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## EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

I greet you to the sessions of the 2018 National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church. As you prepared to attend Conference you probably believed you would see me here. Like going to church on Sunday morning; you expect to see the pastor. I suppose it's rather important for the pastor to be present most Sundays and the bishop to be present at National Conference. As you came to Conference you no doubt thought you would see a number of friends and colleagues. When I was a pastor preparing to come to Conference, one of the things I looked forward to most was being able to see and talk with lots of people I hadn't seen since last year. But as we prepare for worship in our churches or as we prepare for Conference do we ever think about meeting God? Do we expect to see him and hear him? I hope so. Jesus said, *"For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them"* (Matthew 18:20). We are way above that quorum; our Lord is here through his Holy Spirit. I pray we hear his voice during our worship, our fellowship, and even in our business.

This year we gather under the theme "ALL IN" based on 2 Corinthians 5:15: *"He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them."*

One of the realities of life and ministry, and of life as the church, is that our culture has developed into a culture of choices. We demand choices; so many choices that we are perhaps the most distracted generation in history. Our attention span grows shorter not from year to year but moment by moment. For so many in our American culture, life has become a blur of choices and a lot of people think they just don't have time for faith or church. It can lead us to wonder, is it even possible to be "ALL IN?" Faith and church are just another choice among a myriad of choices. How can I honestly be "ALL IN" with so many choices vying for my time and attention?

That's not a question limited just to the casual or regular church attendee however we define casual and regular today. It's a question each one of us, pastors and lay leaders alike, must deal with in our own lives. People wonder how we have time to "do church" when we consider all the other things we have to do? But that question is coming from a mistaken perspective. It's not about how we "do church." The question is whether or not I am committed to "be church" every day and everywhere; not just on Sunday in a building with a steeple on it. Following Jesus, discipleship, is not just another thing to do. It is something to be. It is accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord and growing to know him better and love him more. It is living a transformed life every day as we do all the things on our "to do" list.

We often talk about discipleship like it's optional. Many see the Christian life as: 1. Get saved and 2. Go to church. Now, obviously, we are the *Evangelical* Congregational Church. We fervently believe in, boldly preach, and openly share the Good News about Jesus. Salvation is through personal faith in Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ alone. We believe in the importance of being an active part of a local body of believers – the church. But we also understand that Jesus gave each one of us the Great Commission to "go and make disciples." It's not an option. We are called to faith in Jesus, to life in its abundance now, to join God in where he's at work in the world today.

Disciple-making is vital not only because it is the commission Jesus has given to every one of us, though that's reason enough; but I think we can make an argument from Judges 2:10 regarding the danger of not stepping up to the task of discipling the next generation. Joshua, the successor of Moses, and servant of the Lord, dies and is buried. *"After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the Lord or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel."* One commentator notes the generation "did not know God in a vital way." You want another definition of discipleship: how about knowing God in a vital way. When we think about discipleship and spiritual growth, are we thinking "know stuff" or "know Jesus"?

As Ben Sternke, church-planter and co-founder of Gravity Leadership, put it, *"We respond to the gospel of the Kingdom by trusting Jesus, not just for forgiveness for sins, but for everything."* That, my friends, is being "ALL IN."

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When I think about personally being “ALL IN” I am particularly aware of the demands and expectations on our pastors. How do we do that in healthy ways? We must be “ALL IN” but we can’t lose our wives and families or destroy our own health in the process. I don’t think that’s what Jesus expects. I’ve said it before; ministry is hard work. Spiritual warfare is real.

Satan’s strategy is clear: get the pastor or his family to run off the rails and the result is pain, hurt, and distrust throughout the congregation. Jeff Byerly, our Ministerial Development Associate, and appropriate District Field Directors, and I have had to respond too many times to pastors and their families who are struggling with spiritual battles. They are wounded; some deeply wounded. Reaching out to these pastors, their families, and congregations has taken a lot of time and energy. While restoration is always the goal of biblical discipline and accountability, that can be a long and difficult road for all affected by the battle with sin. Please join me in praying for all of our pastors and their families. Being a pastor is a challenging and too often lonely calling. The book *“For Ministers About to Start ... or About to Give Up”* by Travis Collins reports that 33% of pastors say being in ministry is “an outright hazard” to their families and that 75% of ministers experience “severe stress causing anguish, worry, bewilderment, anger, depression, fear and alienation” during their careers. The changing face of our culture, the congregational finances, growing government and media oversight, and the increasing expectations and demands placed on pastors by others and ourselves makes being a pastor at this time in history even more challenging. Our pastors and leaders need friends, coaches, trusted brothers and sisters with whom they can share their struggles.

So what does a healthy “ALL IN” look like for a pastor? Let me share three quick ideas:

1. It begins with an understanding and surrendering to the truth that this is God’s work and his responsibility. You’ve heard it before “There is a god. I am not him.” I am the steward, not the owner.
2. It means creating margin in our lives; healthy boundaries. I’m not going to tell you where those boundaries are, I am a fellow sufferer. But I will say we need to figure this out. I am thankful to hear of churches that are going beyond the conference suggested minimums for vacation time and churches who are giving their pastor a sabbatical. Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals, states *“In the 2000s we seldom hear about workaholics but know all about digiaholics.”* We can’t unplug. Perhaps we need to take a regular Sabbath from electronic communication. Can we do that? Can I do that? Leith Anderson asks *“Can we trust God enough to look up to him more than down to a phone?”*
3. Take care of your soul. C.S. Lewis wrote, *“You don’t have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.”* Yet how many of us, particularly in vocational ministry are so focused on taking care of everyone else that we neglect to take care of our own hearts? It’s obvious and it’s counterintuitive. We say, “I’m the pastor, I need to take care of them.” But like they tell you during those pre-flight safety instructions, you can’t take care of the people you’re sitting with, even children, if you pass out because you didn’t put your oxygen mask on first. I don’t know what it looks like for you, but I must allow my Shepherd to restore my soul.

These same three things can or should equally apply to every lay delegate and local congregational leader. We need individuals who are “ALL IN” so we can have churches who are “ALL IN”. I often chuckle to myself when I have people talk to me and complain that the church isn’t doing this or that without ever understand that *they* are the church. Oh, how I pray for healthy local churches!

