

69<sup>th</sup> NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference  
Held in person and by Zoom virtual conference  
June 24-27, 2023  
Business Session I

Minutes (DRAFT)

Business Session I of the 69<sup>th</sup> National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) Annual Meeting convened on Saturday, June 24, at the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield, Wisconsin and online in a virtual conference.

*Welcome*

Moderator Rev. Art Ritter welcomed all those in person and online. He complimented the Annual Meeting and Host Committee on the theme and talked about what the next few days would offer, including some new features.

Dr. Marty Hall, chair of the Annual Meeting and Conference Committee (AMCC), introduced some of the members of the Host Committee, who represent a large group of people who have been working on the event for over a year. He also described the project we will be working on in support of Habitat for Humanity – studs to be used in building houses and door mats to welcome new owners. Just as we do for prayer shawls, we will bless these before we send them out.

*Being Church Moment*

The Moderator noted that throughout the meeting we will be hearing from four churches who will relate their respective experiences of being church. Today, Jim Graves, of First Congregational Church of Toulon, Illinois joined the meeting through Zoom to share their journey.

*Call to Order*

Moderator Rev. Art Ritter called the meeting to order at 1:19 pm, CDT.

*Constituting Prayer*

Bill Rafuse offered the Constituting Prayer.

*Introduction of the Head Table*

Moderator Art Ritter introduced Vice Moderator Jodee Landa Lord, Secretary Kate O'Dell, and Parliamentarian Doug Loux.

*Announcements*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord announced the room that would be available for those who are engaged in pastoral searches.

*Establishing a Quorum/Credentials Report*

Rev. Gerry Fisher of the AMCC reported that 67 delegates are participating in the meeting, which represents approximately 32 % of the active 270 Member churches. With more than 20%

of our member churches represented, as required in our Bylaws, Moderator Art Ritter declared a quorum was present, so we will proceed with the business of the Association.

*Approval of the 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda*

Moderator Art Ritter referenced the published agenda created by the AMCC that was made available to all registered attendees by email and posted on the NACCC website. He noted one change: the Board of Directors Citation will be moved to the Business Session on Monday.

**2023 AM01                    MOTION that the proposed Agenda be approved as amended. The motion was seconded and approved without discussion.**

*Review of the Standing Rules and Voting Instructions*

The Moderator noted that the Standing Rules and Voting Instructions for meetings that will include Electronic Participation are posted on the NACCC website and available in the Annual Meeting Program booklet. He noted that the Rules as presented were approved by the Board of Directors on Friday, June 23, 2023.

**2023 AM02                    MOTION to approve the Standing Rules and Voting Instructions as presented. The motion does not require a second. The motion was approved without discussion.**

*Approval of the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes*

The 2022 Minutes Certification Committee – Sharon Higgins, Joyce Acree, and Terry Bobzien – have reviewed the Minutes of the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held in person and by video conference on June 27, 2022. They recommend approval of the Minutes as presented.

**2023 AM03                    MOTION to approve the Minutes of the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held in person and by video conference on June 27, 2022. The motion does not require a second. The motion was approved without discussion.**

*Approval of the Minutes Certification Committee for the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes*

Moderator Art Ritter announced that Beth Borland, First Congregational Church of Detroit, Michigan; Tonna Parsons, Grace Congregational Church of Greenville, Iowa; and Rev. Mark McCormick, Mayflower Congregational Church, Lansing, Michigan, have agreed to serve on the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes Certification Committee upon approval.

**2023 AM04                    MOTION to approve Beth Borland, Tonna Parsons, and Rev. Mark McCormick as the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes Certification Committee. The motion was seconded and approved without discussion.**

*Introduction of New Business*

None was presented.

*Introduction & Vote on New Member Churches*

Executive Director Rev. Dr. Ashley C. Cleere reported that the Leadership Council recommends four (4) churches be accepted into full NACCC membership (Leadership Council Motions: 2022/2023 LC05; 2022/2023 LC09; 2022/2023 LC17; 2022/2023 LC18).

**2023 AM05**

**MOTION by the Leadership Council that Wading River Congregational Church, North Branford Congregational Church, Epping Community Church, and Anamesa Christian Church be accepted into full membership in the NACCC. The motion does not require a second. The motion was approved without discussion.**

*Installation of New Member Churches*

Executive Director Rev. Dr. Ashley C. Cleere performed the installation ceremony with a members or representatives from the churches who were present affirming their desire to join the NACCC.

*State of the Association*

Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere thanked the Host Committee and spoke about the state of the Association.

The Business Meeting recessed at 2:01 pm CDT until Monday, June 26, 2023 at 9:00 am CDT.

