
District Handbook 2009



**Evangelical Congregational
Church**

The District in the Evangelical Congregational Church

Purpose:

The purpose of the Evangelical Congregational Church is to know Christ and to make Him known.

Mission of EC Districting:

Congregations partnering with congregations to build God's Kingdom by bringing the lost to Christ.

Core Values:

1. PASSION FOR CHRIST as demonstrated by our commitment to the authority of the Bible, the centrality of prayer and the pursuit of holiness.
2. COMPASSION FOR THE LOST as demonstrated by evangelism and acts of mercy on a local, national and global scale.
3. SERVANT LEADERSHIP as demonstrated by the training and development of men and women for mission and ministry.
4. HEALTHY MINISTRIES as demonstrated by changed lives through culturally sensitive churches and denominational institutions.
5. UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST as demonstrated by the networking of churches with the Evangelical Congregational Church and the larger Kingdom of God.

Vision:

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God that is led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost.

We will creatively obey the Great Commission by transforming plateaued and declining churches into healthy, disciple-making churches that are committed to evangelizing the communities to which God has called them.

Healthy churches will reproduce themselves by planting churches in least-reached communities. Interdependence will be the distinguishing mark of the Evangelical Congregational Church as local churches network with one another and ministries beyond the E.C. family to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

Defining the District

We have defined a denomination as a group of congregations that share the conviction that the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is best fulfilled through partnership. The Evangelical Congregational Church is a partnership of 154 congregations, committed to proclaiming Christ to a hurting world.

The question is: “How do we organize 150 congregations to effectively, efficiently, and expeditiously fulfill the Great Commission?” The answer arrived at is “DISTRICTING”.

A DISTRICT is formed when congregations in a particular geographic area are organized to fulfill the Great Commission. The rationale for “DISTRICTING” is as follows:

1. God has strategically placed Evangelical Congregational Church congregations in a variety of geographic districts.
2. God wants to change the people and the communities of these districts and He wants to use the E.C. Church to effect that change.
3. Fulfilling God’s will for a district requires teamwork. District teamwork is defined as congregations partnering with congregations to build God’s Kingdom in a particular geographic area.
4. The “Districting model” is a Biblical model that can be used by God to bring the Evangelical Congregational Church to complete unity “to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:23)
5. God is already at work through regional networks of churches that cross denominational lines in the interest of making Christ known to every household in a particular geographic area (e.g. city, township, county, etc.). Evangelical Congregational districting does not compete with nor replace these regional networks. Evangelical Congregational districting will complement and strengthen the work of regional networks.

To summarize:

The most important word in a district’s vocabulary is “lost”. The district has been raised up by God to reach lost people (or pre-Christian people) in a particular geographic area. The district must not become a “mini-Conference” where denominational politics are debated. It must not become a tradition bound institution that focuses on serving the saved. It must be a local movement of God that prays for, cares for, and shares Christ with men, women, youth and children who do not know Christ.

Establishing District Boundaries

We believe that “districting” is a Biblical model* that God will bless and use to enable the Evangelical Congregational Church to be mission driven and realize her vision of becoming a movement of God. Our congregations have been intentionally organized into districts with respect to geographic boundaries and in consultation with congregational leaders. The assignment of congregations to districts will be recommended by the Supervisory Committee of the National Conference and approved by the National Conference. The name of a district will be selected by the pastors and lay leaders of that district.

District boundaries will be reviewed every five years by the Supervisory Committee. The next review will take place in 2013. Recommendations for changes will be submitted to the congregations affected by the change, as well as to the National Ministry Team, and the National Conference. Requests by churches for changes in district assignment may be submitted to the Supervisory Committee during the first six months of that fiscal year. Assignment of districts to Conference Ministers will be recommended to the National Conference for review.

* the church of Antioch was not one Congregation, but a “district” just as the Church in Judea

District Leadership Team

The districts will be accountable to the Conference Minister who will work through a District Leadership Team to serve district needs. The District Leadership Team will consist of a facilitator, an assistant facilitator, a secretary, and the pastoral and lay representatives to the National Ministry Team. The facilitator and assistant facilitator will be appointed by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Bishop. The secretary will be appointed by the facilitator. The National Ministry Team representatives will be elected by the District Ministry Team.

