation form is available for churches completing payroll in house. I believe it is better for churches to outsource payroll, however a form and instructions are available that is **not required to be completed or returned**.

The payroll instructional videos are available at www.vimeo.com. If you search for the "ECC" or "Evangelical Congregational Church" channel you can find the seven pastoral compensation videos and one video for stationing elders. The videos run in length from under ten minutes to over twenty minutes and follow the same format of having separate videos for the two different pastoral housing situations.

The rule changes are not significant however they follow the same format as the compensation forms in that there will be a set of rules for a pastor residing in a church provided parsonage and a second set for a pastor residing not in a church provided parsonage.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Audit Committee:

Another rule change to be presented at the May 2018 National Conference for consideration is moving rule 504.3 – Audit Committee from underneath the Conference Support Team to under the Finance Committee rule 403. This will designate the members of the Finance Committee as members of the Audit Committee and transfers authority of the Audit Committee from the Executive Director to the Treasurer.

Please see the Audit Committee report included with the Finance Committee report.

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Church Center Operations Team:

Abigail Bomgardner is beginning to assume some of Brenda's National Conference duties. Brenda will not be attending all of the National Conference sessions as in previous years. Abi has been working in Church Center business office, in a less public role, for about 2 ½ years. Please stop by the registration table and introduce yourself to Abi. I am thankful for all the members of the Church Center Team and their high level of skill, faithfulness and camaraderie in the office.

Conference Services Committee

We all owe Keith Miller, the Red Shirt Team and the staff at Messiah College and big thank-you for all the necessary small details to hold a successful conference. A thank-you in advanced to the attendees for your patience and understanding as we incorporate a new technology into the National Conference. And another round of gratitude and appreciation to David Julian and the musicians from Grace Community Willow Street for leading worship this year.

Property Committee

The building of the former Grace EC in East Petersburg, PA is being rented by Grace EC Lancaster, PA. The National Conference will retain ownership of the East Petersburg property for a period of time while the occupying church pays rent and all routine operating and maintenance costs of the building. As of the writing of this report, a property or two may come under the control of the property committee during 2019.

Properties Owned by the National Conference

EC Church Center, 100 W Park Ave, Myerstown, PA 17067
Community at New Direction, 226 Southeast Ave., Tallmadge, OH 44278
Community at New Direction Parsonage, 206 Southeast Ave., Tallmadge, OH 44278
Salem EC, 401 East Center St., Mahanoy City, PA 17948
Grace EC Church, 107 West Wiconisco St., Muir, PA 17957
Grace EC Church, 6067 Carpenter St, East Petersburg, PA 17520

Jonathan Brown, Heritage Committee Chair, and I remain in the planning stage of a move of the EC archives from the third floor of Church Center to a space in the ground floor vacated by Religious and Theological Abstracts (RTA). The process has taken much longer than anticipated. The vacated space will be renovated allowing the EC archives to be better organized, more accessible and have space available for research and growth.

Two major repairs are needed at Church Center. The lower half of the parking lot is deteriorating significantly and quickly. Also the railing on the outside of the front stairs is causing the stair treads to crack and separate. The parking lot is scheduled to be fixed during 2018. The railing on the front stairs is currently securely fastened and its condition is being monitored. However, if the railing becomes a safety hazard a repair or replacement timetable will be accelerated.

Publishing Committee

A few copies of the 2016 edition of the Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church still remain. Contact Pat Wolfe at the EC Church Center to order a hard copy. The Discipline is available in three formats; red hard cover ring binder (7x9) - \$23.00, loose pages or inserts only to fit the 7x9 ring binder - \$13.00, 8 ½ x11 red spiral binder notebook - \$10.00 and 4x7 abridged version - \$3.25 ea. Disciplines may be picked up at the EC Church Center or mailed for an additional shipping charge. The Discipline is also available to download from <http://www.eccenter.com/Left/Resources/Publications/2016-Discipline.aspx>. Other denominational items are available at Church Center or download (not all publications are available for download) from www.eccenter.com; 2018 planbook, brochures, prayer guides, membership books and various membership certificates. Please contact Pat Wolfe to order publications or with any questions.

One of two charges given to the CST is to "providing the necessary services to accomplish the mission across the network". Please contact me or any of the community or committee leaders with suggestions or ideas of what services are needed to accomplish the mission of the local EC Church. The

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members of the communities and committees are listed in section 2 of the National Conference Journal and my contact information is in section 1 and page 1 of the National Conference Journal. We will listen to all suggestions for needs and services, evaluate the need and respond when necessary. If enough churches ask for the same service the viability of adding the desired service will be evaluated. The leadership of the CST is also willing to attend local church meetings or district meetings if requested.

Kevin Henry