

**LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER DISTRICT REPORT TEMPLATE
FOR JANUARY 27, 2018 VIRTUAL NAR MEETING**

District I

ROSTERS:

Please attach current rosters to your report (date as of January, 2018).

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTERS SCHEDULED: (Note Areas are C., N.E., N.W., & S)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
(S) March 2-4	Myrtle Beach SC	Clarion	First time Bill & Ann Bruggeman present in DI
(N.W.) March 9-11	Birch Run MI	Comfort Inn	
(N.E.) March 16-18	Lancaster PA	Heritage Hotel	
(N.W.) March ?	Stratford ON	we don't know status of this hoped-for event	
(N.E.) April 6-8	State College PA	Toftrees Golf Resort	
(C) April 27-29	Beachwood OH	Fairfield Inn/Suites	Can accommodate deaf
(N.E.) Sept. 14-16	Poconos, PA	Spruce Lake Retreat Center	
(S) Fall	Savannah GA	...hoped for by South Area	
(C) Nov. 2-4	Millersburg OH	Hotel Millersburg	"Pay your own"
(N.E.) Nov 9-11	Lenox MA	Hampton Inn, Berkshires	

5 POINT-GOLD STAR THRUST TO THRIVE UPDATES:

Prayer: *Include specific prayer plans/activities/other.*

As leaders we encourage the use of the prayer chain, constantly exhorting people to let us add their needs to it; we always have prayer partners at District Mtgs; we model this at Area level at Central by never starting anything without prayer, often small circles of prayer. As DI leaders we send anniversary cards to our Board to remind them that we are praying for them too; we constantly encourage the extra letters for our European counterparts (and keep a list of upcoming dates & contacts in front of Board). N.E.'s decision to hold presenter prayers during MEE's in the dining room following meals - as witness -was adopted by Central.

Personal Development:

As a District, we took time at our last face-to-face meeting to write notes of love and encouragements to each other to take home (and for those not there), and will incorporate something like that in April. We would also like to incorporate some sort of leadership-encouragement activity/video then (may be borrowing the Art of Possibility again, unless anyone has alternative recommendations). DI hosted the 2017 International Family Reunion, with 43 couples from the district states attending - THAT's personal development!

Suggestion for NAR: find some web-based resources to recommend for leadership development.

These 6 Ps of Leadership were stressed at the November District meeting:

- Partnership - remembering to share leadership with your lay/clergy and members of board
- Prayer - to make a habit of praying together as a couple and for each other
- Perception - constantly evaluating by asking "how are we doing? What should we be doing?"
- Plans - having Area goals and a process to achieve them
- Progress - measuring success
- Praise - thanking God and your team for progress

Pre-Encounter Excellence: *Include inviting/recruiting/publicity/Pre-Encounter Contacts, etc.*

Central has added almost 1000 new emails in the last 12 months to GLM eblast church database thanks to assigning the task by county to its board. Most KYRAPS are open to the pre-encountered. Started using "Coffee News" to local restaurants, for free.

N.E. sends churches 3 bulletin or newsletter-ready emails with announcements for the spring Weekend and then again for all fall Weekends. All couples with interest in attending are emailed reminders multiple times/yr.

N.W. uses "Coffee News" that reaches out to local restaurants/businesses, for free.

South sent emails to Lutheran and non-Luth churches in hopes of having a fall '17 MEE, but with no results. Everyone is thinking of "feeder" groups, where fellowship comes first, and then the invitation to attend.

Encounter Excellence: *(This meeting's focus)*

What are you doing /planning to insure excellence in the Encounter Experience?

Central has very faithful Weekend Coordinators who helps us all to be well-prepared. Area Registrar sends out a series of letters beforehand to engage and raise the expectations of the attendees; a faithful person calls each couple the week before - great personal touch. Notes from presenters go the week before too, with bio of all presenters and a rough agenda.

N.E. is intent on ending Weekends by 3 pm, as most drive long distances. They held a weekend-long retreat for its presenters in the fall, at last. They started telling the couples when to return to the conference room, resulting in shorter traveling time (Central tried it in November - it works!) At their recent presenters' retreat they watched "Improving the Quality of Presentations" - to be posted on ilme.org.