In the event that a facilitator or assistant facilitator is not available, the district may be placed under the care of the Conference Minister. An effective and active District Leadership Team is essential for providing each district with vision, direction, motivation, and momentum. The Leadership Team is intended to take the initiative and be proactive in its approach.

DISTRICT FACILITATOR

1. Appointed by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Bishop.
2. Pastors and laity who are members in good standing of the Evangelical Congregational Church are eligible to serve.
3. Term is five (5) years with a limit of three consecutive terms.
4. No remuneration.
5. Responsibilities:
 - 5.1 To convene and lead the meetings of the district.
 - 5.2 To plan and facilitate the prayer strategy with district leaders.
 - 5.3 To appoint, empower, and network ministry leadership teams that are needed to accomplish district goals.
 - 5.4 To ensure that the district stays focused on mission.

DISTRICT ASSISTANT FACILITATOR

1. Appointed by the Conference Minister in consultation with the Bishop.
2. Pastors and laity who are members in good standing of the Evangelical Congregational Church are eligible to serve.
3. Term is five (5) years with a limit of three consecutive terms.
4. No remuneration.
5. Responsibilities:
 - 5.1 To assist the facilitator upon request and perform the duties of the facilitator when the facilitator is unable to do so.
 - 5.2 To ensure that basic spiritual care is provided to pastoral families under the direction of the Conference Minister.

DISTRICT SECRETARY

1. Appointed by the district facilitator.
2. Pastors and laity who are members in good standing of the Evangelical Congregational Church are eligible to serve.
3. Term is five (5) years with a limit of three consecutive terms.
4. No remuneration.
5. Responsibilities:
 - 5.1 To record the minutes of district meetings and distribute them to district leaders/members.
 - 5.2 To prepare an annual report of district activities that will be submitted to the National Conference,
 - 5.3 To maintain the financial records of the district.

District Ministry Team

The facilitator will lead the meetings of the District Ministry Team composed of the active and retired pastors of the district who are credentialed by the Evangelical Congregational Church and two lay leaders from each of the district congregations. One of the lay leaders shall be the lay delegate of the congregation. The lay delegate will be selected in accord with the congregation's by-laws and the *Discipline*. The second lay leader will be appointed by the pastor in consultation with the governing body of the congregation. The second lay leader will serve as an advisory member of the governing body of his/her congregation. The lay leaders must possess a passion for Christ, and a compassion for the lost, and be recognized leaders in their congregation.

Advisory members may be added to the District Ministry Team with the consent of team members. Evangelical Congregational Church commissions or institutions may appoint district representatives who will serve as advisory members of the team.

Connecting the District and the Denomination

Conference Minister

The Conference Minister assigned to a district will serve as an advisory member of the District Ministry Team, although the restrictions of his schedule may prevent his attendance. He should receive minutes of team meetings and conduct an annual personal conference with each district facilitator.

National Ministry Team

Every district will be represented on the National Ministry Team. Districts will select one pastor and one lay delegate to serve on the National Ministry Team which will meet between the sessions of the National Conference. The terms of National Ministry Team members from districts will be five years with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Each district has the authority to elect one alternate pastoral delegate and one alternate lay delegate to the National Ministry Team. The alternate delegates will attend only when the regular delegates are unable to do so.

How to nominate and elect National Ministry Team representatives:

1. The District Leadership Team (DLT) shall appoint a nominating committee to secure nominations for the pastoral and lay representative positions. The DLT may choose to serve as the nominating committee rather than appointing a separate committee.
2. The nominating committee shall recruit nominees from among the voting members of the National Conference. The potential pool of nominees shall include all active itinerant ministers (including licensed pastors who have served three consecutive years in a church appointment and whenever assigned to a church thereafter), and lay delegates. (Discipline, 441.1)
3. The number of nominees is not designated nor is it restricted. Nominations may be made from the floor provided that the nominee is present and consents to the nomination.
4. The members of the District Ministry Team (DMT) shall elect the representatives from a ballot supplied by the nominating committee. The DMT is defined as all licensed and ordained pastors (active and otherwise) of the district as well as the lay delegates and second lay leaders representing the churches of the district.

5. A simple majority of the number of members present and voting shall be needed to elect representatives.
6. The results of the election shall be reported to the Bishop within one week so that the membership of the National Ministry Team can be determined.
7. In the event that a representative resigns from the position and an alternate has not been elected, a temporary representative may be appointed by the DLT until the next regular meeting of the DMT when a slate of nominees shall be presented (following the above procedures) and a new representative is elected to fill the unexpired term.
8. Alternate members may also be elected following the procedures set forth in #1-6.

Responsibilities of a National Ministry Team Member

1. To attend the National Conference (NC) meeting in late May and the National Ministry Team (NMT) meetings as scheduled. All expenses incurred for travel, lodging, and meals shall be reimbursed by the National Conference. Teleconferencing may be available for these meetings. If the member cannot attend, he or she should notify the alternate member and assist the alternate member in making arrangements to attend.
2. To prepare for the meetings of the NMT by reading the reports provided by the various commissions, committees, and institutions of the E.C. Church. The NMT will also evaluate the implementation of NC actions and carry out NC decisions as directed to do so by the NC.
3. A significant focus of the NMT will be an ongoing evaluation and implementation of the purpose, mission, values and vision of the denomination among its member congregations and districts.

Annual Reports

District secretaries will submit annual written reports of the district's work. These reports will be included in the National Conference Journal and the District Handbook.

Resolutions

Districts may bring resolutions to the National Conference for consideration and adoption. The procedure for resolutions resulting in amendments to the rules of the denomination can be found in the National Conference rules, Par. 316, and is as follows:

Resolutions. Congregations wishing to propose a change to the denominational program or polity must present the proposal to their district. If a majority of the District Ministry Team agrees with the proposal, the district may bring a resolution to the National Conference for consideration and adoption.

Resolutions which would result in changes to the Discipline will be processed as amendments and must be submitted to the Amendments Committee which will present the resolution to the National Ministry Team. The NMT will debate the merit of the amendment and decide by majority vote whether it should be recommended to the National Conference.

Resolutions which could result in changes to the Standing or Special Rules of Conference, or resolutions which could influence the work of the denomination without impacting the rules would be presented by the district directly to the National Conference and require a majority vote for approval. These resolutions must be submitted to the Church Center two months prior to the Conference sessions.

National Ministry Team Members by District

Allegheny District

Ministerial – Rev. Charles Campbell (2013N), Emlenton, New Zion

Lay – Robert McGinnis (2013N), Emlenton, New Zion

Anthracite District

Ministerial – Rev. Richard Nahodil (2013E), Pitman, St. Paul's & Zion

Lay – Doris Kuder (2013N), Mandata, Peifer's

Berks District

Ministerial – Rev. Dr. James Price (2013N), Mohnton, Zion

Lay – Arlan Marks (2013N), Sinking Spring, Community

Buckeye District

Ministerial – Rev. Glenn Hansen (2013N), Canton, First

Lay – Rick Glauthier (2013N), Akron, Cottage Grove

Capital/Lebanon District

Ministerial – Rev. William McElroy (2013E), Steelstown, St. John's

Lay – Timothy Rittle (2013E), Annville, Zion

Conestoga District

Ministerial – Rev. Barry Rebert (2013N), Mohn's Hill, Mohn's Memorial

Lay – Edward Ream (2013N), Reamstown, St. Paul's

Illinois District

Ministerial – Rev. David Bailey (2013E), Hooppole, Calvary

Lay – David Jordan (2013N), Afolkey, Grace

Lehigh District

Ministerial – Rev. Robert Bast (2013N), Bethlehem, Emmanuel

Lay – Trent Stehr (2013N), Bethlehem, Emmanuel

North East District

Ministerial - Rev. Douglas Evans (20013N), Lehighton, Bethany
Lay - No rep. given at time of publication

