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**The Minutes of the
Seventeenth National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church
2019
Campus of Messiah College
Grantham, PA**

**First Day – Wednesday, May 29th, 2019
Morning Session**

- Opening** The sessions of the seventeenth National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church convened at Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, May 29th, 2019.
- Workshop** A training event for first time lay delegates was held prior to the opening of the Conference session.
- Rev Run** The “REV RUN 5K Rev Run/Walk” event was held to financially support the work of kingdom extension and to promote physical activity among our pastors and lay delegates.

**First Day – Wednesday, May 29th, 2019
1:00 P.M.
Communion**

The Conference gathering was begun with a service of Holy Communion led by Bishop Bruce D. Hill in the Messiah College’s Hostetter Chapel.

**First Day – Wednesday, May 29th, 2019
Afternoon Session 2:30 P.M.**

- Opening** Rev. Bruce D. Hill, fourteenth Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church, called the business sessions of the seventeenth session of the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church to order at 2:30 PM in the Eisenhower Center of Messiah College. He opened the session with prayer.
- Discipline** Rev. Jeffrey G. Byerly, First Assistant Secretary, read from the *Discipline*.
- Voting Rights** Bishop Hill explained the voting rights to the delegates of the National Conference.
- Standing Rules** **On motion**, the Standing Business Rules as found in the Conference Journal and in the report packet were adopted.
- Conference Roll** The Secretary gave an update on changes to the Conference roll. **On motion**, the Conference roll as updated was adopted.
- Conference Boundary** **On motion**, the Conference Boundary, in keeping with section D of the Standing Rules, was established.
- Episcopal Address** Conference Vice Chairman, Rev. Gary Brown, assumed the chair and Bishop Hill presented his Episcopal Address. **On motion**, the address was adopted with appreciation.
- Women’s Program** Bishop Hill announced the women’s program for this Conference session and

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dismissed the participants.

The Conference session stood at recess for ten minutes.

NC Secretary Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary, presented his report. This report comprises a summary of the work of the National Executive Committee for the past conference year and the complete minutes of the two sessions of the National Ministry Team from this past conference year, as well as a brief summary of NMT actions. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Treasurer's Report Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, presented the treasurer's report and the narrative portion of the Finance Committee report. **On motion**, these reports were adopted.

Episcopacy Committee Rev. Marlin Lafferty, chair of the Episcopacy Committee, presented the Episcopacy Committee's report, which included a plan for a sabbatical for the Bishop, and gave some verbal highlights. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Episcopal Fund An offering was taken for the Episcopal Fund. Bishop Hill announced that the offering amounted to \$1,059.40.

Resolutions Rev. Kirk Marks, National Conference Secretary, presented the following resolutions:

United Evangelical Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio convened a congregational meeting in 2006 to consider the dissolution of the United Evangelical Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio. Following an appropriate motion and second, a vote was taken and those entitled to cast a ballot voted to approve the motion to close effective December 2006 and be declared dissolved effective upon the adoption of a resolution of dissolution by the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church no later than May 31, 2019. The congregation took all actions required by Section 324.4 of the *Discipline* as to the call of the meeting, notice to members, entitlement to vote and vote required to dissolve.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the closure of United Evangelical Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio is hereby approved by the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church, to be effective upon the repayment of any claims of the National Conference being adequately satisfied. Title of all property, both real and personal, of said congregation hereby reverts to the National Conference which becomes entitled to all rights of ownership thereto.

On motion, the resolution was adopted.

The Winnebago Evangelical Fellowship, Winnebago, Illinois, has notified Bishop Hill that it convened a congregational meeting on May 5, 2019 to consider disaffiliation from the Evangelical Congregational Church. A vote was taken and those able to cast a ballot voted by greater than 2/3's majority to approve the motion to dissolve its affiliation with the Evangelical Congregational Church in accordance with paragraph 324.3 of the *Discipline*.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the disaffiliation of Winnebago Evangelical Fellowship, Winnebago, Illinois from the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church is hereby approved, to be effective upon the repayment of any claims of the National Conference being adequately satisfied.

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On motion, the resolution was adopted.

Community Reports

Bishop Hill announced that the written reports of all of the Communities have been distributed. Bishop Hill then asked the Executive Director and each of the Associates to verbally report on “one big thing” from their Community and these reports were given. Bishop Hill reported for the Missional Alignment Community and CNT. **On motion**, all these reports were adopted.

Stationing Committee

Rev. Sterling Trimmer presented the stationing report. **On motion**, the report was adopted. Printed copies were made available to the delegates.

On motion, the session was adjourned.

**First Day – Wednesday, May 29th, 2019
Evening Session 6:30 P.M.**

Worship

The Conference celebrated a service of worship led by a team led by David Julian.

Message

Rev. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate, brought the message on the Conference theme of “Who We Are”. He spoke on the segment of the theme verse that describes us as a “chosen people.”

Reception

Cake and ice cream were served to conclude the day’s session.

On motion, the Conference session was adjourned.

