

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

It is with joy that I share this report that will be part of the packet distributed at our in-person event at District Conference. We are grateful that we can meet in this manner.

Much has occurred since COVID restrictions have eased. Since April 2021, when we resumed semi-normal district processes, the following number of call and credentialing services will have occurred through the conclusion of 2022.

- Nine ordinations
- Seven licensings
- Seventeen installations of pastors in new congregations along with various interim positions being filled.

It is this last number that is particularly startling. I did not track closely the number of installations until preparing this report. It is no secret that there is a significant pastoral shortage in the denomination yet, somehow, somehow we keep working at placement.

In addition to the above processes, we are grateful that Bridgewater Retirement Community has extended an invitation for the Shenandoah District to meet monthly for pastor's gatherings over lunch. These gatherings feature a variety of CEU opportunities, special programs, and invaluable times of fellowship. Bridgewater Retirement Community provides delicious lunches at no cost to the pastors or District. Thank you!

There are multiple challenges that we are facing, including the current denominational division. Despite these other challenges, I believe leadership development and models of leadership need to be front and center of future work together. It is to that end that we will be convening district leaders in January to begin brainstorming/evaluating the whole range of leadership activities. This includes the call of leadership, evaluating the credentialing and educational models currently at work, and the sustaining and nurturing of leadership. We ask your prayers as we proceed with this important work.

I continue to be in awe of congregational vitality and resilience. It has been a joyous time participating with many of you, worshipping with you as you celebrate homecomings, significant dates in congregational life, congregational renewals, and other important events. I give God thanks!

On a more somber note, the denominational division has impacted the Shenandoah District as well. We are grateful for the foresight of many who drafted the Congregational Withdrawal Process, passed at the 2019 District Conference. There are five congregations from the District who have completed the withdrawal process in 2022. These congregations are Antioch, Beaver Creek, Calvary, Columbia Furnace, and Moscow. I am thankful to report that the desire of the 2019 paper "that we hope the paper never needs to be used, but if it does that the process would reflect the Spirit of Christ", was more than met. Sadness and a keen sense of loss were present, yet there was a deep sense of blessing and a desire for God's purposes to continue.

On a personal note, I continue to take great delight in serving the congregations of the Shenandoah District. I keenly understand the forces and struggles which we are encountering. At the same time, I see signs of God's moving among us. The challenges are daunting but the opportunities for renewal of vision and hope are also present.

I close this report with a pastoral word and prayer. The stresses are real, many situations continue to be uncertain and volatile, pressures on congregational leadership are significant. Thanks to each of you who function in some manner in congregational life. Know that your work is deeply appreciated, and you are much in my thoughts and prayers. I pray God's best and blessings on each of you.

Serving Christ Together,
John Jantzi
District Executive Minister