Penn Jersey District

Ministerial - Rev. Robert Brown (2013N), Plymouth Meeting
Lay - Janet Hague (2013N), Hatfield, Emmanuel

Red Rose District

Ministerial - Rev. Bruce Sellers (2013N), Lancaster, Trinity
Lay - Dean Baker (2013E), Willow Street, Grace Community

Schuylkill District

Ministerial - Rev. Dennis Snyder (2013E), Cressona, Bethany Fellowship
Lay - Fern Kurtz (20013N), Pine Grove, St. Paul's

Stateline District

Ministerial - No rep. given at time of publication
Lay - No rep. given at time of publication

Susquehanna District

Ministerial - Rev. Daniel Blank (2013N), Reichs
Lay - Mary Lou Holland (2013N), Columbia, Grace

When a District Meets

Districts will decide the frequency and location of their meetings and will share this information with the Conference Minister. It is expected that a district will meet at least annually.

The Standing Business Rules of the National Conference will apply to the business portion of district meetings.

A district will be expected to nurture a passion for God, a compassion for the lost, and a genuine concern for health and unity among the congregations of the district. A district will be expected to initiate a prayer strategy focused on these areas. Apart from a prayer strategy, a district is free to develop those ministries which meet the needs of that geographic area as revealed by the Holy Spirit. These ministries may include, but are not limited to: evangelistic endeavors, congregational mentoring, church planting, social concern and action, leadership training, global ministries resourcing, children/youth ministries, and pastoral collegiality.

Districts are encouraged to develop the kind of ministry that is uniquely suited to their context. "Success" in the strategy may look different from district to district. In areas where churches are geographically distant or culturally diverse it will not be as practical to build a sense of cohesion around special events or joint programs. Attendance at meetings is only one criterion for measuring results. Instead a sense of unity and partnership may develop around the concept of networking for things like prayer, resource sharing, and support for church planting or student scholarships. Remember that Districting is a verb as well as a noun, referring to an attitude of relationship building as well as an organizational structure.

District Finances

To free district leaders for focus on mission and vision, district accounts may be established and maintained by the denomination's finance office. These accounts can be used to receive and disburse funds needed to implement district initiatives (e.g. social action work, evangelistic campaigns, student aid, teacher training events). Districts may also choose to designate a local church treasury for this purpose. In all cases, monthly financial statements of active accounts should be provided to the District Leadership Team by the district secretary who will maintain district financial records.

If a district partners to plant a church, the Church Planting Commission will partner with the district to provide the financial structures and services needed to support a church planter and the daughter church.

When a congregation has a genuine financial problem, the congregation's district will be the first to respond with assistance. Chronic financial problems need to be referred to the Conference Minister who may recommend appropriations to be paid from the denominational treasury. (NC Rule 706)

District Boundaries

Allegheny
Anthracite
Berks
Buckeye
Capital/Lebanon
Conestoga
Illinois
Lehigh Valley
North East
Penn Jersey
Red Rose
Schuylkill
Stateline
Susquehanna

The Districts of the Delaware Region

Conference Minister: Rev. B. Bruce Wagner

BERKS

BIRDSBORO, Calvary
KUTZTOWN, Grace
LEESPORT, Bethany
LENHARTSVILLE, Salem
MOHNTON, Zion
READING (2) First & Vida
Nueva
SHILLINGTON, St. Luke's
SINKING SPRING, Community
TEMPLE, Faith
WOMELSDORF, Trinity

NORTH EAST

BARTONSVILLE, St. John's
BERLINSVILLE, Trinity
BUSHKILL
EAST WEISSPORT, People's
JIM THORPE, Ebenezer
LEHIGHTON, Bethany
PALMERTON, Living Hope
Lighthouse
SLATINGTON, Trinity
TAMAQUA, Bethany
WEISSPORT, St. Peter's

SCHUYLKILL

ASHLAND, Bethany
CRESSONA, Bethany
Fellowship
DREHERSVILLE, Immanuel
FRACKVILLE, Trinity
LAVELLE, Christ
MAHANOY CITY, Salem
PINE GROVE, St. Paul's
REEDSVILLE, Bethesda
ROCK (Manbeck's), Zion
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, Grace
WEST HAZLETON, Buenas
Nuevas