Please note, too, that when I say health churches, I don’t mean large churches. We need large churches and we need small churches. Each and every local body of believers is important to the Lord’s strategy of reaching our neighborhoods, communities, and the world with the Good News of God’s wonderful grace. Each one has its unique strengths and weakness, challenges and opportunities.

I can tell you finding bi-vocational pastors who live in a reasonable commuting distance to open congregations is a growing challenge. A few years ago one denomination declared that a local church needed an income of at least \$150,000 per year to maintain a minimum full-time pastoral assignment; anything less than that and they simply would not be assigned a full-time pastor. We are not that kind of denomination and I am not advocating that we should be; but more and more churches are looking for bi-vocational pastors who work a secular full-time or part-time job and are, therefore, not able to relocate to live within a reasonable commuting distance to the church. When I look at the total income as reported to the 2017 National Conference, 65 of the 95 churches that submitted annual reports had incomes under

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\$150,000. This is a trend which will continue to challenge us. (Yes, one-third of our churches did not submit an annual report.)

Pastors who are serving in healthy congregations are increasingly unwilling to leave that situation for another congregation (even if it appears to be healthy). This is a good thing; pastors are putting down roots and getting involved in their local community, they're buying homes, wives often have more than jobs; they have careers that often provide the family's health insurance and other benefits. That means that it is becoming more and more challenging to ask a pastor to leave a healthy situation for a church that may be larger but less healthy or in need of a revitalization. I pray for pastors who are called to take up the challenge of moving to a church and leading a revitalization effort; turning that church around and restoring it to health and vitality. That leads me to the third issue the Stationing Committee sees.

Not only do I need to pray for pastors to lead in church revitalization, we need to pray for members of local congregations to want to see their church change and be restored to vital missional ministry. I am increasingly frustrated by individuals, some even congregational leaders, who simply want the Stationing Committee to find someone to fill their pulpit and perpetuate the way they've always done things. When one of our Stationing Elders met with a Pastoral Relations Committee to talk about an alternative for the future of their church, he was told "no ...when there's three people left we'll give you the keys and you can do what you want with the building." A PRC member at another church, in their meeting, told their Stationing Elder the church is struggling "Because God isn't doing his job." Please hear me when I say these are exceptions to the conversations most Stationing Elders have; but that attitude breaks my heart and one comment like that is too many as far as I'm concerned. If you think the Lord takes these kinds of attitudes and statements lightly, I encourage you to read the second and third chapters of Revelation.

Gary Brown asked a key question during our Stationing Committee Retreat: "Are we in the business of servicing people's nostalgia?" Ed Stetzer, the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism at Wheaton College and Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, has written that too many Christians today have replaced the Great Commission with the Great Nostalgia. That will not only be fatal to local congregations, more importantly, that could be eternally fatal to the people living all around the church who need Jesus.

I'm honestly not sure how to deal with those local leaders or the congregations they represent. The good news is we really have a difficult time finding pastors for those kinds of churches because most of our pastors don't want to simply put in time until a church closes. They want to see people reached with the Gospel. Praise the Lord for that! We have a statement in the *Discipline* that describes the process for dealing with an unstationable pastor. But what do we do with a local church, when because of their attitude, is unstationable? A number of years ago we said not every pastor is guaranteed a church; does a similar statement apply to local churches? That's something we're going to have to work through in the years to come.

I do not believe the reason Jesus came to earth, born of the virgin, lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven was so we could maintain our little chapels of nostalgia until the last person turns out the lights. America is full of closed churches, large and small. No church can simply continue as we have in past generations simply because that's what makes us comfortable and happy. No church, large or small, can just continue to "do church" the way we always have. We've proven over and over again that it does not work and when we do it, we are, in fact, ignoring God and his word. We serve a creative God and I think he expects his church to be creative in meeting the needs of ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Please hear what I'm saying and what I'm not saying. I'm not saying that small churches should all close or merge. There definitely is a place for healthy missional small congregations. I'm not saying that every church has to be a large church, but if we chose to put maintaining our traditions over reaching people with the Good News about Jesus, we've missed the whole point. If we're asking the Stationing Committee to simply maintain our nostalgia, or our current level of dysfunction or un-healthiness, we are finished no matter how many people show up on Sunday morning. We'd be better off becoming a house-church and pouring time, talent, and treasure into community ministry rather than into maintaining a 125 year old monument to generations long gone. Too many churches today, EC and non-EC, (yes, many others share our problems) have saved our pews and dead aunt Bessie's stained glass window while we've lost our children and whole generations of people who need Jesus. (I'm not sure if this is preaching, prophetic, or just a rant; but I feel a little better now.)

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Ministry is hard work; it's often dirty work. There is no magic in ministry, ministry is simply service. In Greek the word for ministry is "diakonia." The root word is "konis" which means "dust" or "grit." In other words, ministry is dirty work; it rolls up its sleeves and does things that many times, look unimportant to the world. Our English word for "ministry" comes from the Latin root for "small things," as in the word "miniscule." Ministry means I am to be involved in little acts, small gestures, and everyday service: giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty, preaching the whole Gospel, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, caring for those with special needs, or as Jesus illustrated washing others' feet. Ministry, bi-vocational, volunteer, and/or full-time, requires us to be "ALL IN."

I am the Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church of the United States; not really "the bishop of the world" as I was introduced a few years ago in Liberia. But I do have the privilege to travel to our international conferences to minister alongside the leaders and people of the EC Church around the world. I will not steal Randy's thunder (or at least too much of it) but I am excited about what God is doing in other parts of the church even as they deal with very difficult circumstances. Just a few weeks prior to leaving on a trip to Nepal this past year, the team received word the Nepalese government had adopted a law outlawing what we would call evangelism and others would call proselytizing. While Nepal's constitution already forbids religious proselytizing, the new law — which also contains an anti-blasphemy stipulation forbidding the "hurting of religious sentiment" — adds teeth to the existing restriction: five years imprisonment and a 5,000-rupee fine per violation. While the team was focused mainly on encouraging the existing church and did not have a lot of interaction with the Hindu majority, Pastor Janga, leader of the EC Church in Nepal, and the other pastors and church leaders face a daily threat of persecution. Yet the church grows.

