

JUNE 2016



Together on the Journey with your district executive minister . . .

August 1 will mark my seventh anniversary in this office. It has been a privilege to serve as Mid-Atlantic District Executive Minister, a calling and privilege I take very seriously. I have the deepest respect for predecessors who have served in this office – Don Booz, Pam Leinauer, Don Rowe – and want to continue the high standards they’ve set. I want to take this opportunity to thank each member of the Mid-Atlantic District for this opportunity. I also want to apologize for mistakes I have made, for ways I may have disappointed you, to thank you for grace, and to reaffirm my continuing and serious commitment to this ministry for another year.

A few thoughts: One of my guiding principles as DEM is “First, do no harm,” which means I try to think, pray, and consult if necessary before acting or responding. If sometimes I seem a little slow to you, this may be why.

I try to be mindful of what is mine and what is not. There is an important role for a district and district executive; we also have a congregationally based system of governance and much congregational autonomy. Some things are mine, some things are a congregation’s.

Something that is mine: Upholding denominational polity and values, and intervening when necessary for the sake of congregational health. This happens somewhere between rarely and occasionally. And almost always because of confidentiality issues, you’ll never be aware of these situations, but they’re one of the most important parts of and hopefully contributions of my vocation.

One of the most important things I do is facilitate pastoral placements, and overall I feel good about the pastoral placements in Mid-Atlantic over my seven years. Some of them have been matches made in heaven. The kinds of pastors I’m looking for and would want to have myself are attracted to Mid-Atlantic, and that’s been a legacy over the tenures of all the DEs I mentioned above.

Some of our most vital, growing congregations are pastored by “second career” and bi-vocational pastors, whose ministerial training has been through TRIM or ACTS, and “apprenticeship.” I appreciate them.

I’m often impressed and humbled by the commitment and service of members of our district: our Moderators, leadership team, ministry and task team members. I’ve had two great Leadership Team Chairs over my tenure – Chris Stockslager and Gretchen Zience.

The district office is moving on June 20. It’s disruptive and time consuming. I intend to take the time necessary to pack up and to get resettled. Our current situation is unsettled because the Service Center is up for sale, nor is it functional space for necessary meetings. I want to see us settled in a place that will serve district needs for an office for the foreseeable future. Thanks to the Westminster Church for making space for us. Thanks to the Brethren Service Center for hosting us for these past twelve years.

These are changing times for the Church of the Brethren and for districts. Change is stressful. Some change is necessary and can be for the best. I believe our best days and years are ahead.

When I began this position, Middle PA DE Dave Steele (incoming General Secretary) told me it would take five years to learn how to do the job. Here I am at seven. I’m a slow learner, but now, at least some days, I feel like I have a clue. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your support.

Together On the Journey,
Gene Hagenberger

Mid-Atlantic District Executive Minister

PLACEMENT UPDATE

Bethany:	Searching
Faithful Servants:	Pulpit supply
Frederick	Preparing Profile
Friendship:	Searching
Harmony	Searching
Welty	Searching
Woodbridge	Searching

DISTRICT CALENDAR

June

18	Annual Conference Briefing, 10 am Oakton CoB
20	District office will begin move to Westminster CoB
25-July 3	District Executive will be attending CODE Summer Session and Annual Conference, Greensboro, NC

July

4	District Office Closed
5	District office will be open at Westminster CoB
14	P&A 2:30 pm at Frederick CoB



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