South - lay and clergy leaders finally had a chance to be together and are excited to share upcoming MEE. For our April meeting, we have already invited APCCs, and one of the focuses will be tightening and updating our presentations, improving manner of reading, how we can lovingly comment on each other's sharings, etc. We are also focusing on the evenness of opportunity to help lead MEEs.

Post-Encounter Excellence: *What is being done/planned to engage/support the newly encountered?*

Central follow-up is a personal telephone call (it's amazing how few call back). The response to the post-event A newsletter called eConnections goes out every other month: upcoming activities, welcoming new couples, etc. An accompanying one (more details, dialogue Qs, enrichment piece) has gone out twice. The activities calendar is full of a wide variety of events, mostly attended by the "regulars." One "veteran" journey group committed to relationship-building fellowship events only when they welcomed a few new couples. N.E. has tried Facebook groups and sends out regular emails. Takes time to keep updated. They are now doing an emailed newsletter monthly, an increase from twice a year.

N.W. uses the post-w/e questionnaire and has spread the load of post-weekend activities.

South has a large ongoing (28 years) ecumenical community, and a new one.

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/BEST PRACTICES:

Include things you are piloting or plan to pilot. If tried, please include observations/results.

Central - The wine tasting event has been well attended for 3 years now (seen as an inviting tool). Many of us thought the swapping of Self and Focus was a great idea, and hope we can continue.

ENRICHMENTS/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

N.W. and Central both have annual Family Campouts and Retreats.

South planned a renewal wine and cheese for local couples from March '17, and are trying again in June.

CPO ACTIVITIES:

In what ways are you connecting with other WWME Faith Expressions?

Central works with a BME clergy as interpreters for the deaf every April, and is workshopping BME couples. We cross-reference our Community Activities and Journey Groups with WWME's.

N.E. brought on board an "orphaned" UCC presenter in 2017 as second set, and invited an EME couple (declined).

Our DPCCs report that one of our clergy helped on Mennonite & Brethren Weekends near them - one as an emergency and the other as invited partners. This would have been really hard before the CPO!

VARIETY OF MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES:

If you're holding or considering anything other than the traditional Weekend, please include here.

Central has been open to variety of experiences and offers it - just waiting for a church to host or sponsor it. N.W. is considering a non-residential Weekend, as yet unplanned..

PRAYER CONCERNS:

Many of our leaders have had health issues, surgeries, recuperation: Sue Rufe, Bob & Darlene Kail, Judy Christiansen, Bob McGurn.

OTHER UPDATES TO SHARE (Optional):

STRENGTHS AND HOW WE APPLIED THEM:

We are all busy, but the Board responds with amazing speed to specific situations, like missing registrations. Most Area boards and staff positions have been stable.

N.E. never used to hold presenters' meetings due to being so spread out, but in 2017 they held one after a Weekend (so 4 couples were already there, and stretched it into an overnight mini retreat. Found it extremely helpful for building relationships.

SUCCESSSES / PROBLEMS SOLVED / OBSTACLES OVERCOME:

- Like every other District, we are spread out, so we have taught every member how to participate in Go-to-meetings. They work, and are so much better than telephones only. The Oct Virtual Mtg had 10 couples represented (2 traveling).
- There was recent discussion of female clergy becoming presenters, and the Board discussed this fully and with great love. We have amazing, prayerful, and dedicated presenters in District I.
- Our finance couple reported that every Weekend in 2017 was in the black, under the new way it is being calculated.
- One problem identified was donation checks returned for NSF. Solved by Dean's decision to alert the appropriate Admin couple, who might know of changed circumstances.
- Discussed ways to keep information about how to donate in front of the newly encountered.

CHALLENGES WE FACE / PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING:

Everyone is asking about the GLM eBlasts that hold enrichments. When will these start? How often? How often do we get asked why there is so much repetition in the talks? Attendees want more time in their rooms, more time to move around, go outside, sleep sooner, leave earlier, etc. District meeting will emphasize need to update and shorten our presentations so not one of them is over time allotted. But might we go further and consider severely curtailing duplication? WWME missed a great chance to shorten the talks - possibly because they were updated by set.

Submitted with love,

Kevin ♥ Raye Guynn
District Clergy

David ♥ Jean Fell
District Lay

Fred ♥ Julie Schamber
District Presenting Couple Coordinators