69<sup>th</sup> NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference  
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Business Session II

Minutes (DRAFT)

Business Session II of the 69th National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Annual Meeting convened on Monday, June 26, 2023 at the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield, Wisconsin and online in a virtual conference.

*Welcome and Announcements*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord made several announcements about events and changes to what was printed in the program.

*Being Church Moment*

Rev. Dr. Charles Packer shared the experiences of Pine Hill Congregational Church, West Bloomfield Township, Michigan. They were faced with a decision about whether to sell their property. The unanimous decision to sell became an opportunity to reimagine their way of being church.

*Call to Order*

Moderator, Rev. Art Ritter called the session to order at 9:14 am, CDT.

*Introduction of Staff and Strategic Alliances*

Executive Director Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere

- She introduced the staff who are currently serving.
  - Julie Robie
  - Laura Wright
  - Gerry Krupp
  - Tracy Bernhardt
  - Kristin Ward
  - Andrea McCall
  - Cheryl Milnes
- Attendees were invited to write a card of appreciation for Carrie Dahm, who has retired after decades of service.
- Tomorrow, we will recognize Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, who is completing his service as Dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS).
- Later today, we will thank Marianne King for her service as the editor of *The Congregationalist*.

*Strategic Alliances*

Rev. Dr. Cleere explained the role the strategic alliances play in enhancing NACCC's ability to serve its members and introduced representatives to speak about their organizations.

Rev. Dr. Justin Chamel, President of Eden Theological Seminary, introduced the ETS programs and invited attendees to stop by their booth.

Mike Fales, Director of Service Learning and Campus Ministries, Olivet College  
Their news is they are now going to become the University of Olivet. The undergraduate programs won't change, but they will be offering online graduate programs. He also talked about new and continuing programs that involve the entire Olivet community.

Kyle Roberts, new Executive Director of the Congregational Library and Archives  
He also introduced Sarah Trotta, the Librarian.  
He gave a brief history of the Library and noted they amended their mission to focus more on the contemporary developments in Congregationalism. For those who are not in the Boston area, Roberts explained how everyone can contribute materials and access the Library's resources. He invited people to let them know about ideas for the Library.

Arlen Vernava Interim Ministry Network  
He explained how the Interim Ministry Network began its work to make transition times or leadership change more productive and inspirational.

Dr. Meredith McNabb, Lake Institute  
She introduced her Shared Endeavor session on "Engaging the Shifting Landscape of Religious Generosity," which looks at the growing interest in giving as a spiritual practice. Dr. McNabb also called attention to the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving's Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising.

### *Reports, Elections, Budget Approval*

#### *Nominating Committee Report*

Rev. Wendy Van Tassell gave the report of the Nominating Committee: Claude Johnson, First Congregational Church of Greenville, Michigan; Rev. Emily Raasch, First Congregational Church of Anaheim, California; Jami Backell, Warden Community Church, Warden, Washington; Rev. J.R. McAliley, Center Congregational Church of Atlanta; Barb Ehrlendson, First Congregational Church, Stonington, Connecticut. She then read the slate of nominees for each position and introduced those who were in the room. The slate was made available to all registered attendees by email, included in the Annual Meeting packet, and posted on the NACCC website. Secretary Kate O'Dell reported that no additional names had been submitted by the required deadline.

#### *Election of the NACCC Leadership*

**2023 AM07                    MOTION that the entire slate be elected as presented. The motion does not require a second. The motion was approved without discussion.**

#### *Election of Nominating Committee Members*

The Moderator called for nominations to fill two open three-year positions on the Nominating Committee. The following names were placed in nomination from the floor: Justin Nierer, Sandstone Congregational Church, Jackson, Michigan; Joelle Sommers, Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, Wisconsin. The Moderator asked if there were any further nominations from

the floor. Hearing no further nominations, he declared the nominations closed and called for the vote.

**2023 AM08**                    **MOTION by the Board of Directors to approve Justin Nierer, Sandstone Congregational Church, Jackson, Michigan and Joelle Sommers, Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, Wisconsin, to fill two three-year positions on the Nominating Committee. The motion does not require a second. The motion was approved without discussion.**

*Ratification of Leadership Council Actions*

Moderator Art Ritter presented the list of Actions by the Leadership Council from June 2022 through June 2023 that require ratification. These are posted on the NACCC website.

**2023 AM09**                    **MOTION by the Leadership Council that the Association delegates ratify the actions of the Leadership Council from June 2021 through June 2022 which require ratification and are not being presented separately (Leadership Council motions 2021/22 LC 02, 05, 09, 17, and 18). The motion does not require a second. The motion was adopted without discussion.**

*Ratification of Board of Directors Actions*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord presented the list of Actions by the Board of Directors from June 2022 through June 2023 that require ratification. These are posted on the NACCC website. She noted that the Board of Directors added 2022/2023 CO47 on Friday, June 23, 2023 to approve the Standing Rules and Voting Instructions and on Saturday, June 24, 2023 they added 2022/2023 CO 49 to change the wording in 2022/2023 CO43.

