Eastern Association Council

2025 Annual Report

Greetings Members of the Illinois Conference,

Whereas 2025 was a year of eagerness, 2026 has been a year of **connection** for the Eastern Association. Our governing council continues to maintain a steady cadence of meetings and discussion, with strong leadership and participation by all.

In October, we held our annual Fall Worship Celebration and Business Meeting at First Congregational in Decatur. We had a good turnout and were well-attended to by an amazing host congregation. In our worship setting, Rev. Ryan Travis invoked us to reflect on the needs of the people seeking church amidst today's modern challenges. We continued that discussion in the business portion of that day's meeting, where we had a presentation on 'The New Manual on Church'. We also had an interactive working lunch session where we shared with each other answers to the following questions:

"How is your church doing?"
"Do you feel connected?"
"What are some positive things happening in your congregations?"
"What do you need?"

The conversations and reflections were robust, and many of us walked away with new ideas and inspiration to consider how we could modernize our own ministries. There is much follow up to be done here, but we are on the path to continue strengthening our connections with one another, through conversations like these.

Rosters for the Council and Committee on Ministry for the coming year, as noted here:

NAME	ROLE	CURRENT TERM	TERM ENDS
Doug Zimmerman	Moderator	1 of 1	2028
Mary Gilman	Vice-Moderator	1 of 1	2028
Tom Norwalk	Secretary	2 of 2	2029
Patricia Morton	Member	2 of 2	2027
Alice Huebner	Member	2 of 2	2028
Lynette DuBord	Member	2 of 2	2028
Terri Smith	Member	1 of 2	2028
Carol Currier-Frighetto	Member	1 of 2	2028
Ericka Crist	Member	1 of 2	2028
Jay Hurd	Member	1 of 2	2029
Shawn Hillman	Past Moderator	1 of 1	2027

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In the coming year, the EA's focus will continue to be CONNECTIONS. We are planning to continue visits with our member congregations to have meaningful discussions on 'how we're all doing' as the church. By connecting more - with intent - we hope to inspire and learn from one another by hearing all the ways we can make churches attractive and fulfilling for today's community and needs.

The quantity of physical churches in our group, no matter the number, will not interfere with the quality of our mission and purpose.

We share – and ask for – prayers of love and support in our ministries for the coming year.

Eastern Association Mission Statement

"We are called to love and serve God,
to be inspired by the Holy Spirit,
and to celebrate and embody the
healing, reconciling ministry of Christ!"

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Hillman
Plainfield Congregational Church
Immediate Past Moderator – Eastern Association Council