

The year 2023 presented new challenges and new opportunities for our District Leadership Team as we experienced the withdrawal of several congregations and struggles faced by others, even as some congregations seem to be doing quite well. Through it all, the work of the district continues through the dedicated efforts of our Ministry Teams.

Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development Team is chaired by Jane Baker. Their main event for the year was a workshop on Servant Leadership in held October at Harrisonburg First Church.

Discipleship Ministries Team chair is Dave Chappell. This team is sponsoring a series of three sessions of District Bible School. The first was held October 8 at Mt. Pleasant Church.

Ministerial Leadership Team is led by Phil Stone Jr. They have been busy conducting licensing and ordination interviews. There is a severe shortage of pastors, but in our district many are receiving training through the Christian Growth Institute program. Additional training opportunities for lay ministers are being explored.

New Church Development Team chair is Daniel House. Our newest congregation, Gordonsville Chapel, was recognized at Annual Conference this summer. This team is also exploring church development opportunities beyond church planting.

Outdoor Ministries Team is chaired by Nancy Bowman. They had an excellent Spring Festival and summer camp. Staff housing needs have been addressed with the purchase of a home for the Program Director. OMT has provided strong support for Director Linda Alley and her staff.

Congregational Care Team chaired by Jonathan Fletcher has team members representing all five sections of our district. Their goal is to maintain contact with all congregations as a way of keeping them connected and informed. CCT held a deacon training event in September, led by retired pastor Bernie Fuska.

Service Ministries is chaired by Don Driver. They sponsored a Thank You Dinner in March at Pleasant Valley Church and an Ice Cream Social in September at Bridgewater Retirement Community. The primary purpose of these events was to express appreciation to those who have supported disaster ministries and our annual auction. This team acts as a resource for our Disaster Response Auction and Brethren Disaster Ministries.

MY thanks are extended to all members of the District Leadership Team for faithful service during this time when our district and denomination face many challenges. Service Ministries Chair, Don Driver, and I are each completing our second and final three-year term. The work continues thanks to the innovative leadership of many volunteers and staff persons.

I especially extend my heartfelt thanks to our District Executive Minister, John Jantzi, for his faithful leadership and dedicated service, especially for his untiring efforts to maintain relationships with all persons and congregations that make up Shenandoah District.

Wayne Pence, District Leadership Team chair