

400.27 - Historic Report - Annual Conference Shepherding Team 2021

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST), which was formed in fall 2017, was poised to give leadership through a year that already promised to be challenging. With a general conference on the horizon, the imminent retirement of Bishop Dyck, and the unfolding work toward the strategic goals, the ACST had the opportunity to promote the vision and provide stability to the annual conference.

The pandemic delayed the general conference, upended the routine rotation of bishops and introduced a new set of challenges. Since the submission of the last historic report on April 1, 2020, the ACST has been able to remain faithful to its commitment to build community by transitioning from in-person meetings to a Zoom platform. The strategic goals of making disciples, working against racism and creating vital congregations remain the core focus for the ACST. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, much has been accomplished, and the leadership of the conference celebrates the strides being made by the Task Forces and those who have dedicated countless hours to the efforts. Reports on the progress toward the strategic goals are found elsewhere in the 2021 historic reports.

We are grateful for the early guidance of consultant Helen Chang, member at Urban Village UMC, who served as our organizational consultant during the first two years of this work. Helen concluded her service with us in the summer of 2020. Amania Drane continues to offer excellent leadership as the project manager for the Anti-Racism and Discipleship goals and Rev. Arlene Christopherson offers staff support to the work of vital congregations.

The ACST continues to provide a common table where information and concerns can be addressed across administrative and programmatic lines. To further align the work of the Task Force with the District Shepherding Teams and local churches, a Steering Committee was formed in summer 2020 with the mission of eliminating barriers and measuring progress toward the three strategic goals. In November 2020, the ACST convened a meeting of the Task Forces and the District Shepherding Teams at which the DSTs were able to brainstorm about pursuing the strategic goals in their own contexts.

Through 2020 and into 2021, the ACST has collaborated with the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA) and Program Ministries in aligning the budget to enhance conference goals. The ACST received periodic updates and information concerning conference and local church finances, and joins in celebrating the wise and prudent financial management of the CCFA.

In fall 2020, the ACST formed an organizational task force to address the realignment of program areas in the conference. This work has resulted in a resolution to the 2021 session seeking to update the standing rules around program areas. Members of this task force include Mark Manzi, Deborah Dangerfield, Arnold Rivera, Mary Rawlinson, Meg Park, Laura Underwood, Nancy Pendergrass and Arlene Christopherson.

The ACST also served as a foundation for the orientation of our interim bishop, Bishop John Hopkins, as he began his assignment with us in January 2021. Bishop Hopkins brings new insight and vision to the work of this common table and is a welcome partner. Our work is

enhanced with the partnership of the Cabinet, Director of Connectional Ministries, Director of Congregational Development, Director of Communications and conference communications staff.

Our prayer is that this unprecedented year of adversity has seasoned us for the opportunities that lay ahead. With God's grace our mission continues.

In Christ Service,
Elizabeth Gracie and Rev. Myron McCoy, Co-Chairs, ACST

Members of the Annual Conference Shepherding Team

Bonnell, Karen S.	DeKalb dST/Discipleship Representative
Brace, Jeff	Rockford dST
Chong, Hannah Hwa-Young	Board of Ordained Ministry Representative
Dangerfield, Deborah	Annual Conference Committee Chair
Gracie, Elizabeth	Co-Chair, Annual Conference Shepherding Team
Harris-Black, Yvette	Black Methodists for Church Renewal Representative
Lacey, Chester	Chicago Northwestern District dST
Lill, Bonnie	Elgin District dST
Manzi, Mark	Lay Leader Representative
Co-Chair, Annual Conference Shepherding Team	Co-Chair, Annual Conference Shepherding Team
Park-Landis, Meg	Age Level Ministries
Pendergrass, Nancy	Nominations Committee
Rawlinson, Mary	Justice and Mercy Ministries
Reyes, Luis F.	Aurora District dST
Rudy, Martha	Chair, Board of Trustees
Samson, Ayla	Chair, Asian American Fellowship
Scott, Tammy	Conference Committee on Financial and Administration Representative
Severing, Jarrod A.	Anti-Racism Task Force Representative
Underwood Wilson, Laura	Development and Revitalization