

CDM ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

SPRING 2019

The CDM Meets in the Spring and Fall

The Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) meets face-to-face two times each year: once in the spring and once in the fall. Otherwise, much of the work of the CDM is carried out by its subcommittees which communicate by email and conference calls continually throughout the year.

This is the report on the 2019 spring meeting, which took place March 28-29, 2019, at Matthews OPC in Matthews, NC.

Planning for the Next Decade

The CDM continued the discussion it had begun at the fall 2018 meeting, in which it took stock of where it stands in its journey of service and began formulating a proposed vision for its labors over the next ten years. The Executive Committee was charged to continue its focus on this long-term outlook.

While carrying on work between the fall 2018 meeting and the current meeting, the CDM realized that it had made several large financial commitments that will most likely utilize the excess funds that it has stored up, and possibly require more. As such, the CDM determined to start to act according to the prospect of leaner years that might be ahead, unless the Lord were to surprise the committee with giving that exceeds the norm received by the CDM.

GA Report

The CDM's written report to the General Assembly, prepared by the CDM Administrator, was reviewed and approved by the committee before submission to the Stated Clerk. The CDM report includes Short-Term Missions and Disaster Response as well, since the CDM Administrator serves as Coordinator of these areas for the OPC.

Diaconal Funding Requests

Various funding requests were considered. The largest of these was the annual request that comes from the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM). The CDM is given the opportunity to support diaconal ministry on many of the OPC foreign mission fields, where our missionaries labor in both Word and deed.

This spring, the largest CFM request came from Uganda, the largest foreign mission field in the OPC.

1. The OP Uganda Mission (OPUM) is blessed to run a medical clinic in Nakaale that serves the health needs of the communities where our missionaries serve. The CDM moved to continue funding the operation of the clinic, the clinic construction, and the support of Dr. Flip Beardman.
2. The CDM continues to provide 50% of the support of OPUM facilities engineer Mark Van Essendelft, who labors not only in the maintenance of the OPUM property but also as a missionary deacon in Karamoja.
3. The CDM also allotted funds to assist with the cost of drilling wells for the village churches in Mbale.

Refugee Relief

The CDM desires to continue to provide funding for the ministry expenses of OPC Evangelist Chris Cashen as he carries out a ministry of Word and deed to refugees who have settled in the vicinity of Clarkston, GA.

Disaster Response

The CDM received in-depth reports on the hurricane relief efforts in Houston, Puerto Rico, and North Carolina in response to Hurricanes Harvey (2017), Maria (2017), and Florence (2018). Over the last few years, hundreds of volunteers have given of their time, talents, and energy on these disaster response fields, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations have been received.

The on-going ministry of Houston Outreach Evangelist, Nick Lammé is largely funded by the General Disaster Response fund.

In North Carolina, many homes have been restored through the work of volunteers and the leadership of an Oversight Committee from the Presbytery of the Southeast and Site Coordinator, Fred de Ru. This ministry is anticipated to end on May 31, 2019.

The CDM also received reports on the ministry to those affected by the Camp Fire that scorched much of Paradise, CA, in November 2018.

Diaconal Training

The CDM finalized plans for the fourth OPC Presbytery Diaconal Summit (PDS IV), to be held in October 2019 for members of the presbytery diaconal committees. The next OPC National Diaconal Summit, open to all deacons in the OPC, is scheduled to be held in 2021.

Diaconal Visitation

Mr. Christopher Sudlow reported on his recent visits to four OPC churches as part of the Diaconate Visitation Program to which the CDM has assigned him. It was apparent that much is being learned from this field work.

Resolution of Thanks

Finally, it is with mixed feelings that the CDM sees the departure of another long-time member of the committee – sadness to see him go, yet thankfulness for his significant contributions toward the work of diaconal ministries in the OPC.

Rev. Ron Pearce plans to step down from the CDM after serving six consecutive terms (18 years), many of those during which he so ably serving as the secretary of the committee. The CDM recognized his service in the following resolution adopted into its minutes:

Dear Ron,

Your heart of compassion for the needy within reach of the CDM's ministry has been an inspiring example to all of us of the heart of our Lord Jesus for the poor.

Your steadfast commitment to the work of our committee over the course of eighteen years has contributed profoundly to the stability and increasing maturity of our ministry.

Your careful attention to the details of our work, and capturing them as our secretary (even anticipating some of them!) has been utterly indispensable to our achievements.

Your gracious and humble way of expressing yourself in our deliberations has been a model to all of us of what a churchman, doing the work of the church, looks like.

Your wit and infectious laugh has time and again sweetened our labors together, and contributed deeply to the Christian friendship we've enjoyed together.

Your godly character and reputation within the OPC have lent credibility and winsomeness to our committee's relationship to the larger Church;

In short, your "fullness of wisdom and of the Spirit" (Acts 6:3) have exemplified for all of us the true qualifications for diaconal service in the church of Jesus Christ.

Ron, we are deeply grateful for your eighteen years of continuous service on the Committee on Diaconal Ministries. We view your retirement with a deep sense of loss, yet with the happy awareness that by your diaconal service with us you have gained "a good standing for yourself, and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13). And we look forward with you to the commendation of our master one day: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25: 21, 23).

The fall meeting of the CDM is scheduled for October 31 – November 1, 2019, in Willow Grove, PA. Please pray for the committee in its many labors.

Respectfully submitted,

David Nakhla, Administrator
OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries
David.Nakhla@opc.org