**2023 AM 10**                    **MOTION by the Board of Directors that the delegates ratify the actions of the Board of Directors from June 2022 through June 2023 that require ratification and are not being presented separately (Board of Directions motions CO03, 06, 07, 08, 09, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47). The motion does not require a second. The motion was adopted without discussion.**

*Financial Report*

Treasurer Patrick Stewart and CFO Cheryl Milnes presented the proposed 2023-2024 Budgets of the Shared Ministries Fund, the Center for Congregational Leadership, and the Ministry Council as recommended by Board of Directors action (2022/2023 CO30). He noted that the slides would be available on request.

Rev. Justin Nierer noted some language in one of the reports needed to be adjusted. Executive Director Ashley Cleere explained what Nierer was questioning.

**2023 AM11**                    **MOTION by the Board of Directors to approve the 2023-2024 Budgets of the Shared Ministries Fund, The Center for Congregational Leadership, and the Ministry Council as**

**recommended by Board of Directors Action. The motion does not require a second. The motion was discussed and approved.**

*Congregational Foundation Presentation*

President Laura Hamby

Ms. Hamby introduced the “10% more” campaign by noting that attendees just approved the second balanced budget in a row. However, she explained, to achieve this for a third year we will need to increase revenues. Therefore, the Congregational Foundation is urging everyone who’s able, to join them in donating 10% more.

*Missionary Presentations*

Mission and Outreach Ministry Council (MOMC) Chair Rich Miller-Todd introduced the representatives of four NACCC mission partners who spoke and showed brief videos of their missions.

- Katie DeJournette – Hosanna Industries
- Rev. Miller-Todd explained that the person who was scheduled to share about the work of Morgan Scott had a family emergency. He noted information about all the NACCC Mission partners is available on the website.
- Jim and Jason Owens - Love Worth Sharing – Serving in Haiti
- Julie Claasen – Fishers of Men
- Tim Uthmann - Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation

Business Session II paused at 10:54 am, CDT.

Moderator Art Ritter announced that Business Session II would reconvene at 1:30 pm.

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Business Session II of the 69th National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Annual Meeting reconvened at 1:32 pm, CDT on Monday, June 26, 2023, at the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield, Wisconsin and online in a virtual conference.

*Announcements*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord had some additional information, including room numbers and a reminder about the bus schedule for the evening event.

*Being Church Moment*

Mike McIntyre of First Congregational Church of Salt Lake City shared a brief history and their experiences with selling their building. They had committees to find new homes for their organ and their beautiful stained-glass window, “The Road to Emmaus.” This transition time included reaching the decision that they wanted to stay together rather than close down, and now they have a new settled minister.

*Board of Directors Citations*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord, who is chair of the Board of Directors, announced that because they had such a difficult time deciding, they are presenting two citations this year.

Laura Hamby read the citation for James Waechter, who joined meeting by Zoom.

James Waechter read the citation for Laura Hamby.

#### *The Cadman Resolution Summary*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord reviewed the history of the Cadman Resolution. Over the past three years, *The Congregationalist* has published articles that encouraged dialogue around issues of social justice. The Cadman Resolution also sparked formation of the Racial Justice Task Team and noted that a packet with information about their work is available here at the Annual Meeting. She introduced members of the Racial Justice Task Team who were present and thanked them for their work.

#### *Recognition of Marianne King, Editor of The Congregationalist*

Moderator Art Ritter and Executive Director Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere expressed appreciation on behalf of NACCC membership for her wonderful work. Vice Moderator Jodee Lord also presented Ms. King with a tote and a blanket, that had both been silk-screened with covers of *The Congregationalist*.

#### *Missionary Presentations*

Rich Miller-Todd introduced representatives of more missionary partners who spoke and showed brief videos of their missions.

- Charles Sagay – Mission School of Hope, Cameroon
- Laura Ramirez – Panamerican Institute, Tijuana, Mexico
- Rev. Dr. Harding Stricker – Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregational, Argentina
- Sharon and Jim Powell – Happy Life, Kenya
- Their representative couldn't be present, but A Christian Ministry in the National Parks provided a video.

Rev. Miller-Todd talked about his experiences on the Cherokee Cultural Exploration Ministry trip in May, 2023, in collaboration with the Cherokee Methodist Church. He expressed hope that we can create another exploration ministry with a different group in the near future.

The Business Meeting recessed at 3:00 pm, CDT until Tuesday, June 27, 2023, at 9:00 am, CDT.