Our brothers and sisters in Japan continue to faithfully serve a country that is less than one percent Christian. Liberia shares the good news about Jesus in remote areas of that developing country. The EC Church of India is sending out their own missionaries to least reached areas of their own country as well as neighboring countries. And our brothers and sisters in Mexico continue to work together to tell others about Jesus even as they deal with the threat of violence from the drug cartels.

May the Lord continue to give all of these brothers and sisters strength and encouragement to serve him in very challenging times and places. May they always be near the top of our daily prayer lists. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: if you've never participated in a short-term mission trip, if you've never visited a mission field, please do it. God speaks and we hear him in ways we seem to miss when we're at home surrounded by all the responsibilities and stuff of American life.

We, as the National Conference, will be asked to adopt one resolution dealing with the closure of Grace EC Church, East Petersburg, PA. The congregation voted to close effective September 24, 2017. The good news is that the facility did not stay closed for long. Grace EC Church, Lancaster, PA felt the Lord's leading to relocate their ministry from South Shippen Street in downtown Lancaster city where they had been sharing facilities with "In the Light Ministries." I believe I can say the Lord miraculously provided the motivation to move so that as one Grace EC Church closed in September, another Grace EC Church opened for ministry to that community three months later. Praise the Lord!

Tomorrow morning you will hear updates from many of our affiliate ministries. Evangelical Seminary will present a revised Enduring Covenant between the Seminary and the Evangelical Congregational Church. You may recall that National Conference adopted a document entitled "An Enduring Covenant" in May 2012. Both President Tony Blair and I felt that document needed to be updated to more clearly reflect the current relationship following the changes instituted by the denominational restructuring of 2016. I endorse the Enduring Covenant which will be presented tomorrow morning for our adoption.

When I think about all the conversations about our restructuring, one area where I wish I could get a "do-over" is in the way we talked about the funding of our affiliate ministries. When the National Conference voted in 2015 to enter into restructuring it included moving from mandatory funding, through ministry funds, to the voluntary funding of our affiliate ministries. The problem was it was a lot easier to say one word — "defunding" — than say "moving from mandatory funding, through ministry funds, to the voluntary funding." Using one word may have been easier but it wasn't accurate. Let's be clear about this: we have not said our affiliate ministries don't need to be funded. Our affiliates still need our regular support; prayer, encouragement, and voluntary financial support. In 2017, 44 congregations gave a total of \$27,305 to Twin Pines Camp. That sounds pretty good until you discover that one congregation gave \$8,000 of that. Thank you to that church; the rest of us need to do better. In 2017, only 22 congregations

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gave a gift to Evangelical Seminary. That's up to 25 in the first four months of 2018 but we still have a long way to go. Please remember, both of these affiliate ministries are investments in the future of the Evangelical Congregational Church. They need an on-going relationship with each and every one of our congregations; and our congregations also need an on-going relationship with our camps and seminary. I know these affiliates want to know how they can help you and they're each developing ministries to help our local churches. So, please join me as we do our best to not use the "d-word" any more and instead talk about how we can creatively and voluntarily fund our affiliate ministries.

During the March 2017 National Ministry Team meeting, Randy Sizemore, our Global Ministries Associate, announced that he would not seek another term as GMA. That set off a process of seeking the Lord's leading in identifying the next person to serve as our Global Ministries Associate. I am pleased to tell you I believe the Lord has provided the right individual at the right time to serve as our next Global Ministries Associate. Let me take a few moments to express my gratitude to Randy Sizemore. I have often blamed him as the one who started me down the path of denominational restructuring, when soon after my election as Bishop, he walked into the office and told me we had to have a talk about how the GMC was financed. That brief statement got me started on lots of changes which also included Randy entering into a shared ministry position in 2014 as Lead Pastor of Bethel EC Church, Dixon, IL while still serving as the Director of Global Ministries and then Global Ministries Associate. Most of all, I am thankful to be able to call him my friend. Thank you, Randy and Carla, for your ministry and leadership to the global church. I hope you all will be with us as we express our appreciation to Randy and Carla later this evening. During the March 2018 National Ministry Team meeting, the NMT affirmed the selection of Rev. Ted Rathman as our next Global Ministries Associate. I am thankful for Ted and his wife Jessica. They carefully prayed about this decision before he applied. I am thankful, too, for the vision of the Grace EC Church, Schuylkill Haven, PA leaders and congregation to allow their pastor to serve both them and the international conferences of the Evangelical Congregational Church. We will take time during the worship service this Friday morning to install Ted as our next Global Ministries Associate. I look forward to working with Ted as he officially begins his ministry as GMA on July 1, 2018.

I want to take a few moments to make sure you know how well the teams leading the Evangelical Congregational Church are working together. The leadership team affectionately known as the BEDAS (Bishop, Executive Director, Associates and Secretary of National Conference) is a dedicated group of strategic thinkers and I greatly appreciate their input. The 13 District Field Directors and the local congregations who allow them to do this vital ministry all continue to amaze me. I want to express my sincere appreciation to each one. Our District Field Directors are doing an outstanding job of building community within the pastors and congregations in their districts. We are seeing more and more instances of local leaders recognizing our DFDs as guides in navigating the process of tapping in to denominational resources. Our DFDs are creatively helping to guide healthy conversations about ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century among pastors. In addition, some of the District Field Directors have willingly stepped into some deep waters to help me work through challenging situations with pastors and congregations.

I believe our two year-old denominational structure is beginning to take hold and build a sense of community in our denomination. We've gotten some things right; we've come up short in others. One of the tasks we must now undertake is to evaluate just what those areas are and make the adjustments necessary to keep the momentum moving forward. We also need to begin to think about making the changes permanent or as permanent as things are in this day and age so we can begin the process of writing the appropriate amendments for the next edition of denomination's *Discipline*. That process of preparing amendments to the *Discipline* will begin next year! I also realize that what we are really attempting to do is initiate culture change. During a recent meeting I was reminded by the presenter that culture change takes a minimum of five to seven years. We're making progress; but we aren't there yet.

