

National Conference Digest 2023

Wednesday, May 24

National Conference began at 1pm in the Hostetter Chapel with singing, the reading of the Word, and prayer. The message was given by Bishop Emeritus Mike Sigman, who challenged us with the question, "Do you love the church?" Bishop Randy Sizemore led the entire Conference in sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Following the service of Holy Communion, the National Conference commenced the business session at Brubaker Auditorium and cared for the introductory items necessary to open the business sessions.

Officers' reports were shared. Rev. Brad Hatter gave the National Conference Secretary's report. Then, the National Conference Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Carl Butler, Jr. saying that investments are down, but ministry fund income is up.

The Episcopacy Committee's report was given by the chairman, Rev. Keith Blank, sharing that the committee seeks to provide confidential support to the bishop. Then, Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Conference Network Team's report with thanksgiving to those who are a part of the team. Kevin Henry presented the Conference Support Team's report, welcoming Wendy Beard and Bethany White as staff.

Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner came to the podium and gave the Church Health Commission's report. A spiritually healthy church is made up of spiritually healthy people. Loving God and loving others are the best ways to build healthy churches that engage in the great commission by making disciples. Healthy churches become lifelong learners, applying what they are learning and obeying Jesus' commands, bringing transformation. After Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner's report was completed, Bishop Randy Sizemore and National Conference gave thanks for his years of service in the Church Health Community.

The Finance Committee report was given by Mr. Carl Butler and Executive Director Kevin Henry. Ministry fund rate will remain at 5.65%. The Conference Report had individual items that were adopted by the National Conference. The COLA was encouraged for pastoral compensation increases.

Stationing Elder ballots were cast for the Great Lakes Region and the Delaware Region. The Great Lakes Region elected Rev. Robert Dunbar. The Delaware Region elected Rev. Nathanael Kennedy and Rev. Charles Walker.

Following dinner, inspiring worship was led by Rev. Bruce Sellers after which Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Episcopal address. The EC Church vision was emphasized that we will be a dynamic movement of God which flows from our heritage and the heart of God to reach the lost. This begins with a burning passion for God, involving practical strategies that fit and flourish with churches that plant more churches than those that close. In this, we must not forget that we are evangelical. This truth must be personal, that we are a missional church as a vision that is believed by all of us. Fulfilling this vision will call us to break camp and get our feet wet, fulfilling the vision to be a dynamic movement of God.

After the conclusion of the Episcopal address, there was a time of refreshments and fellowship with a heart of unity among the conference.

Thursday, May 25

On Thursday morning, National Conference continued with inspiring worship in singing by Chris Lehigh and a message on having love for the lost by Dr. Tim Roehl.

The business items for Thursday began with the report for the Benefits Corporation by Rev. Ryan Taylor and Executive Director Kevin Henry. Rev. Frank Schock was elected for the open Pastoral representative on the Benefits Corporation. The retirement benefits for pastors have changed to Nationwide, and all pastors were encouraged to set up their online account and beneficiaries as soon as possible.

Proposed rule changes were addressed and approved as presented by the Finance Committee, Stationing Elder Committee and the Ministerial Development Community.

Following the morning break, Rev. Ted Rathman gave the Global Ministry Community's presentation with a flag processional onto the conference floor. Following this processional, the conference was blessed to hear the beautiful voices of the Yoriyoshi Abe family from

Japan. Also during the presentation, greetings and thanksgiving were shared via video by international conference leaders. Delegates then joined hands and prayed.

There were two resolutions made that were presented by Executive Director Kevin Henry. The closures of Rosedale Community Church and Union Salem Church were approved.

After the conference took a break for lunch, there were two equipping experiences. The first was equipping healthy leaders by Dr. Tim Roehl who spoke on "Avoiding the Moses Syndrome." The second was equipping healthy churches by Rev. Gary Keuhner, who had the conference work on a healthy church checkup survey. After the equipping sessions, each district met to debrief.

The National Conference came back after dinner for another inspirational time of singing and worship through the Word. Dr. Tim Roehl gave another message that focused on the theme of "Marks of a Kingdom Church," reminding us that we are called to be missionaries to our communities. Following this message, the Kingdom Extension Community presentation by Rev. Michael Snedeker was given. The members of the National Conference stood up, representing that they believe that the EC Church can be a dynamic movement of God. We were challenged to believe that God can do great things in the next ten years and to do what we can to help accomplish those things for God as disciples who make disciples. The evening concluded with prayer.

Friday, May 26

Following a time of worship, Rev. Matthew Hill shared the Ministerial Development Community presentation. The Ministerial Development Community seeks to equip people called by God to reach people in their own communities as a dynamic movement of God. This equipping includes four building blocks to help make that happen. The first building block is our Pastoral Assessment Center. The second building block is ICL. The third building block is our Board of Examiners. The fourth building block is pastoral health. These four blocks help to make up what our Ministerial Development Community is about.

The National Conference continued with the

credentialing report.

The questions for applicants were charged to: David Brezina, Richard Fischl, Thaddaeus Hughes, Kevin Kumher and Brandon Segan.

In closed session, the following statuses were approved:

Itinerant Elder: Robert Valentine, Michael Coulson, Jared Yordy; **Ordained Elder:** Richard Fischl, Kevin Kumher; **Ordained as a Deacon:** Lawrence Bentz, Barry Heckman; **Local Pastor:** Michael Lewis; **Approved Pastor:** Thaddaeus Hughes; **Licensed Candidate Status:** David Brezina, Brandon Segan; **Superannuation Status:** Dennis Brubacher, Jeffrey Byerly, Timothy Christman, Kurtis Graff, Kenneth Kalisz, Dale Kramer, Kenneth Miller, Richard Nahodil and Robert Santucci.

The annual renewals of credentials, notifications of transfer and notifications of removal were granted.

The Conference concluded with the Memorial Report and recognition of retirees. The retirees recognized were Dennis Brubacher, Jeffrey Byerly, Timothy Christman, Kurtis Graff, Kenneth Kalisz, Dale Kramer, Kenneth Miller, Richard Nahodil and Robert Santucci.

The 2023 National Conference adjourned by singing together *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* followed by prayer.