69<sup>th</sup> NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference  
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Final Business Session

Minutes (DRAFT)

The final Business Session of the 69th National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Annual Meeting convened on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, at the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield, Wisconsin and online in a virtual conference.

*Announcements*

Vice Moderator Jodee Lord had two more announcements about rooms and schedules.

*Call to Order*

Moderator, Rev. Art Ritter called the meeting to order at 9:07 am, CDT.

*Being Church Moment*

Joel Boyd shared the experiences of Meadowbrook Congregational Church of Novi, Michigan as they spent a year studying how they could move from good health to better health. He shared some of what they learned and what they were preparing to live into, including intentional study of their community's needs.

*Reports and Awards*

*Mission and Outreach Ministry Council*

Chair Rich Miller-Todd thanked the MOMC members: Kathryn Mullins, Rev. Bob Higgins, Amana Talala Mbise, and Gerald Zwaga. He noted he had given his report at an earlier session.

*Growth Ministry Council*

Chair Mary Prendergast

She introduced the members of the Growth Ministry Council: Pastor Michael Freeman, Rev. Ezekiel Rodriguez, and Rev. Dr. William "Ron" Tolliver. Their focus for the year was our youth. They contacted every church in the NACCC to establish connections with their youth program. The Council participated in planning for the NAPF/HOPE meeting. Growth oversees church planting and the Hurting Churches Fund. They are continuing their webinar series; they have a list of about 15 topics for upcoming presentations.

*Vitality Ministry Council*

Chair Rev. Justin Nierer

He introduced the members of the Vitality Ministry Council: Cynthia Hardy, Rev. Ian Macdonald, Rev. Robb Tarr, and Rev. Sarah Terlouw. He also expressed pleasure that the time had come to announce honors that they look forward to awarding every year.

The Charles R. Russell preaching award goes to Rev. Dr. R. Clifton Bailey, Shandon Congregational Church, Shandon, Ohio.

Rev. Ian MacDonald announced the Harry R. Butman award for distinguished service to the NACCC goes to Rev. Dr. Mimi Biedron, North Congregational Church, Farmington Hills, MI.

#### *Lay Ministry Training Program*

Polly Bodjanac spoke about the LMTP and announced that they are currently accepting applications for Cohort C. She introduced four people who have participated in the program. She noted that next year, she would need more time at the Annual Meeting because they will be celebrating the first graduation.

#### *CFTS Graduation*

Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, CFTS Dean led the graduation celebration for Rev. Jacob R. Richards.

#### *Recognitions*

Rev. Justin Nierer honored Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, who is retiring as CFTS Dean. He also announced the Vitality Ministry Council is pleased to approve Pine Hill Congregational Church's nomination of Rev. Dr. Packer for a Harry R. Butman Award. Nierer spoke in Rev. Dr. Packer's honor followed by Rev. Ed Gabrielson. Moderator Art Ritter continued the honors and introduced Revs. Tom and Wendy Van Tassel to present the NACCC's gift, a framed excerpt of the Southwell Litany. Rev. Dr. Charles Packer shared a few words of appreciation and gratitude.

A report on the Habitat for Humanity project showed we were able to complete 50 door mats and 50 2x4 studs that were decorated by Annual Meeting participants.

#### Host Committee

Moderator Art Ritter called Rev. Marty Hall forward and thanked the Host Committee for their wonderful work and service in making the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference the great experience it has been.

#### Retiring Leadership

Executive Director Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere called Mary Biedron, Barbara Erlendson, Garry Fisher, Claudia Kniefel, Katie Mullins, Justin Nierer, Don Olsen, Mary Prendergast, Sarah Terlow, and Wendy Van Tassell up to receive the thanks for their service.

#### *Installation of NACCC Leadership*

Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere lead the liturgy of installation for incoming and continuing NACCC leadership.

#### *2024 Spokane Annual Meeting Preview*

Host Chairs, Rev. Ed and Jami Backell introduced a preview video for 2024 with the theme, "There Is a Time."

#### *Closing Remarks*

Moderator Art Ritter reminisced about the days spent together and looked forward to opportunities to share what we've learned with our churches.

#### *Benediction*

Rev. Art Ritter offered the Closing Prayer of benediction.

*Adjournment*

Moderator Art Ritter noted that no further business was before the assembly and declared the Business Meeting of the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference in Brookfield, Wisconsin was adjourned at 11:26 am, CDT.

**National Association of Congregational Christian Churches  
Minutes Certification Committee 2023  
Final Report**

The 2023 Minutes Certification Committee – Rev. Mark McCormick, Beth Borland, and Tonna Parsons – have reviewed the Minutes of the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held in person and by video conference on June 24-27, 2023. They recommend approval of the Minutes as presented with one amendment to Business Session I, the addition of an address.