

# Minutes of the 131st Annual Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church

Community Covenant Church  
15700 West 87<sup>th</sup> St Pkwy  
Lenexa, KS 66219  
April 28-29, 2017

## OPENING PLENARY SESSION

Friday, April 28, 2017

1:00 p.m. Central Standard Time

### 1. Welcome

The opening worship song was led by Pastor Marc Jefferson of Aurora Community Covenant Church in Aurora, Colorado. Moderator Matt Norlen, chair of the Midwest Conference Executive Board and pastor of Evangelical Covenant Church in Wausa, Nebraska, welcomed attendees to the 131st Annual Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

### 2. Action on the Agenda and Standing Rules

The Moderator moved the adoption of the following proposed agenda and standing rules:

#### AGENDA

##### Session 1:

1. Welcome
2. Action on the Proposed Agenda and Standing Rules
3. Approval of Minutes of the 131<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting
4. Introduction of Executive Board, Parliamentarian, Tellers
5. Recognition of Special Guests
6. Report of Credentials
7. Our Shared Mission: Transformed Lives and Communities
8. Denominational Ministry Update from Ed Gilbreath, Executive Director of Communications, The Evangelical Covenant Church, Chicago, IL

##### Sessions 2:

Ministry Fair

##### Session 3:

9. Introduction and Prayer for New Church Joining
10. Second Report of Credentials
11. Ballot Presentation, Elections for Administrative and Institutional Boards
12. Recognition of Ordinands
13. Funding Our Mission
14. Consecration of 2017 Board Members
15. Transformed Lives and Communities Testimony
16. Vote on Churches to be Removed from the Roster

17. Announcements and Appreciation
18. Slide Show

## STANDING RULES

### 2017 MIDWEST CONFERENCE ANNUAL MINISTRY CELEBRATION

The written authorities that govern the Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church are the Constitution and Bylaws of the Midwest Conference and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. *Robert's* provides, however, that a given meeting may establish its own standing rules in order to meet its specific needs. These standing rules require the consent of two-thirds of those voting and, when approved, supplement the written authorities. The general provisions of the Bylaws and *Robert's* apply in every situation not specifically addressed by the standing rules. The following standing rules are recommended for the 2017 Midwest Conference Annual Ministry Celebration:

1. Consideration of any main motion, including its subsidiary motions, will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes.
2. No speech in debate may exceed three (3) minutes, though a delegate desiring to extend his or her remarks may seek the permission of the Meeting to do so.
3. All main motions and amendments shall be submitted in writing to the secretary. Motions arising from the floor during the course of the approved agenda are in order as long as they pertain directly to the business at hand. All other items must be prepared in writing and submitted in advance to the moderator who, at his or her discretion, will ask permission of the Meeting to add them to the agenda in the order to be received. Motions to amend the Constitution or Bylaws must have been previously reviewed by the Executive Board in order to be received by the Annual Meeting.
4. The Moderator is authorized to modify the order of the agenda to accommodate certain time requirements.
5. Adjournment of the 2017 Annual Meeting shall be no later than 12 p.m., Saturday, April 29, 2017.

The motion to adopt the proposed agenda and standing rules passed.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of the 131st Annual Ministry Celebration**

A motion was made that the minutes of the 131st Annual Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church be reviewed and corrected by the officers of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church and approved by the Executive Board.

The motion passed.

### **4. Introduction of Executive Board, Parliamentarian, Tellers**

Moderator Matt Norlen introduced the members of the executive board, the parliamentarian, and tellers:

Parliamentarian – Darrell Meador

Tellers – Tom Dierenfeld, Wade Bland, Jean Adams, Kristen Carlson

## **5. Recognition of Special Guests**

Moderator Matt Norlen recognized special guests:

Ed Gilbreath

Dave Husby

Drew Hyun

## **6. Report of the Credentials and Motion**

Vice Chair Jon Black gave the report of delegates. Jon reported that registration included 86 delegates representing 45 churches and six fellowship groups. There are three delegates representing conference institutions and organizations, 11 delegates representing the executive board, 10 delegates from Colorado, 15 from Iowa, 25 from Kansas, seven from Missouri and 15 from Nebraska, for a total of 86 voting delegates. There are also six advisory members representing church plants.

## **7. Our Shared Mission: Transformed Lives and Communities**

A video was shown welcoming the attendees to Kansas City. Superintendent Tammy Swanson-Draheim recognized and thanked Lori Anderson and Brandi Kejr for all they did to put together the Ministry Celebration for the Midwest Conference.

