The Eleventh National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church

2013 National Conference Theme

"As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”
John 20:21 (NLTse)

Wednesday

Wednesday featured a 5K Run/Walk to support church planting during the registration process. The conference convened in the afternoon at the Hostetter Chapel with the entire conference sharing in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Bishop Hill presented a message that featured the unity that the Church possesses through the Lord of the Church.

Following the service of Holy Communion, the National Conference cared for the parliamentary procedural items necessary to open the business sessions.

Bishop Bruce Hill delivered the Episcopal address, which challenged the conference concerning the theme of engaging our culture as Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”

Copies of this message were made available to conference delegates, who were encouraged to make this address available to their congregations.

The reports from the Conference Ministers—Dr. Gary Kuehner made personal comments, highlighting his passion to gather a team to focus on evangelism.

He then presented two resolutions concerning: 1] the extinction of Salem EC Church, Mahanoy City (motion carried), and 2] the disaffiliation of Seibert EC Church, Allentown (motion carried).

Rev. Gary Brown made personal comments, and then presented a resolution concerning the disaffiliation of Kimball Avenue EC Church, Chicago, IL (motion carried).

Dr. Gordy Lewis made personal comments about reporting and financial trends. He then presented a resolution concerning the closure of Bethany EC Church, Martindale (motion carried).

Additionally, the bishop directed the secretaries to write letters of affection and appreciation to Kimball Avenue, Seibert, and Bethany churches.

Rev. Kirk Marks reported for the National Executive Committee and the National Ministry Team. Mrs. Debra Patterson, treasurer, presented a report of the Conference finances. Dr. Hal Scanlin reported for the Historical Society.
Rev. Marlin Lafferty presented the Episcopacy report. Kevin Henry reported for the Property and the Loan and Investment committees—noting that loan percentages were reduced from 5% to 4% for the investment fund.

A ballot was cast for Rev. Gary Brown to be Conference Historian.

The Compensation Committee report was presented by Rick Glauthier, which included the following items:

- The base 2014 pastoral salaries were established to be increased by the COLA percentage that will be posted on the church website once it is released.
- The Conference leadership salaries for Bishop and Conference Ministers will be established with a 1.7% increase.
- Items of information focused on establishing Conference salaries, pension figures, honorariums, moving regulations, housing, vacation schedules, and ministry leaves.

After dinner, the conference band led in worship. Dr. John Tornfelt then presented devotions focusing on “telling what we know to those who don’t.”

Rev. Les Cool reported for the Church Planting Commission, which featured testimonies from a few church planting situations, providing positive updates to the conference.

Seminar speaker Dr. Chris Backert from Fresh Expressions challenged the conference delegates with the message, “The Once and Future Mission.”

The evening session closed with an invitation to visit the church planting sites on the conference floor.

**Thursday**

The morning began with a devotional time which featured praise led by the conference band and featured a devotional from Mrs. Laurie Mellinger, who focused on the issue of new wine in old wineskins.

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly presented the report of the National Conference Relations Committee.

Donna Fillman, Paul Johnson, James Ritter, Donald Romberger, and Russell Warner answered the disciplinary questions.

The following individual classifications will reflect their new titles due to the approval of the new 800 and 908 sections of the Conference Journal. Matthew Hill, Lewis Bennett, and Ken Sears were approved as Itinerant Ordained Elders. Brian Betsworth, Christopher Bronico, Andrew Carr, Gene Stevenson and, Ted Rathman were approved as Licensed Pastors. Richard Weidman was approved as a Local Pastor. James Danielson and Joshua Reinders were transferred to Licensed Candidates. Paul Johnson and John Ewing, Jr. were approved as Local Candidates. Patricia Strain and Donna Baldt were approved as an Ordained Deaconesses. Donna Fillman was approved as a Deaconess. Leroy Walbert, Jr. and Edward Watts were approved as Deacons.

Donald Romberger was approved as a Certified Lay Preacher. Jeff Berger and Robert Stoner were redesignated within the Elders classification. Bruce Ray was transferred to the supernumerary status. Daniel Rohrbaugh and Robert Stahl were superannuated. All annual renewals of credentials were granted. Barry Bradley, Brent Martin, and Dale Reber were removed from our ministerial rolls.

Rev. Les Cool presented the report for the Futures Initiative, while Controller Kevin Henry provided financial projects. Discussion was held concerning the conceptual plan to eliminate Conference Ministers and move toward cluster-based arrangements for congregations.

The Conference recognized the ministry of retiring pastor, Robert Stahl.
Mrs. Vickie Scheib presented devotions for the afternoon session.

Revs. Scott and David Carr, and Shawn Fetterhoff reported for the camping ministries of the denomination.

Dr. Gordy Lewis reported for the Church Health Commission by highlighting some of their resources.

Lois Matarazzi was re-elected to serve on the Twin Pines board.

Seminar speaker Dr. Chris Backert from Fresh Expressions continued the message, “The Once and Future Mission.”

Dr. Tony Blair reported for Evangelical Seminary and shared a vision for leadership development. Steve Reiter and his support staff reported for New Dawn Christian Communities.

Rev. Gerald Baum presented the Moving Report.

The conference adopted a resolution from the Faith & Doctrine Committee regarding the prohibition of same sex unions and marriages (for the timely purpose of alleviating pressure on our military chaplains).

The evening session began with devotions from Robert Stahl.

Revs. James Price (DR), David Bailey (GLR), and Sterling Trimmer (SR) were elected to their corresponding regional Conference Relations Committees.

The discussion continued concerning the Futures Initiative. A ballot was cast requiring a 2/3 majority. The Futures Initiatives concept was defeated.

Rev. Franklin Schock presented the report for the Benefits Corporation, and conducted its annual meeting. A ballot was cast for Rev. Franklin Schock and Charles Buehler to the Benefits Corporation Board of Trustees.

The evening sessions concluded with a special visit from “Effie and Emma,” and an ice cream social.

**Friday**

The conference band led in praise and worship, while Mr. George Davis provided morning devotions.

Rev. Ryan Taylor presented the report for the Evangelism and Discipleship Commission with help from Sue Yarnall, who showed a video about women’s ministry. Rev. Al Giles and Justin Stauffer talked about the 3DM disciple making movement.

Christine Pense presented the Leadership Commission report and highlighted changes to the requirements for pastoral CEUs and changes to the governance manual.

Revs. Doug Evans and David Bailey were elected as Stationing Elders of their respective regions.

Director Rev. Randy Sizemore reported for the Global Ministries Commission, indicating that the work continues to expand, however it is more difficult to do more work with fewer resources.

Rev. Gary Kuehner reported for the supervisory committee and noted information concerning about rules for appropriations and ministry fund obligations.

The Susquehanna Conference Minister evaluation was presented by Rev. Charles Walker with positive approval.

Rev. Gregory Dimick presented the memorial report of deaths among pastors, pastors’ wives, lay delegates, and missionaries.

The following reports were presented and approved: Audit, Conference Historian, Statistical, Nominating, Stationing, and Conference Services.

The budget was approved with a Ministry Fund calculation of 8.82% plus camp funds.

The 2013 National Conference adjourned with singing and prayer.