LEHIGH VALLEY

ALLENTOWN (6), Christ,
Horizon, New Bethany,
Seibert, St. John's & Zion
BANGOR, First United
BETHLEHEM (3) Arabic Living
Emmanuel & Fountain of
Life
EASTON, First
EMMAUS, St. Matthew's
FOGELSVILLE, Hope
Community
HOSENSACK, Grace
NEW TRIPOLI, Jacob's Church
VERA CRUZ
WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP, Christ

PENN JERSEY

BOYERTOWN, Trinity
CLAYTON, Bethany
HATFIELD, Emmanuel
PHILADELPHIA, Comunidad Biblica Cristiana
PLEASANTVILLE, Bethany
PLYMOUTH MEETING
ROYERSFORD, Trinity
WHITING, NJ, Christ
ZIEGLERVILLE, Christ

The Districts of the Great Lakes Region

Conference Minister: Rev. Gary M. Brown

ALLEGHENY

CLARION, Riverhill
CROSSROADS, Bethany
EMLENTON, New Zion
FERN, Trinity
KNOX, Grace
SENECA

BUCKEYE

AKRON (2) Cottage Grove &
First
CANTON, First
CANYON FALLS, KY
TALLMADGE, restart

ILLINOIS

AFOLKEY, Grace
CEDARVILLE, Emmanuel
CHICAGO, Kimball Avenue
DIXON (2), Bethel & St. James
HIGHLAND PARK (2)
Highland Park & Maranatha
HOOPPOLE, Calvary
ROCK FALLS
WINNEBAGO

STATELINE

CLARKS MILLS, Countryside
DELIGHTFUL
LEAVITTSBURG, Eagle's Creek
TRANSFER, Lakeside
YOUNGSTOWN, Wedgewood Park

The Districts of the Susquehanna Region

Conference Minister: Rev. Frederick J. Moury, Jr.

ANTHRACITE

GRATZ, Good Shepherd
HERNDON, Seibert
MANDATA, Peifer's
MUIR, Grace
PITMAN (2) St. Paul's & Zion
SHAMOKIN, Trinity
SUNBURY, Bethany
TREVORTON, Emmanuel
WILLIAMS VALLEY, Faith
WILLIAMSTOWN, Ebenezer

CONESTOGA

ADAMSTOWN, Immanuel
AKRON, Grace
BRIDGEVILLE, Zion
BROWNSTOWN, Ebenezer
CALIFORNIA, Bethany
EPHRATA, Grace
MARTINDALE, Bethany
MOHN'S HILL, Mohn's Memorial
MOUNT AIRY
MOUNT CULMEN
PEQUEA
REAMSTOWN, St. Paul's
ROTHSVILLE, St. Paul's
TERRE HILL, Trinity

SUSQUEHANNA

BAIR, Faith
BALTIMORE, MD, Rosedale
Community
COLUMBIA, Grace
EAST BERLIN, Countryside
Fellowship
KINDERHOOK
MOUNT JOY, Trinity
RED LION, Arlington
REICH'S
WEIGELSTOWN, St. David's
YORK (2) St. Paul &
Iglesia Cristiana

CAPITAL/LEBANON

ANNVILLE, Zion
BUNKER HILL
CLARK'S VALLEY, Zion
FISHING CREEK, Trinity
HARRISBURG (2) Faith
& Trinity
LAWN
LEBANON, First
LEWISBERRY, Wyndamere
Heights
MYERSTOWN, Zion
PALMYRA, First
REXMONT
STEELSTOWN, St. John's
UNION SALEM

RED ROSE

CONESTOGA, Bethel
CRESWELL, Bethany
EAST PETERSBURG, Grace
LANCASTER (5) Faith
Grace, Trinity, Tapestry
& Vida Nueva
LITITZ, Trinity
MANHEIM, Trinity
MILLERSVILLE, Grace
WILLOW STREET, Grace
Community

Districts Facilitators

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Stateline District

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