Today, I am pleased to reinforce what you already know – the Lord is alive and well and is at work in and through the people of the Evangelical Congregational Church. Listen to some of these recent notes I received on quarterly and annual reports (and yes, I actually do read the reports):

- More people being involved in prayer.
- Our financial picture continues to look good; praise the Lord for his generous supply!
- We have successfully united a group from a recently closed church in with our congregation.
- We've hired a student from Lancaster Bible College to oversee our youth ministry.

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- New people are getting connected – both young families and seasoned saints.
- We have started a monthly men’s ministry.
- A swell in attendance has caused us to consider a third service.
- New leaders have surfaced.
- People were amazed at our Easter attendance.
- Just completed “40 Days of Prayer.”
- Facilities get used frequently by church and community.
- High percentage participation in prayer challenge.
- More volunteers are coming forward.
- Stories people are telling as they witness to others.
- A wonderful church family that lives in harmony with one another.
- We continue to make progress in our revitalization efforts!
- We are seeing the Holy Spirit’s presence and power evidenced in powerful new ways in worship and in the lives of members.
- And this response to the line in the annual report form about “Dedications to full-time Christian Service”: “Nobody is jumping up to say, ‘I wanna be a missionary!’ or ‘God has called me to pastor!’ But I see an increasing commitment to ‘full-time’ Christian living among our folks. They’ve always been ‘real’ Christians, but I’ve seen an increase in courage and creativity when it comes to life and ministry.”

God is at work in and through his people! Do you believe that? Do you see that? Have you experienced that? I certainly hope so! If not, I pray that the Holy Spirit would move in your heart and in the hearts of the people of your local congregation. Take some time during this National Conference to share your good stories – celebrate!

I must also celebrate and express my appreciation for our Church Center staff. We’ve experienced changes: Brenda now works two days a week in retirement and Jodi, my ever-efficient Administrative Assistant, now works three days a week. Kevin Henry is an outstanding help and resource to me and to our congregations. The rest of the staff, Pat Wolfe, Shirley Long, Abi Bomgardner, Dave King and Pat Strain continue to serve the Lord and his church and for that I am very grateful. Change is a constant but the work of serving our congregations continues through the staff’s faithful and effective service.

In conclusion, I’m still having a good time serving as Bishop of the EC Church. I must admit there are some days that are more enjoyable than others, and I don’t sit around bored with nothing to do; but the good days still outnumber the challenging ones, and for that I am very grateful to the Lord. Of course, I am so thankful for Gloria’s deep love and support. She truly is my best friend and even with all my travels, together is always my favorite place to be. Thank you to all of you who continue to support us in prayer. It sounds like a cliché but we really do depend on your prayers; please don’t stop.

Thanks be to God for his wonderful gift of mercy, grace, and love in Christ Jesus! May he receive all glory and honor for the great things being accomplished for the building of his Kingdom in and through the Evangelical Congregational Church. May each one of us be “ALL IN” for Jesus. *“He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them”* (2 Corinthians 5:15).

**Rev. Bruce D. Hill**

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## NATIONAL CONFERENCE SECRETARY

The National Conference Secretary’s Report to this May-June 2018 session of National Conference includes the minutes of the two National Ministry Team meetings (omitting the documents listed as attached to the minutes) that took place this conference year and a summary of the National Executive Committee’s work in this past conference year.

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The full minutes of all National Executive Committee and National Ministry Team meetings, including all of the supporting documents, are kept in the official National Conference Secretary files, currently housed at Reamstown, St. Paul's.

## Summary of National Executive Committee Work

In accordance with responsibilities assigned to it by the *Discipline* and the National Conference Rules, the Executive Committee of the National Conference continues to meet to monitor situations between Conference and National Ministry Team sessions and take action on emergency situations. The National Executive Committee is made up of the Bishop, the Vice-Chair of Conference, the National Conference Secretary, and the National Conference Treasurer.

Over the last conference year, the National Executive Committee has handled the following situations:

- Sale of the former Muir Church property
- Changes in the National Conference banking relationships
- Ongoing monitoring of legal situations involving the National Conference
- Assisted the Bishop in working with churches that are struggling with their ability to continue in ministry
- Assisted the Bishop in dealing with pastors using EC credentials to serve churches that may not share our ministry values.

## Summary of National Ministry Team Actions

The National Ministry Team met for its regular fall meeting on October 19, 2017 (minutes attached). In summary, at that session of the NMT:

- The Kingdom Extension and Global Ministries Community” budgets were approved.
- The report of the Global Ministries Task Force was approved.

The National Ministry met for its regular spring meeting March 15, 2018 (minutes attached). In summary, at that session of the NMT:

- The Bishop's appointment of Rev. J. Ted Rathman as Global Ministries Associate effective July 1, 2018 was affirmed.
- Changes to the Loan and Investment Committee's policy manual were approved.

## Minutes of the National Ministry Team Meeting

### Zinn Commons of Evangelical Theological Seminary

**Thursday, October 19, 2017**

**9:00 AM**

<b>Opening</b>	The National Ministry Team met in regular session on the above date. Bishop Bruce D. Hill opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates.
<b>Word &amp; Prayer</b>	Rev. Kevin Roberts, pastoral representative of the North East District, presented a message from Colossians 4 and an opening prayer.
<b>Attendance</b>	Each member of the NMT present introduced him or herself to the group and the secretary recorded the attendance (attached). Bishop Hill made note of the new members of NMT and welcomed them.
<b>Bishop's Report</b>	Bishop Hill vacated the chair. Rev. Gary Brown, National Conference Vice-Chairman, assumed the chair of the meeting. Bishop Hill presented his

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report. A written copy of this report was distributed (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted. Bishop Hill reassumed the chair.

## Secretary's Report

Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary, presented the minutes of the National Executive Committee's August 10, 2017 meeting (attached). The Secretary also presented the minutes from the March 16, 2017 NMT meeting (attached). **On motion**, the minutes were approved.

## Treasurer's Report

Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, presented the 2018 Housing Allowances for National Conference employees:

Rev. Richard Christman, II	Church Planter	\$15,000
Rev. Bruce Hill	Bishop	\$21,000
Rev. Timothy King	Church Planter	\$ 9,000
Rev. Gary Kuehner	Associate and DFD	\$15,600
Rev. Gordon Lewis	DFD	\$10,000
Rev. Dana Logan	Chaplain- StoneRidge	\$ 8,000
Rev. Keith Miller	DFD	\$12,000
Ms. Patricia Strain	Deputy Director GMC	\$13,500

**On motion**, the housing allowances were approved.

The NMT stood at recess for a tour of the David A. Dorsey Archaeological Museum.

**Thursday, October 19, 2017**

**10:55 AM**

## CNT

Bishop Hill presented the report of the Conference Network Team (attached). He gave a verbal report on the CNT's meeting yesterday. During that time the working of the new structure was positively evaluated. He also presented the included action item, regarding the District Field Director position for the North East District. The CNT is recommending that Rev. Paul Miller, who is currently serving as acting DFD for the North East District under the Bishop's appointment, be affirmed as the permanent DFD for the district.

**On motion**, the recommendation was approved.

**On motion**, the CNT report was adopted.

## Conference Support Team

Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference presented the Conference Support Team's report (attached). Kevin verbally highlighted a number of items in the report.

**On motion**, the Conference Support Team report was adopted.

## L & I Committee

Mr. Kevin Henry, presented the report of the Loan and Investment Committee (attached). He highlighted that loan money is available to churches and loan applications are available from Shirley Long at Church Center. The fund is sufficiently capitalized such that no additional certificates will be offered for sale at this time. The maximum amount that may be borrowed from the Fund is \$500,000.

**On motion**, the report was adopted.

## Church Health

Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate, presented the Church

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## Community

Health Community's report (attached). Gary described the availability of church health resourcing from this community. Rev. James Price, DFD for the Schuylkill District, shared about the work he is doing in church revitalization with three churches in his district. Gary highlighted the "Show Me Health" testing instrument that is now in the hands of every pastor and lay delegate.

**On motion**, the report was adopted.

## Global Ministries Community

Rev. Randall Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, presented this report (attached). Rev. Sizemore presented an opening statement describing the nature of this report to the NMT and gave some highlights and updates.

**On motion**, the report was adopted.

## GMC Budget

Rev. Sizemore and Kevin Henry presented the GMC budget (attached).

**On motion**, the budget was adopted.

On motion, the National Ministry Team stood at recess for Lunch.

Thursday, October 19, 2017

12:45 PM

## ETS

Dr. Tony Blair, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary, brought greetings and an update from the seminary. He described some of the struggles the seminary is having and the conclusion of the partnership discussions with Huntington. He described the changes that have come to the marketing strategy of the school. New programs and new degrees are coming on-line. The covenant between the EC Church and the seminary is under revision as a result of the denomination's restructuring. The seminary board configuration will no longer require majority EC membership.

**On motion**, the report was adopted.

## Global Ministries Task Force

Bishop Hill introduced Rev. J. Ted Rathman, chairman of the GMC Task Force, who presented the GMC Task Force's report (attached) and gave some verbal highlights on the process and the resulting recommendations. He and Rev. Sizemore answered some questions about the potential restructuring. **On motion**, the report was adopted. Bishop Hill outlined the process and timeline to implement the recommendation on the GMA position.

## Kingdom Extension Community

Rev. Leslie Cool, Kingdom Extension Community Associate, presented the Kingdom Extension Community's report (attached). He highlighted some up-coming training events and opportunities for local church pastors and leaders. He highlighted the need for churches to understand themselves and their communities to bridge that ministry gap. He also talked about the vision for churches to form accountability affinity teaching/learning groups. **On motion**, the Kingdom Extension Community's report was adopted. Les also presented the 2018 Kingdom Extension budget (attached). **On motion**, the budget was approved.

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## **Ministerial Development Community**

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly, Ministerial Development Community Associate, presented his community's report (attached). He reviewed the "profile for pastoral ministry" and explained its significance for the ministry development process. He explained the current strong state of our relationship with the seminary and the reasons for its status as our preferred seminary. He highlighted the key significance of the divergence of callings and gifting described for the church in Ephesians 4 and answered the questions on the MD Community's vision for operationalization of this ministry model. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **Missional Alignment Community**

Bishop Hill presented the Missional Alignment Community's report (attached) which outlines the constituent groups of this community and each group's work. The Heritage Committee is working on better organizing and housing the archives. He highlighted the work of the Prayer Mobilization Team and Rev. Michael Campbell gave a brief overview of the work of the Spiritual Warfare Advance Team (SWAT). **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **District News**

A number of district representatives gave reports on various district level ministries and activities, prayer requests and celebrations.

## **Adjournment**

Rev. Robert Dunbar closed the National Ministry Team meeting with a word of prayer. **On motion**, the meeting was adjourned.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting of the National Ministry Team is scheduled for March 15, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kirk R. Marks Secretary

## **Minutes of the National Ministry Team Meeting Zinn Commons of Evangelical Theological Seminary**

**Thursday, March 15, 2018**

**9:00 AM**

## **Opening**

The National Ministry Team met in regular session on the above date. Bishop Bruce D. Hill opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates and describing the business of the day.

## **Word & Prayer**

Rev. Randall Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, now in the last months of service in that position, presented a message from 1 Samuel 21, Psalm 55 and Psalm 57. He also offered the opening prayer.

## **Attendance**

Each member of the NMT present introduced him or herself to the group and the secretary recorded the attendance (attached).

## **Secretary's Report**

Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary, presented the minutes from the October 19, 2017 NMT meeting (attached). **On motion**, the minutes were approved.

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- Bishop's Report** Bishop Bruce Hill vacated the chair. He appointed Rev. Jeffrey Byerly to serve as chairman pro tem of the meeting and Rev. Byerly assumed the chair. Bishop Hill presented his report. A written copy of this report was distributed (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted with appreciation. Bishop Hill reassumed the chair.
- Treasurer's Report** Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, presented the treasurer's report (attached) and highlighted some "bright spots and positive indicators" in the report. **On motion**, the report was adopted. The Treasurer reminded the NMT that the Finance Committee will meet next Friday, March 23, 2018 to begin the process of formulating the 2019 NC budget which will be presented to National Conference in May. She asked for the Team's prayers for that meeting and process.
- CNT** Bishop Hill presented the report of the Conference Network Team (attached). **On motion**, the CNT report was adopted.
- Conference Support Team** Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference, presented the Conference Support Team's report (attached). Kevin verbally highlighted a number of items in the report and encouraged everyone, including local church treasurers, to attend the pre-conference meetings. **On motion**, this report was adopted.

The NMT stood at recess for 15 minutes.

**Thursday, March 15, 2018**

**10:50 AM**

- L & I Committee** Mr. Kevin Henry, presented the report of the Loan and Investment Committee (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted.
- On motion**, the changes to the L&I Policy Manual (attached) were approved.
- Church Health Community** Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate, presented the Church Health Community's report (attached). Gary drew attention to and outlined the new training event on church revitalization described in his report. Gary also reported that subsequent to the writing of the report. Rev. Robert Valentine has replaced Rev. Stephen Holubec as chair of the Christian Education/Youth Network Leadership Team on the Church Health Community. Saturday, September 22, 2018 is the date for the upcoming EC men's event. **On motion**, the report was adopted.
- Global Ministries Community** Rev. Randy Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, presented this report (attached) and gave some highlights and clarifications on the confidential nature of some of the material in the report. **On motion**, the report was adopted. Rev. Timothy King led the Team in prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for Randy's service and future ministry.
- Kingdom Extension Community** Rev. Leslie Cool, Kingdom Extension Community Associate, presented the Kingdom Extension Community's report (attached). He highlighted some up-coming training events and gave updates on events that have taken place since the writing of the report. He also reported on progress in the planning of a "virtual church." This report resulted in a significant

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discussion on the movement of church plants to chartering and the “how” and the “what” of measuring ministry success. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **Ministerial Development Community**

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly, Ministerial Development Community Associate, presented his community’s report (attached). Glenda Dunbar gave a testimonial of her and her husband’s positive experience at PAC this past January. Jeff also highlighted the needs described in his report for some help in some areas. Jeff is looking to recruit both a Learning Community Assistant (a new position) and a Coaching Assistant to replace Rev. Charles Walker. On May 3, the MDC will be holding a dialogue meeting to discuss the Ephesians 4 “APEST” model of ministry with anyone who is interested. Restoration ministry, overseen by Rev. Gary Brown on the MDC, has been exciting and is much needed in our ministry ranks at this time. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

**On motion**, the National Ministry Team stood at recess for Lunch.

**Thursday, March 15, 2018**

**1:00 PM**

## **ETS**

Mr. James Ehrman, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs of Evangelical Theological Seminary, brought greetings and an update from the seminary. Jim described some changes that have come to the seminary in distribution of administrative responsibilities. He also described some programming changes that have come to the seminary: the school has added the MA in Bible degree and the ThD program with six specialization streams. He also described the work the school is doing on financial sustainability and increased online programs. Dr. Kenneth Nafziger spoke on the ICL program. The seminary now offers credit for those who complete ICL and then move into an MDiv program.

Bishop Hill reported that a new “Enduring Covenant” document that describes the relationship between the seminary and the EC Church has been developed by Bishop Hill and Dr. Blair. The seminary board has already approved this covenant and it will be voted on by the denomination at National Conference. **On motion**, the report was approved.

## **Missional Alignment Community**

Bishop Hill presented the Missional Alignment Community’s report (attached) which outlines the constituent groups of this community and each group’s work. The Heritage Committee is working on better organizing and housing the archives in the soon-to-be-renovated ground level of Church Center. The Faith and Doctrine Committee has a full agenda of projects on hand. He highlighted the work of the Prayer Mobilization Team and the work of the Spiritual Warfare Advance Team (SWAT). **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **Benefits Corporation**

Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the EC Church, gave a verbal report from the Benefits Corporation and highlighted the procedure for the operation of the Manna Fund, encouraging all retired pastors to submit applications. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **GMA Search**

Bishop Hill presented the report of the Global Ministries Associate Search Committee (attached). He verbally outlined the search process. The committee has presented the Bishop with a unanimous recommendation from the search committee. Bishop Hill then reported that he has

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appointed Rev. J. Ted Rathman to the position of Global Ministries Associate effective July 1, 2018, subject to the NMT's affirmation. Bishop Hill outlined Rev. Rathman's background and qualifications for this position. **On motion**, the NMT affirmed the Bishop's appointment.

## **National Conference Preview**

Bishop Hill presented a written report giving a preview of National Conference 2018's theme and schedule (attached) and gave some verbal highlights. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

## **District News**

A number of district representatives gave reports on various district level ministries and activities, prayer requests and celebrations.

## **Adjournment**

Rev. Jonathan Brown closed the National Ministry Team meeting with a word of prayer. **On motion**, the meeting was adjourned.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting of the National Ministry Team is scheduled for October 18, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Kirk R. Marks**  
**Secretary**

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## NATIONAL CONFERENCE TREASURER

The fiscal year ending December 31, 2017 resulted in the net assets of the National Conference increasing by \$153,000. There was no unusual revenue or expense activity during the year that has significantly affected the operating financial results. There were some minor out of the ordinary revenue activity such as \$33,000 of investment income, \$14,000 in appropriations paid back by the former East Petersburg Grace E.C. Ministry funds were \$35,000 over budget and comparable ministry funds are \$3,000 over last year. Budgeted expenses were mostly as anticipated with the exception of building costs for closed churches, appropriations and conference network team travel. The budget for conference network team was grossly under estimated for 2017 resulting in an \$11,000 unfavorable budget variance and two unanticipated appropriations of \$10,000 each were made during the year. The timing of closed churches and the condition of their building when they close is always an unknown. Offsetting these negative budget variance were positive budget variances from stationing moving and retiree hospitalization. Overall the positive and negative budget variances resulted in a net positive expense budget variance.

As mentioned above comparable ministry funds recorded a small increase over last year. However, we had many more churches recording a year to year increase in ministry fund payments than the churches that recorded a decrease. Forty-nine churches recorded a decrease in comparable ministry fund payments compared to 75 churches that recorded an increase in year over year ministry fund payments. Last year there were 68 churches that recorded a decrease in comparable ministry funds from 2015 to 2016. During 2017 seven churches paid no ministry funds during the year but paid something in 2016 and three churches that paid ministry funds in 2017 but no ministry fund payments in 2016. The ministry fund payment statistics are not negative nor would I classify them as overly positive. There are some bright spots and positive indicators but overall the ministry fund payments can be best described as stable. Thank-you to all of the church treasurers that are diligent in making the ministry fund payments.

The financial markets recorded an overall gain during 2017 that resulted in positive investment income and an increased investment account balances for the National Conference resulting in cash and

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investments increasing \$121,000 over last year. A positive of an increasing cash and investment balance is that enough cash is held to fund the outstanding pension liability. A negative of an increased cash and investment balance is the current financial market volatility we are currently experiencing may result in us not having as much cash as we have now. While we are not expecting a market downturn, we do have some cushion to ride out any short term difficulties.

Calendar year 2017 was our first full fiscal year under the new structure without any financial stressors. The 10 month lead time from budget preparation to implementation and a new operating structure contributed to a budget that was not accurate in a few line items and the approved 2018 budget following the same schedule may also have a few inaccuracies. Nonetheless, the denominational restructuring to date seems to have financially benefited the denomination with continual decreases in the ministry fund percentage on schedule. Thanks to the Finance Committee for their work throughout the year and keeping leadership on task.

***Debra Patterson***

**National Conference of the Evangelical  
Congregational Church  
Balance Sheet  
Twelve Months Ended December 31, 2017**

	<u>Unaudited</u> <u>12/31/2017</u>	<u>Audited</u> <u>12/31/2016</u>
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash & Investments	810,517	689,614
Accounts Receivable	136,111	87,370
Prepaid Expenses	26,135	25,901
Inventory	4,871	4,871
Property Held for Resale	20,000	20,000
Property, Plant & Equipment, net	<u>258,914</u>	<u>265,453</u>
Total Assets	<u>1,256,548</u>	<u>1,093,209</u>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	33,597	21,946
Salary Related Payables	5,686	5,686
District Liabilities	5,325	6,320
Pension Liability	<u>479,576</u>	<u>479,576</u>
Total Liabilities	524,184	513,538
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	732,364	579,681
Temporarily Restricted	---	---
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>1,256,548</u>	<u>1,093,209</u>

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National Conference of the Evangelical  
Congregational Church  
Statement of Activities  
Twelve Months Ended December 31, 2017 (unaudited)

		<u>Actual</u>	<u>12/31/2017 Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Audited 12/31/2016</u>
Revenues	Ministry Funds	1,199,460	1,164,259	35,201	1,306,586
	National Conference	43,956	---	43,956	45,509
	Registrations				
	Student Aid Offering	15,836	---	15,836	
	Sales of Ministry Aides	3,507	6,300	(2,793)	3,778
	Copier/Postage	27,650	23,500	4,150	18,573
	Income from Church Closure	2,189	---	2,189	(18,498)
	Gain/(Loss) Disposal of Asset	40	---	40	15,049
	Donated Property	---	---	---	(200,000)
	All Other	129,593	89,683	39,910	477,564
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,422,231</b>	<b>1,283,742</b>	<b>138,489</b>	<b>1,648,564</b>
Expenses	National Conference	---	---	---	102,038
	Commission on Evangelism & Discipleship	---	---	---	3,719
	Church Health	31,574	46,548	14,974	17,863
	Leadership	---	---	---	10,173
	Church Office Operations	---	---	---	225,167
	Denominational Leadership	---	---	---	241,466
	Ministry Development	59,854	39,968	(19,886)	39,541
	Community				
	Missional Alignment Community	320,739	341,547	20,808	165,085
	Conference Support Team	480,552	450,895	(29,657)	193,376
	Agencies & Institutions	376,829	404,784	27,955	789,485
		<b>1,269,458</b>	<b>1,283,742</b>	<b>14,194</b>	<b>1,787,913</b>
	<b>Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses</b>	<b>152,683</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>152,683</b>	<b>(139,349)</b>

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## MEMORIAL SECRETARY

### PASTORS:

**Rev. Scott E. Shaffer** passed away October 10, 2017. He was the founding pastor of Lakeside E.C. Church, Transfer. He is survived by his wife Ann, a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, two sisters, and a brother.

**Rev. Gordon J. Straube** passed away October 10, 2017. He served the Pleasantville, Bethany church for 35 years. He is survived by his wife, Betty as well as two daughters, two granddaughters, and a twin sister. He was predeceased by a grandson.

**Rev. Robert M. Daneker, Sr.** passed away November 18, 2017. He served the following churches: Cetronia; Reedsville; Allentown, Boulevard; Lancaster, Grace and later was the founding pastor of Hope Community Church, Fogelsville. He also served as Eastern District Superintendent of the former Eastern Annual Conference. He is survived by his wife Barbara, two sons, Robert, Jr., a member of this Conference and James and a daughter, Laurie, wife of Kenneth Kuhns, also a member of this Conference. He is also survived by seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Rev. Major John D. Gordon** passed away December 4, 2017. He served as pastor of Drehersville, Immanuel and was Lay Pastor of Palmyra, First. He also served for over 30 years in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. He is survived by his wife Judith, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren, and a brother.

**Rev. Kenneth M. Weaver** passed away December 11, 2017. He served the following churches: Mohn's Hill; Womelsdorf; Kinderhook; York, St. Paul; Lancaster, Trinity; Lancaster, Grace; and Conestoga. He was also the Conference Evangelist from 1968 until 1980 and was instrumental in the establishment of Twin Pines Camp, being a strong advocate of E.C. camping ministry for many years. He was the husband of the late Doris Weaver and is survived by three daughters, a son, seven grandchildren, and five siblings.

**Rev. Robert W. Zetterberg** passed away December 22, 2017. He served the following churches: Hooppole, IL; Youngstown, OH; Findlay, OH; Dixon, IL, Bethel; Akron, OH, Cottage Grove; and Rock Falls, IL. He was also a former Western Conference District Superintendent. He is survived by his wife Evelyn, two sons, two daughters, nine grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren, and a sister. He was predeceased by a son and two grandchildren.

**Rev. Richard E. Kern** passed away January 16, 2018. He served the following churches: Clark's Valley; Herndon; Mandata; Pine Beach, NJ; Bridgeville; Bethlehem, Olivet; Mount Joy; and Bair. He was survived by Phyllis Kern who then passed away in April 2018 and by a daughter, two sons, three grandchildren, and a brother.

**Rev. Barry S. Zimmerman** passed away February 9, 2018. He served as Assistant Pastor at Brownstown and served as pastor at Martindale and Shillington. He is survived by his wife, Linda, a son, two grandchildren, and two sisters.

### PASTORS' WIVES/WIDOWS:

**Linda M. Miller** died June 10, 2017. She was the wife of retired pastor, Rev. Alfred W. Miller. Together they served the following churches: Pine Grove; Rock; Tamaqua; York; and Lebanon. In addition to her husband, she is survived by two daughters, including Leona Rega, Lay Delegate from Tamaqua, Bethany, two sons, twelve grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

**Cleora Hauk** died July 2, 2017. She was the wife of retired pastor Rev. Paul Hauk. Together they served the following churches: Kutztown, Grace and Allentown, Boulevard. In addition to her husband, she is survived by two sons and a daughter. She was predeceased by a daughter Merry.

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**Ruth Friedlund** died October 30, 2017. She was the widow of Rev. Maurice Friedlund. Together they served the following churches: Rock Falls, IL; Emlenton; Hooppole, IL; Akron, OH, Cottage Grove; Knox; Fern; Dixon, IL, Bethel; and Clarion. She is survived by a daughter, three sons including Rev. John Friedlund, a member of this Conference. Also eleven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and a sister. She was predeceased by a son David and a daughter Karen.

**Beverly Osberg** died December 21, 2017. She was the widow of Rev. Richard Osberg, Sr. Together they served the following churches: Emlenton; Mansfield, OH; Akron, OH, Cottage Grove; Dixon, IL, Bethel; and Highland Park, IL. She is survived by two sons, including Rev. Richard Osberg Jr., a member of this Conference, and is also survived by seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

**Phyllis Kern** died April 11, 2018. She was the widow of Rev. Richard E. Kern who passed away earlier this year. Together they served the following churches: Clark's Valley; Herndon; Mandata; Pine Beach, NJ; Bridgeville; Bethlehem, Olivet; Mount Joy; and Bair. She is survived by a daughter, two sons, three grandchildren, and a sister.

## LAY DELEGATES:

**Patricia A. Crites** died October 3, 2017. She was Lay Delegate for Faith E.C. Church, Bair.

**Beverly Boose** died November 11, 2017. She was for many years Lay Delegate for York, St. Paul Church.

**Richard Keller** died December 1, 2017. He was Lay Delegate for Reich's Church.

**Mary Good** died February 9, 2018. She was for many years Lay Delegate for the former Reading, First church and was once President of the former Eastern Branch Missionary Society.

**Velma Geiger** died March 31, 2018. She was the Lay Delegate for the former Allentown, Grace Church.

**Dr. Richard Zerby** died May 18, 2018. He was United States veteran serving during World War II. He was a lifetime member of Grace Church, Millersville being active in numerous leadership positions, including Lay Delegate, as well as service in the Herndon Camp Meeting Association.

## MISSIONARIES:

**Kathryn Kunkel** died December 6, 2017. She was the wife of retired EC missionary and pastor Rev. Don Kunkel. The Kunkels served for fifty years with Village Missions, primarily in Idaho.

**Jack Murray** died March 10, 2018. He and his late wife Martha were retired E.C. missionaries having served with Missions to Europe's Millions (now ECMI) in various countries throughout Europe as well as several nations formerly part of the USSR.

## HONORABLE MENTION:

**Nancy Virtue** died July 2, 2017. She was the wife of Jerry Virtue, a former Lay Delegate for Dixon, Bethel church. She and her husband were active for many years in E.C. missions.

**Catharine Horst** died September 16, 2017. She was the mother of Shirley Long, who works in the Finance Office of Church Center.

**Lynn Martin** died August 30, 2017. He was the father of Rev. Jeff Martin, a member of this Conference.

**Lorraine Zipp** died January 5, 2018. She was the mother of retired pastor, Rev. Robert Bast.

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*“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV).*

***Rev. Adam Roberts***

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## STATISTICIAN

It was through the efforts of Jacob Albright to PRESS ON that we are who we are today. Over the years of our denominational existence we have seen various responses to the programs and requests of our conference leadership. The leadership of the EC denomination has an obligation to provide services and pastors to the member churches, however this requires financial assistance through developing a budget which is challenging if the information needed to do work is not provided.

For the past several years fewer churches are sending the required Annual Report. This report is utilized heavily in determining the future budgetary availability. It is a report which allows our denomination to PRESS ON to greater heights by being ALL IN as an initiative for doing the Lord’s work. When we are not ALL IN much needed missing information may cause errors in the determination of many financial decisions. To paraphrase our bishop: “When we are ALL IN it means more than what we do – it is who we are as disciples of Jesus.” We need to ask ourselves, as churches, are we ALL IN by sending our Annual Report each year?

Because the attached statistics are incomplete due to 36 of our churches not sending Annual Reports this year we have decided to examine the information requested each year as some of the current information seems to be superfluous. In order for our denominational churches to be ALL IN it is imperative that this report has meaningful facts for further guidance.

If we all are to be more like Jesus it will require total commitment to Him and that same type of commitment is important to our denomination. It is now time for us to ALL be ALL IN and be able to PRESS FORWARD!

Thank you for being ALL IN in your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

***Rev. Kenneth Wiest***