

Rev. Douglas S. Wyatt
June 1, 2023

**We are...
Rocks**

**Eastern Kentucky
District Superintendent's
Report**



EKD
EASTERN KENTUCKY DISTRICT
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Eastern Kentucky District

June 1, 2023

We are.....

General Superintendent Dr. Gustavo Crocker; Dr. David Wilson, Interim President, MVNU; Nazarene Foundation President, Dr. Mark Lail; former District Superintendent, Dr. Garrett Mills, delegates, and friends of the Eastern Kentucky District Church of the Nazarene: It is an honor and privilege today to present my 9th report to the Eastern Kentucky District Assembly.

Thank you to The Refinery, Pastor Blosser, and his team for making this such a great day.

Our theme for this Assembly is “**We are... Rocks**”. I want us to be used by God in any and every circumstance. Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:18 that he would use Peter. “I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build..” We are Rocks. Well, to be totally honest, we should be willing to be anything and everything Jesus has asked us to be. A rock, a servant, a hair stylist, a prisoner, a teacher, an insurance agent, a cook, a server, a doctor, a sales person, a flight attendant, a miner, a preacher, or a factory worker, if you are God’s child you are called by Him to be used by Him.

I have asked each pastor and church to reflect on what God has done through them and His Church this last year. You will find in the pages of the delegate handbooks shared stories of ways God has used the church to transform lives. There are countless testimonies of changed lives because of the faithfulness of God’s people. These amazing transformation stories are reflected through almost 400 conversions and almost 200 baptisms this past year. Praise God!

Let us NEVER forget the church is meant to be a place of hope, peace, love, refuge, acceptance, restoration, and transformation. There is some rhetoric going on we should not listen to, for it is motivated by fear. 1 Timothy 1:7 says, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” We have nothing to fear. Nothing to fear and should most importantly be focused on the LOST. We should love the LOST. God has given us freedom. 1 Cor 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

I must linger a while longer here. Our NDI theme – “Journey of Grace” puts discipleship and the responsibility we have to disciple as a priority. In Matt 28 Jesus said to “Go and make disciples.” And in Mark He said to “Go into all the world.” We should be more concerned about those that are lost and finding them than judging them or worrying about being judged by a pharisee because we love a sinner. Please never forget our Lord ate and drank and went to the places no one else would go and did not stop because of their color, background, lifestyle, mistakes, or you name it. We are called to GO. Let’s go my friends. GO INTO THE WORLD. We are the church and we are His missionaries.

We are... Leaders

Local Leaders

I want to thank each pastor and layperson on the EKD. Please stay committed to lead your church. Your church is the EKD. We are only as strong as your leadership and church. We hurt when any of our churches hurt.

District Leaders

I am thankful for the District Advisory Board. A great big thank you goes to the clergy on the board; Dr. Desmond Barrett, Rev. Lonnie Blosser, Rev. Scot Crothers, Rev. Jim Webster and to our laity; Robyn Campbell, Scott Crawford, Bethany Mills, and Howard Slibeck. Each of our department heads; Rev. Derek Catron (NDI), Brad Salyers (NYI), and Suella Slibeck (NMI) have given tremendous leadership to our churches on the district. I also want to thank Rev. Jim Webster (District Treasurer), Rev. Lonnie Blosser (District Secretary), and Annette Lewis (Office Administrator) for their faithfulness and selfless dedication to the EKD.

Family

I am so very thankful for my family and their steadfast love and support. I have three (and two daughters in law) incredible children: McKenna, Mac (& his wife Ashley), Lane (& his wife Sierra). We would be glad to brag on our children with you anytime. In fact Joni has pictures and is ready to share.

I am extremely blessed to have a wife that has been willing to share with me in team ministry. On June 13th Joni and I will have celebrated 36 years of marriage. God allows me to spend each day with my best friend. She is the love of my life and I thank God for Joni.

We are... Givers

I want to share that each of our churches has invested in:

- ❖ 164 World Areas
 - ❖ 212 Languages shared through the Church of the Nazarene around the world.
 - ❖ 30,610 Churches
 - ❖ 2.67 million members
 - ❖ 480,222 Conversion globally through the Jesus film.
 - ❖ 56 Churches on the EKD
 - ❖ 1 New plant
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- **Total Raised** – This year we raised \$5,484,481 for all purposes. That is \$432,921 more than last year.
 - **World Evangelism Fund** – We are at 100% paid on our WEF goal. Supporting our mission's enterprise by giving \$258,473.
 - **Mount Vernon Nazarene University** – We gave \$76,956. We support and pray for the many changed lives because of our Nazarene University.
 - **Pensions and Benefits** – We are thankful for the 30,459 credentialed clergy of which WEF and P&B contribute. We gave \$82,221.
 - **District Budget** – \$257,913 was given to support our District efforts.

We are... Influencers.

This year we celebrate God's blessings on our churches through the following expressions:

- **Weekly Corporate Worship** 4,659 people worshipped in person and online. That is 996 more than last year
- **Total Membership** 5,015 are part of the Local church and EKD team.
- **NDI Attendance** 2,880 have gathered in classes, homes, and other unique venues.

Thank you, Pastor Derek for your leadership through NDI and the great Team Day we had yesterday.