Delegates repeated the mission statement and the Superintendent explained why we are working together to see lives impacted and communities changed. The three main ways we go about our mission were emphasized:

- Starting new churches
- Strengthening existing churches
- Developing missional leaders

The Superintendent repeated that this is the “why” of what we are doing as a conference. The video *Nate’s Story*, created by Grace Place, illustrated “why” we do what we do.

The Superintendent shared that the purpose of our ministry is to see lives and communities transformed, that everyone would know that God is for them.

The Superintendent gave an introduction of the “Vision Footprint,” or goals for the conference over the next 10 years:

- See 8000 new disciples in our conference churches
  - These are people who matter to God who are mobilized to share the mission with God. Currently we are around 16,000 members and we are looking at a 50% increase. The number has been stagnant for the last 10 years.

- To have 140 thriving churches
  - Currently we have 95 churches and church plants.
  - This would include 55-60 new church plants.
  - Video was shown of New Life church plant from Wichita, Kansas, where four people received Christ on Easter Sunday. New churches have zeal to energize existing churches.
  - Over 50% of the Midwest Conference budget goes to planting new churches.
- To have 25% of our churches be ethnic/multi-ethnic churches
  - Our goal is that our churches would reflect the demographics of where they serve.
  - Seeking also to diversify our staff in the conference.
  - The Sankofa video was shared.
- 30/15% gender diversity where there will be increased women serving in ministry – to include 15% of the churches led or co-led by a female pastor and at least 30% of our credentialed clergy represented by women
  - Transformed lives and communities

The Superintendent shared that God is inviting us and asking us to take risks to accomplish these goals; we will need to lean in to participate together so God gets the glory as we come alongside the work He is already doing.

The Superintendent invited Brent Thompson up to help process these goals and to lead a conversation using the following questions:

1. What excites you the most about this vision?
2. What do you see as our biggest challenge?
3. What are some ways your church could own this vision?

The delegates broke up into groups and answered the three questions and then Brent closed us in prayer. The responses were gathered by the tellers.

There was a video from Pastor Marc Jefferson of Aurora Community Covenant Church in Aurora, Colorado, thanking the Midwest Conference for their commitment to start new churches.

Brian Johnson, Director of Church Planting, shared that “Christians are not naturally born . . . Christians are intentionally made by an adventuresome Church.” – Stanley Hauerwas

The work of planting churches is the work of the church. We participate through prayer for the new missions that we have started. Pray not just for your own church but for churches that are being planted. Reproducing churches is part of what church planting wants to do. Sending is also part of church planting.

The following church plant pastors were called to share a few minutes on the mission of their churches:

- Mark Hawke – Grace Place, Erie, CO
- Susan & Greg Russell – Renovate, Parker, CO
- Marc Jefferson – Aurora Community Covenant, Aurora, CO
- Chad Pickering – New Life Wichita, Wichita, KS
- Casey Franklin – Inversion, Highlands Ranch, CO
- William Lopez – Iglesia Pan y Vino, Prairie Village, KS

The church plant leaders were prayed over by pastors and delegates, and Brian closed the time with prayer.

A video was shown about Renovate in Parker, Colorado, which is reaching out to people who are agnostic or unbelievers.

## **8. Denominational Ministry Update**

Ed Gilbreath, Executive Director of Communications for The Evangelical Covenant Church, Chicago, IL, extends greetings from the Covenant President.

There was a denominational video shared on Three Strand Strong. Congregation/Conference/Covenant, working together to do the following:

- Start and Strengthen Churches
- Make and Deepen Disciples
- Develop Leaders
- Love Mercy Do Justice
- Serve Globally

The Superintendent shared about the BLESS program.

Because of a delay, the opening greeting from Pastor Johan Tredoux of Community Covenant Church of Lenexa and worship led by the Aurora Community Covenant Church of Aurora, Colorado, was moved to the end of the session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m., to be followed by breakout sessions, the Ministry Fair and an evening worship service, and to reconvene at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 29, 2017.

## **MINISTRY FAIR**

**4:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, April 29, 2017**

**8:00 a.m.**

The Iglesia Pan y Vino worship team from Prairie Village, Kansas, led a time of worship. Moderator Matt Norlen dismissed delegates and guests to breakout sessions.

## **CLOSING PLENARY SESSION**

**10:00 a.m.**

## **9. Introduction and Prayer for New Church Joining**

Moderator Matt Norlen opened the session with prayer after a song led by Iglesia Pan y Vino.

The Superintendent welcomed all who were in attendance from Pan y Vino onto the stage to be part of welcoming Pan y Vino into membership in the Midwest Conference. Brian Johnson and Allan Serrano were also part of welcoming the church to the Midwest Conference.

The Superintendent welcomed Hillcrest Covenant Church, who helped to plant Pan y Vino by sharing their facility and helping them financially.

There was a slide show during the welcoming of Pan y Vino that showed their congregation. The Superintendent presented Hillcrest with a certificate of birth. Pastor Larry Williams accepted this on behalf of Hillcrest.

The Moderator shared the following motion on behalf of the executive board:

*Be it resolved, that the Midwest Conference express thanks to God in joyful anticipation of the welcoming into full Covenant membership of Iglesia Pan y Vino, an Evangelical Covenant Church, of Prairie Village, Kansas, due to be acted upon at the June 2017 Covenant Annual Meeting in Detroit, Michigan.*

There was a second. Motion carried. There was standing ovation, and Allan prayed for the church.

## **10. Second Report of the Credentials**

Video of Twin Lakes Bible Camp was shown.

The Moderator gave an updated report of delegates. Matt reported that registration included 97 delegates representing 48 churches and six fellowship groups. There are five delegates representing conference institutions and organizations, 12 delegates representing the executive board, 10 delegates from Colorado, 16 from Iowa, 30 from Kansas, seven from Missouri and 17 from Nebraska, for a total of 97 delegates. There are also eight advisory members representing church plants.

## **11. Ballot Presentation, Elections for Administrative and Institutional Boards**

Moderator Matt Norlen presented the following ballot:

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*2-year term*

Jon Black \*

*2-year term*

Deb Bonsall \*

*2-year term*

Melvin Cole

*2-year term*

Casey Franklin

*2-year term*  
Kristin King \*

*2-year term*  
Katie Martinez

*2-year term*  
Wuifor Portillo \*

*2-year term*  
Brenda Sawyer \*

*2-year term*  
Elyse Thornburg

**MIDWEST COVENANT HOME**

*3-year term*  
Lyle Person

*3-year term*  
Cathy Johnson \*

**COVENANT CEDARS BIBLE CAMP**

*3-year term*  
Susie Carlson \*

*3-year term*  
John Schnell \*

**TWIN LAKES BIBLE CAMP**

*3-year term*  
Alan Dean

*3-year term*  
Brian Fagerstrom \*

*3-year term*  
Dennis Sarenpa \*

*3-year term*  
Barb Taylor

**COVENANT HEIGHTS CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER**

*3-year term*  
Lyn Arroyo \*

*3-year term*  
Kyle Grafel

*3-year term*  
Karl Helvig \*

*3-year term*  
Gary Jardine

*3-year term*  
Lee Lownsberry \*

*3-year term*  
Becca Walters \*

(\*incumbent)

A motion to approve the ballot was made and seconded. Motion passed. Moderator Matt Norlen moved that the individuals listed on the approved ballot be elected by a voice vote of acclamation. The motion passed with an enthusiastic shout.

## **12. Recognition of Ordinands**

Moderator Matt Norlen recognized John Madvig who presented the ordinands who will be presented at Gather, the Covenant Annual Meeting in Detroit this June:

- Ryan Ashley (OWSa), Pastor, Restoration Covenant Church, Arvada, CO
- Casey Franklin (OWSa), Pastor, Inversion Community Covenant Church, Littleton, CO
- John Paul Harris-Webster (OWSa), Assoc Pastor, Community Covenant Church, Lenexa, KS
- Mark Hawke (OWSa), Church Planter in Residence, Grace Place, Berthoud, CO
- Tim Hawkinson (OWSa), Renew Covenant Church, Carroll, IA

Joyce Norman prayed for the ordination candidates.

## **13. Funding Our Mission**

A conference-specific video was shown on Three Strand Strong.

The Superintendent invited Ed Gilbreath up to speak on what the denomination is doing to expand God's mission with the Three Strand Strong initiative.

The new giving guidelines of a combined tithe were shared:

6.5% to the Covenant  
3.5% to the Conference

Moderator Matt Norlen recognized Brenda Sawyer, Treasurer of the Midwest Conference Executive Board, to present the financial report for the Midwest Conference and review the 2017 (revised) budget and 2018 budget.

Brenda shared that it will take some funding to accomplish the 10-year goals that we have set. How much more could we do if all 95 churches gave biblically?

Where the conference currently spends funds:

- 37% start-up costs for new church plants
- 22% starting new churches
- 20% developing missional leaders
- 21% strengthening existing churches

Motions to approve the 2017 (revised) budget and the 2018 budget were made and seconded. Both motions passed.

Brent Thompson came up and shared on generosity and the tools that the conference can bring to the local church.

Video was shown of Covenant Cedars Bible Camp.

#### **14. Consecration of 2017 Board Members**

The Superintendent invited Brian Frable and Matt Norlen up to thank them for their service. They both completed serving three terms on the Midwest Conference Executive Board.

The Superintendent prayed for the individuals serving on the Midwest Conference Executive Board, Covenant Cedars Bible Camp Board, Twin Lakes Bible Camp Board, Covenant Heights Camp Board, Midwest Covenant Home Board, and Women Ministries Board.

A video was shown on CHIC, July 15-20, 2018.

#### **15. Transformed Lives and Communities Testimony – a conversation with Covenant World Relief Director, Dave Husby**

The Superintendent invited Dave Husby up to share on Covenant World Relief.

A slide show was shared on some of the work in Fundefam from Monterrey, Mexico.

A slide show was shared on the work in Zimele Wethu in South Africa.

A video was shown on Covenant World Relief ministries around the world.

#### **16. Vote on Churches to be removed from the roster**

The Moderator shared how he is a legacy of his grandparents. He introduced the closure of legacy churches and invited us to celebrate their ministry. He noted five churches to be removed from the roster.

The Moderator moved that the following resolution be adopted:

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Conference remember with gratitude to God the*

*ministry of Evangelical Covenant Church of Lanyon in Harcourt, Iowa, acknowledging now the completion of its organized work, and commending to God the fruit of its effective spiritual labor over the years 1877-2016 and the “living legacy” funds that will live on in new congregations that will be planted in the future.*

Motion was seconded and passed.

The Moderator moved that the following resolution be adopted:

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Conference remember with gratitude to God the ministry of Faith Covenant Church of Omaha, Nebraska, acknowledging now the completion of its organized work, and commending to God the fruit of its effective spiritual labor over the years 1948-2016 and the “living legacy” funds that will live on in new congregations that will be planted in the future.*

Motion was seconded and passed.

The Moderator moved that the following resolution be adopted:

*BE IT RESOLVED that the Midwest Conference remember with gratitude to God the ministry of Journey Covenant Church of Liberty, Missouri, acknowledging now the completion of its organized work, and commending to God the fruit of its effective spiritual labor over the years 2000-2017 and the “living legacy” funds that will live on in new congregations that will be planted in the future.*

Motion was seconded and passed.

The Moderator moved that the following resolution be adopted:

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the Midwest Conference remember with gratitude to God the ministry of South Sudan Evangelical Covenant Church of Des Moines, Iowa, acknowledging now the completion of its organized work, and commending to God the fruit of its effective spiritual labor since the establishment of her ministry in 1999.*

Motion was seconded and passed.

The Superintendent highlighted some of what Relevant Word Ministries has done and that they have decided to separate from the Evangelical Covenant denomination. The Superintendent moved that the following resolution be adopted:

*Whereas Relevant Word Ministries of Colorado Springs, Colorado, has chosen to voluntarily withdraw from the Midwest Conference and the Covenant denomination, be it resolved that the Midwest Conference accept this resignation and offer thanksgiving for our relationship of many years (2003-2017), and be it further resolved that the Midwest Conference prayerfully commend the church to God for His keeping and blessing.*

Motion was seconded and passed. Kristin King, member of the Midwest Conference Executive Board, prayed and thanked God for the ministries.

### **17. Announcements and Appreciation**

A video was shared that announced the 132nd Annual Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference will be held at Grace Place in Berthoud, Colorado, on April 20-21, 2018.

Moderator Matt Norlen announced the delegates on behalf of the Midwest Conference to the Evangelical Covenant Church Annual Meeting in June 2017 would be the Superintendent and Brian Johnson.

Brian Frable, member of the Midwest Conference Executive Board, thanked Community Covenant Church for hosting the 131st Annual Ministry Celebration of the Midwest Conference.

Moderator Matt Norlen recited the mission statement.

Pastor Wuifor Portillo, member of the Midwest Conference Executive Board, closed the formal meeting in prayer.

### **18. Slide Show**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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David Anderson, Secretary