**Second Day – Thursday, May 30th, 2019
Morning Session 8:30 A.M.**

Worship

The Conference was led in worship by the team led by David Julian.

Message

Rev. Ted Rathman, Global Ministries Associate, brought the message on the Conference theme of “Who We Are” focusing on the theme verse segment “a royal priesthood.”

Discipline

The secretary read from the *Discipline*.

EC Benefits Corporation

On motion, the Conference adjourned to reconvene as a meeting of the EC Benefits Corporation.

On motion, the Conference reconvened.

ETS

Dr. Anthony Blair, president of the Evangelical Theological Seminary, presented the seminary report. Tony gave some highlights and a verbal update on his written report. **On motion**, the report was approved.

Enduring Covenant

Bishop Hill presented the “Enduring Covenant” document describing the relationship between the denomination and seminary. Bishop Hill and Dr. Blair have developed this document. The Board of the seminary has already approved this document. **On motion**, the document was approved.

StoneRidge Retirement Living

Rev. Dana Logan, Lead Chaplain, and Chelsey Wirth, Coordinator of Fund Raising for StoneRidge Retirement Living, introduced themselves and

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presented this report. **On motion**, the report was approved.

Twin Pines

Mr. Shawn Fetterhoff, Executive Director of Twin Pines, presented this report. He also gave some verbal highlights and described new events and relationships Twin Pines has developed. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Articles of Incorporation

Bishop Hill reported that the Twin Pines Board has asked the National Conference to amend their articles of incorporation and he gave the background and reasons for this request. **On motion**, these changes were approved.

The Conference session stood at recess for fifteen minutes.

Budget

Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, and Mr. Kevin Henry, National Conference Executive Director, presented the National Conference budget for 2020. This budget includes a Ministry Funds rate of 5.6%. **On motion**, the budget was adopted.

Compensation

Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, and Mr. Kevin Henry, National Conference Executive Director, presented the compensation recommendations from the Finance Committee.

On motion, item #1 was adopted.

On motion, item #2 was adopted.

On motion, item #3 was adopted.

On motion, item #4 was adopted.

On motion, item #5 was adopted.

On motion, item #6 was adopted.

On motion, item #7 was adopted.

On motion, item #8 was adopted.

On motion, the Finance Committee's report as a whole was adopted.

Denominational Structure

Bishop Hill presented the report of the "Evaluation of the EC Denominational Structure" and explained the process for formalizing the new structure by *Discipline* amendments. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

On motion, the National Conference instructed the Amendments Committee to prepare amendments to the *EC Discipline* such that the *Discipline* can be amended to formalize and approve this structure that is currently in place as an experiment under section 409.11. The Conference further instructed that these amendments be presented to National Conference at its 2020 session for first reading so that they can be considered for final approval and *Discipline* change at the 2021 session of the National Conference.

Rule Changes

Bishop Hill presented the proposed rule changes. The Bishop indicated that the rule changes will be considered and approved by section.

On motion, the proposed changes to sections 403 "Finance" were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to sections 803.1.3.1 and 803.1.3.2 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 803.2.1 and 803.2.3 "Itinerary" were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 804.2.2 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 804.3 were adopted.

Motion, and second to adopt the proposed changes to section 805.1.4.

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Motion, and second, to amend the item by replacing “Ministerial Development Community” with Board of Examiners” within the item. The motion to amend was approved.

The motion to adopt section 805.1.4 was approved.

On motion, the proposed striking of section 805.2.1.3 was adopted.

Motion, and second, to adopt the proposed changes to section 805.2.4.

Motion, and second, to amend the item by replacing “Ministerial Development Community” with “Board of Examiners” within the item. The motion to amend was approved.

On motion, the proposed addition of section 805.3.3. was adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 805.4 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 805.5 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 807.1.3 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 906 were adopted.

On motion, the proposed changes to section 910.2.4 were adopted.

Motion, and second, to adopt the proposed changes to section 1020.

Motion, and second, to amend the item by striking all reference to part time ministry and any death benefit less than \$10,000.

Motion, and second, to refer the item back to the Conference Support Team for further study. This motion was adopted and the item was referred.

On motion, the report on rule changes was adopted as a whole.

The Conference stood at recess for lunch.

Second Day – Thursday, May 30th, 2019 Afternoon Session 1:30 P.M.

Educational Experience

The Conference reconvened with delegates meeting separately in break-out groups for delegates to participate in educational seminars.

Second Day – Thursday, May 30th, 2019 Evening Session 6:30 P.M.

Worship

The Conference was led in worship by the team led by David Julian. Rev. Leslie Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate, brought the message on the Conference theme of “Who We Are” focusing on the segment of the theme verse “a holy nation.”

Third Day – Friday, May 31st, 2019 Morning Session 8:30 A.M.

Opening

Bishop Hill called the session to order and the secretary read from the *Discipline*.

Credentials

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, presented the Board of Examiners’ report.

