



Engaging Minds to Inspire Hearts Through Biblical Instruction and Practical Mentoring

Dear friends in the Eastern Region,

It is my privilege to present this report to you. Exciting things are happening at Berkshire Christian! This past spring the Trustees adopted a new mission statement to guide the ministry moving into the next decade. More than imparting knowledge, we desire to be involved in the formation of students' minds *and* hearts as they mature in their faith and service to Christ. To that end we are working to strengthen the mentoring component of our training. Coupled with a strong academic emphasis led by dedicated and knowledgeable adjunct faculty, the educational opportunities offered through Berkshire Christian are well-designed to meet the leadership needs of the Advent Christian Church in the present and for years to come.

Berkshire Christian is dedicated to providing for the leadership needs of the Advent Christian Church, a charge it has held for over 121 years. There are two primary ways this ministry has been carried out since the closing of the Lenox campus in 1987. First, through our programs, and second, through our partnerships. We are training men and women for ministry through our distance learning program called eBerkshire. This program offers online classes that are very interactive and embody our commitment to a highly supportive, personalized experience that is Bible-based and culturally relevant. In the spring ten students participated in a course entitled *Redemption, Resurrection, and Reconciliation: Themes of a Biblical Theology*. Seven other students are now taking that same course. From July 2017 to the present, over thirty students have been enrolled in eBerkshire courses. Eight students are pursuing the Leadership Certificate or Pastoral Studies Certificate at the present time, with additional applications for the Leadership Certificate anticipated this fall. Our Adjunct Faculty totals six active people including newest members Tracy Ainsworth, Corey McLaughlin, and Jonathan Price. A Curriculum Advisory Committee develops new courses and maintains the quality of these courses and overall curriculum. In addition to online courses, Berkshire Christian offers local church learning centers, making it possible for individuals to take courses with others in a group setting. Expansion of this program is under consideration. For more information or to register for an *eBerkshire* course, please visit the website or call the office today.

Our partnerships with Eastern University (EU) and with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) have been fruitful over the decades that they have been in existence. Currently the partnership with EU is being reviewed by an independent team assembled to conduct an evaluation of the partnership, which has been in effect for twenty years. During that period twenty-nine students have studied at Eastern, with many completing their undergraduate degree at that institution. Discussion about the future of this partnership is planned for the next Board of Trustees meeting later this month. Regarding the partnership with GCTS, four students graduated in May; two from the South Hamilton, Massachusetts campus (Tom Loghry and Catherine Rybicki) and one each from campuses at Charlotte,

North Carolina and Jacksonville, Florida. Advent Christian students have the benefit of receiving up to 50% tuition assistance at Gordon-Conwell and studying under the mentorship of Dr. Gordon Isaac, who has served as the Berkshire Associate Professor of Advent Christian Studies for twenty-two years. Those considering study at Gordon-Conwell will be interested in knowing that online degree programs are now available, allowing students to remain in their local setting with minimal residency requirements. This is a very appealing option for those unable to relocate to attend a residential program. Currently there are no Advent Christian students at Eastern University or Gordon-Conwell. If you have interest or know of someone interested in Eastern University or Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, please send us their name and contact information so we can provide them with more information.

Some recent changes are having a positive impact. The relocation of the Berkshire Christian office to Oxford, Massachusetts is one of those changes. This new location is more centralized and is in greater proximity to volunteers who serve our administrative needs. Much work is being done to streamline organizational structure and efficiency. Efforts to improve communication have resulted in the creation of an eNewsletter, *Education Connection*. This quarterly publication features the latest news and opportunities from Berkshire Christian. To receive your copy of the next edition, please text the word 'Berkshire' to 42828 or go to the website and sign-up under the 'News' tab. To better understand current needs among our constituency and to help us in planning for the future, a Needs Assessment is being conducted. This extensive survey was sent to hundreds of individuals including alumni, current students, denominational leaders, and pastors across the country. The information provided will be useful in helping to gain important insight from many perspectives, as Berkshire seeks to better serve Christ and its constituency through its resources and programs in the development of a Strategic Plan. Be sure to stay in touch weekly by visiting Berkshire Christian's Facebook page (@BerkshireChristian).

This year several Alumni and Friend gatherings have been held from Florida to New Hampshire, including one in August held at Alton Bay Christian Conference Center attended by over 170 people. These have been wonderful times of fellowship and renewed acquaintances, along with the opportunity to hear of Berkshire Christian's exciting new developments and resources. One important resource is the Adventual Collection housed in the library at Gordon-Conwell in South Hamilton. This collection is under the direction of curator Duane Crabtree and provides a glimpse into our wonderful Adventual heritage. You are encouraged to visit this collection, which is open on a consistent basis. You are also invited to visit the new Berkshire office. Please contact us for more information.

Through its partnerships and programs Berkshire Christian provides the educational resources beneficial to Advent Christians, offering what few others can provide. We are most grateful for your ongoing prayers and faithful support. We are blessed to count the churches and pastors of the Eastern Region as our partners in the past and we look forward to renewed support in the future in the work of preparing men and women for gospel ministry. May the Lord be with you in these crucial days of Kingdom work.

Most Sincerely in Christ,
Dr. Glenn M. Rice, President
October 1, 2018