- **New Nazarenes** This year we received 172 new Nazarenes. This is up 27 from last year.
- **Conversions** We had 391 conversions this year. 116 more than last year. 36 of our 55

- churches saw conversions
196 total Baptisms. 63 more than last year.
- Baptisms

This year the EKD planted one new church. Through the leadership of Rev. Chuck and Lisa Chapman, the Recovery Community Church was birthed. In September of last year, our Erlanger GracePointe Church gave a blessing to the Chapman's to go out as missionaries to Northern Kentucky and beyond serving the Lord through the Church of the Nazarene. Many strides have been made along the way. In his report you will read just a couple of pivotal moments in the life of this new church. I am thanking God for their obedience and the lives being changed.

We saw our new churches from last year strengthen:

- ❖ Hope Place – Meeting the needs of the unchurched in Corbin.
- ❖ Bread of Life – PAC Church of Lloyd ministering to the hungry and lost through compassion.
- ❖ Assembly of the Saints – PAC Church of Independence Generations – A Congolese Congregation becoming a Church of the Nazarene through the leadership of Rev. Dave Mills and our Independence Generations Church.

I praise God for the great reports from each of these new works as we continue to see His church move forward.

We are... Rocks

It is imperative that each of our churches makes as its goal to reach the lost in our communities and counties. Don't mistake the last sentence to be something the District Superintendent is requesting. No no no!!! This is a COMMAND of Jesus. The church and our Christian walk was never designed to be about comfort, preference, or getting fat on the word and doing nothing with it. The church and persons Jesus desires is about "going into the world". My Jesus was more concerned about seeking that which was lost than making the religious happy or comfortable.

Most every church board I meet with tells me they are willing to do whatever it takes to reach the lost. Sometimes I even ask them to raise their hands if they really mean it, whatever it takes and it is unanimous. All hands raised. I ask you today, are you a yes person or a no person. Jesus wants yes people. Whatever it takes means I will love everyone, do anything, sacrifice my own comfort or preference for what someone else needs in order to find Jesus. This isn't just about music, lifestyles, carpet, tattoos, marks on the walls, and filth although it very well could be. At the heart of this is, am I willing to do whatever? Really whatever? All people are in need of Jesus and Jesus himself showed us through His example He loves everyone. He loved the adulterer, the tax collector, the robber on the cross, and the murderer on the cross, the drunk, and the scripture is full of those Jesus showed us to love. We are to love like that. The lost in our families and communities are hurting, abused, abusing, homeless, hungry, persecuted, mistreated, confused, mistreating, LGBTQ, and all LOST. God help us to love the lost.

When the census was taken it recorded there were **1.4** million in population on our district. It also stated that **802,000** of the 1.4 million did **not claim a church** home. That is **57.3%** of our population do not claim a church home. This fact should remind us all of the lost we are accountable to share the love of Christ with. There are lost people waiting on us to share Christ with them in our towns, cities, and counties.

There are churches that need planted, sponsored, and mothered. Our existing churches need to reinvent themselves, refocus and be revitalized. The first and most important way to know if your church needs to change. Look in your handbook and see how many conversions there were last year from your church. Now you know if there needs to be a change. At the least, annually 100% of our EKD churches should show conversions. Please hear me. My

heart breaks for the struggling church. I weep when a church gets to the point of needing to close. One new convert will change your focus and help the church refocus on what is important. We must see: new converts, baptisms, new Nazarenes, intentional discipleship (NDI), and living out missions both locally and globally.

I have asked each of our pastors to have a mentor in their life. This is someone who has been where they want to be spiritually, positionally, and experientially. Additionally, our District Licensed Pastors have mentors. Through the Board of Ministry, we are requiring each student to have a mentor and follow a plan.

This past fall Joni and I had the privilege of visiting a very special religious site in Greece. It was the archeological site of Philippi. We sat in the amphitheater of the Roman ruins. I thought about the many that sat where I was sitting. Joni, our daughter-in-law Sierra, and I sat there while our son Lane read from Philippians. We got up and made our way through more ruins until we stopped at the actual prison cell of Paul and Silas. This is the cell they were in while living out Acts 16. In 16:25 it says “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. ... 29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” I hope at your midnights you are praying and singing so prisoners and jailers here you and want to be saved. I believe the real reason Paul and Silas were in prison and going through what they went through was because there was a lost jailer who needed Jesus. Try to remember in you’re life the reason for the is because somebody is in need of Jesus.

In Matthew 16 there is an exchange that goes on between Jesus and Peter. Jesus asks Peter in verse 15 “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter,[b] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

We are... Rocks - On this rock I will build my church.” Matthew 16:18. I hope now it makes since. The Peter who after Matthew 16 still denied Christ was told by Jesus ... on the Rock. I believe we need to be a rock. Truthfully we need to be whatever Jesus needs us to be, a rock, a servant, a hair stylist, a prisoner, teacher, an insurance agent, a cook, a server, a doctor, a sales person, a leader, a flight attendant, a miner, a preacher, a factory worker if you are God’s child you are called by Him to be used by him. Say YES!!

As I close, I want you to know Joni and I pray for you and want to encourage you and help you. We pray for your children and their needs and stand beside you in good times and difficult times. We are here for you and we are in this together.

I want to a **Be a Rock for Jesus** and at midnight be praying and singing. Because remember it was all about the Jailer needing Jesus. Let’s pray today that God will help us **Be ROCKS for Him.**

Totally His,

Rev. DS Wyatt