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Disciplinary Questions

The following individuals answered the disciplinary questions: Barry Heckman, Vincent Jones, and Richard Kuhn. Bishop Hill reported that Timothy Valentino, who was unable to be present at this Conference, answered the disciplinary questions before the National Ministry Team in March. Bishop Hill led the Conference in prayer for these candidates.

Executive Session

On motion, the Conference moved into executive session.

The Conference reconvened into open session.

Credentials

Rev. Byerly resumed the Board of Examiner's report:

We recommend that Marisel Mieses be ordained as a Deaconess – Discipleship. A ballot was taken for this item.

We recommend that Barry Heckman be received as a Licensed Deacon with a specialization of Christian Education/PCAP. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend that James “Janor” Bestwick be transferred from Licensed Pastor to a Local Pastor. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend that Timothy Ream be transferred from a Licensed Pastor to a Local Candidate. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend Russell Warner be transferred from a Licensed Pastor to a Local Pastor. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend Richard Kuhn be transferred from Approved Pastor to a Local Pastor. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend Jeffrey Stansbury be transferred to the Supernumerary classification. **On motion**, the item was approved.

We recommend that Gary Brown; Charles Campbell; David Dennis; Robert Mavis; Richard Osberg, Jr.; David Swift and Sterling Trimmer, Jr. be transferred to the Superannuated classification. **On motion**, the item was approved.

The Board of Examiners reported that they have granted annual renewals for the following credentialed individuals:

- Deacon/Deaconess – Timothy Reigle
- Licensed Candidate – None
- Local Candidate – Manuel Arias, Lawrence Bentz, Jeffrey Hain, and Mark Reigle
- Lay Preacher Certification – Gerald Klopp, Donald Romberger, Paul VanOsten and Ronald West

The Board of Examiners reported that Philip Bartelt, Stephen Cramer, Lisa Custer, Robert Fritz, Michael Hollinger, John R. Martinez, Juan Carlos Morales, and Leroy Walbert, Jr. have been removed from our ministerial rolls at their request.

On motion, the credentialing report of the Ministerial Development Community was adopted as a whole.

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- Ballot Announced** Bishop Hill announced that George Custer, Michael Knapp, Rick Reilly, Camron Smith, and J. Paul Weitzel were approved for ordination during the executive session.
- Ballot Announced** Bishop Hill announced the result of the ballot vote that was taken. Marisel Mieses has been approved for ordination as Deaconess.
- Ballot Announced** Bishop Hill announced that Timothy Sanger and Robert Santucci were received into the Itinerancy by ballot vote of Itinerants during the executive session. Timothy Valentino was received by transfer as an ordained elder during the executive session.
- The Conference session stood at recess for 15 minutes.
- Worship** The Conference entered into a time of worship led by the Conference worship team. Rev. Jeffrey G. Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, preached a message entitled “The Manifold Wisdom of God” focusing on the segment of the theme verse “God’s own possession.”
- Memorial Secretary** The Rev. Adam Roberts, National Conference Memorial Secretary, presented the Memorial Report. **On motion**, the report was adopted.
- Retirement Recognition** Bishop Hill announced the list of retirees. Those retiree couples who were recognized were Gary and Ann Brown, Charles and Annette Campbell, David and Christie Dennis, Robert and Beth Mavis, Richard and Debbie Osberg, David and Dana Swift, and Sterling and Jolie Trimmer. Bishop Hill made the retiree presentations and Rev. Gordon Lewis led the Conference in a prayer for thanksgiving and blessing for these retirees.
- Milestone Recognitions** Bishop Hill recognized Rev. Keith Miller and Rev. Ronald Heim for achieving 50 years of service with EC credentials. Dr. Donald Metz led the Conference in a prayer of thanksgiving for these years of service.
- New Credentials** Bishop Hill called forward and recognized those who received new pastoral credentials at this Conference. Rev. Richard Osberg led the Conference in prayer for them.
- Andrew Fund** An offering was taken for the Andrew Fund and the Conference worship team led the singing of a song. The offering amounted to \$1,339.83.
- Appreciation** Bishop Hill expressed appreciation to all those who contributed to the Conference program this year.
- Conference Digest** Bishop Hill announced that the *National Conference Digest* has been prepared and it was distributed. It will also be posted on the website and has been distributed by e-mail.
- 2020 Conference** National Conference for 2020 is scheduled for May 27-29, 2020 at the campus of Messiah College.
- Conference Roll** **On motion**, the National Conference Secretary was authorized to update the Conference Ministerial Rolls.
- Committee Appointments** **On motion**, the Bishop and Associates were authorized to appoint committees for the 2019-2020 Conference year.

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Appreciation Bishop Emeritus Dr. Michael W. Sigman voiced the Conference's appreciation for Bishop Hill's leadership and the Conference recognized Bishop Hill with a standing ovation.

Minutes **On motion**, the Secretary was authorized to affix signatures to the minutes.

Adjournment The Conference session was concluded with the singing of *Wonderful Grace of Jesus*.

On motion, the seventeenth National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church was adjourned. Bishop Hill led the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary