

## **2021 District Conference Wrap-up**

The Virilina District Conference of the Church of the Brethren gathered at the Grandin Court Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia on November 12-13, 2021. "Wait On The Lord" was the theme of the 2021 District Conference. The theme was based upon Isaiah 40:31, "... but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Attendees participated in the worship, fellowship and spiritual discernment for the district under the leadership of Moderator Gregory E. Fleshman, pastor of the Mount Union Church of the Brethren in Roanoke County, Virginia.

Assisting in leadership during conference was Moderator-Elect Lynn N. Myers of the Antioch Church in Franklin County, Virginia, Pamela K. Clark of the Peters Creek Church who served as Clerk, Harvey S. Leddy of the Roanoke, Williamson Road Church who served as Timekeeper, and Timothy P. Harvey of the Roanoke, Oak Grove Church who served as Parliamentarian. David Sollenberger, 2023 Annual Conference Moderator, spoke for worship and the Ministers and Spouses meal on Friday night.

Saturday's business included the following:

### Persons Called to Leadership:

Moderator-Elect – Noel S. Naff (Mount Hermon)

District Board – Gayle M. Harms (Jones Chapel), Gary W. Bauer (Durham, Peace Covenant), Pam D. Harris (Topeco), Samuel F. St. John (Roanoke, Ninth Street), Karen B. Cassell (Lynchburg), Timothy H. Emmons (Nineveh), Bruce E. Huffman (Antioch), Robin W. Lavinder (Germantown Brick), Todd A. Reed (Cedar Bluff), and Rudolph H. Taylor, III (Cloverdale).

Outdoor Ministries Committee – Kimberly H. Brown (Cloverdale) and Stephanie D. Robinson (Roanoke, Oak Grove).

Standing Committee – Edward C. Woodard (Roanoke, Oak Grove).

Program and Arrangements – Teresa M. Broyles (Germantown Brick) and Suzanne I. Rhoades (Trinity).

Nominating and Personnel – Amber T. Harris (Durham, Peace Covenant), Michael D. Elmore (Roanoke, Oak Grove) and Kevin L. Kinsey (Roanoke, Central).

The 2020 District Board Budget of \$734,271.97 (including designated items of \$450,000, but not including Camp Bethel) was approved. This included a 4% salary increase for the District Resource Center staff. (95% approval)

Approval of a resolution revising the quorum required by the constitution and by-laws for the district board (89% approval).

Approved the disorganization of the Boones Chapel (Snow Creek) Church (96% approval) and the Parkway Church (99% approval).

Other newsworthy items:

An offering of \$1,876 was received to be divided between conference expenses and the 2021 Haiti Earthquake Response of the Church of the Brethren.

The District Board reorganized during the lunch hour. Serving as chairpersons are: Hannah M. Jarrett (Roanoke, Summerdean) – District Board, J.W. Rhoades (Trinity), Vice Chair – District Board, Timothy H. Emmons (Nineveh) – Commission on Ministry, Robin W. Lavinder (Germantown Brick) – Commission on Nurture, Stacy W. Goff (Copper Hill) – Commission on Stewardship, and Roger G. Stultz (Roanoke, Summerdean) – Commission on Witness. Stephanie L. Naff (Mount Hermon) will serve as Chair of the Outdoor Ministries Committee and Daniel L. Rudy (Roanoke, Ninth Street) will continue as Chair of the New Church Development Committee.

Delegates heard the reports of the District Board, New Church Development Committee, Outdoor Ministries Committee and other institutions of the district and denomination, as well as reports from the district staff. Among those representing the wider church were: David Steele (Church of the Brethren, Inc.) and David Sollenberger (2023 Annual Conference Moderator).

Delegates also heard that twenty-four congregations and fellowships were involved in PASTORAL PLACEMENT PROCESS on September 30: Bassett, Bethany, Bethel, Bethlehem, Christiansburg, Copper Hill, Coulson, Danville – Emmanuel, Fairview-Rocky Mount, Green Hill, Lighthouse, Maple Grove, Moneta-Lake Side, Monte Vista, New Bethel, Newport News-Ivy Farms, Oak Grove – South, Oakvale, Pleasant View, Roanoke-Hollins Road, Roanoke-Iglesia Cristiana Renacer, Saint Paul, Selma and Shelton.

We celebrated the graduation of Naomi L. Powers and Robby Tatum from Christian Growth Institute.

We recognized William M. Pugh in absentia for fifty-years of service in the set-apart ministry. Due to the nature of the conference in a pandemic circumstance, he will be recognized at the Roanoke, Oak Grove Church when the situation permits.

We held a memorial service for those ministers, former district staff persons, spouses and family members, who have died since the 2019 conference: Michael Alan Carroll, Kenneth J. Peterson, Jack D. Karpenske, Joyce Elaine Myers Fike, L. Clyde Carter Jr., Paris Elbert "Pete" Bain, Jettie Adkins English, Gordon Ernest Deyerle II, Charles Curtis Rhudy, Barry Dean Sink, Edgar Kyle Baker, Patsey Martin, James C. McKinnell, James John "Jim" Stade, Nancy Helen Blankenship Hillsman, R. Kermon Thomasson, Debra Lynn Phillips Bassetti, Lois Arlin Kurtz, and Hannah Mae (Withers) Lenker.

Moderator Gregory E. Fleshman installed Lynn N. Myers as the 2022 Moderator. Brother Myers shared that the focus of the 2022 District Conference will be based on I John 4:21, "And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister." The overall theme will be "Bound Together By Love."

The Virilina District is one of twenty-four districts of the denomination and encompasses 91 congregations, fellowships and meeting points with 8,909 members located in Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina. The Church of the Brethren is a denomination of 98,680 members in 978 congregations, fellowships and projects throughout the United States. Brethren are noted for an emphasis on peacemaking, reconciliation and service. Related denominations, formed through mission work, are found in Nigeria, India and other nations. Brethren began in Germany as a movement advocating adult profession of faith and baptism by immersion, separation of church and state, and an earnest desire to live out the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.