

**MINUTES OF THE  
SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
MICHIGAN REGION OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH  
APRIL 30, 2019**

**PRAISE AND WORSHIP** The Conference began with singing and worship led by Rachel Wilson and the Davison Missionary Church worship team.

**WELCOME AND PRAYER** Rev. Doug Connelly brought greetings from our host church, the Davison Missionary Church, Davison, Michigan

**INTRODUCTION OF THE CONFERENCE THEME “PRAY FIRST”** Regional Director, Jim Keller and Regional Director-Elect, Jim Jordan spoke to us on the theme “Pray First! A Call to Action! A Statement of Priority!” Rev. Keller reflected on his youth in hearing the early morning prayer meeting in the tabernacle when men and women loudly called out to God. Years later in a small prayer meeting at Lamotte Missionary Church, Jim heard Rev. Gene Sims crying out to God. Recently in a Zoom prayer meeting with one of our Hispanic pastor leaders! Quoting from Hosea 10:12 he challenged us with the message “...now is the time to seek the Lord.” Pray first!

1. Concerted Prayer = together, corporate, united (Acts 1:14; 2:42-47) (Jim Keller)
2. Prevailing Prayer = persistent, passionate, never give up (Luke 18:1-8) (Jim Jordan). “What we believe about God determines how we pray to God.”
3. Desperate Prayer = “Crying out to God” prayer (Ps. 18:3-5; 107; Heb. 5:7) (Jim Keller) Do not hold back from the passion that emerges out of your spirit to cry out to God.
4. Focused Prayer = Seeking God’s Presence and Glory (Exodus 33; I Sam. 4 & 7) (Jim Jordan) Prayer is an expression of our relationship with God. The focus of our prayer should be to give glory to God! We should always seek His glory and presence! God will hear and will answer when we call upon Him!

The closing quote by Jim Cymbala in Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire states: “*What does it say about our churches today that God birthed the church in a prayer meeting, and prayer meetings today are almost extinct?*” A season of prayer followed.

**Business Meeting No. 1**

**CALL TO ORDER** The business meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

**CONFERENCE BAR** The Conference Bar was established by placing all in attendance on their honor with only the members of the Conference casting votes when called upon to do so.

**CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS** Parliamentarian  
Rev. William Barnwell (Royal Oak Church)  
Conference Program Manager  
Dr. Alan Yerke (Ministries Coordinator)  
Assistant to the Regional Oversight Council Secretary  
Rev. Dave Engle (Fellowship Bible Church, Brown City)  
Recommendations/Resolutions Committee  
Rev. Doug Connelly, Chairman (Davison Missionary Church)

Rev. Phil Burkett (Cass City Missionary Church)  
 Rev. Ann Harrington (Colonial Woods Missionary Church,  
 Port Huron)

Introductions Committee

Rev. Brent Kriesch, Chairman (Faith Missionary Church, Flint)

Credentials Committee

Rev. Ann Harrington (Colonial Woods Missionary Church,  
 Port Huron)

Regional Resource Center Staff

Tellers – Ushers – Greeters

Rev. Matt Mendenhall, Chairman (First Missionary Church,  
 Clarkston)

**Approved by unanimous consent**

**RULES OF ORDER** The Rules of Order were read as printed in the Conference Handbook.

RESOLVED: that we accept the Rules of Order as read.

**Approved by unanimous consent.**

**CREDENTIALS  
 COMMITTEE**

The Report of the Credentials Committee was presented as follows:

Ordained Ministers (55)

Licensed Ministers (16)

Licensed Lay Pastors (4)

Lay Delegates (43)

Voting Guests (5)

Total voting members: (123)

Total non-voting guests: (44)

Total in attendance: (167)

**This report was received into the record by unanimous consent**

**REGIONAL  
 DIRECTOR  
 REPORT**

Rev. Jim Keller presented his report. He highlighted who we are and what motivates us in the Missionary Church. Keep the vision in view - live the Vision!

He provided a list of current disciple-making, micro-church and church planting works, then asked, "When will your disciple-making, church planting work be on this list?" Rev. Keller also highlighted training and coaching for the Vision.

He expressed deep gratitude to the ROC, MMT, Conference delegation of the Michigan Region, and the office staff for the personal support given to him and Brenda and the Michigan Region ministry overall. Thank yous were also given to the Mancelona and Brown City Camp Boards and to the Rinkes who are now working with the Strengthening Local Church team.

Included in Rev. Keller's report were various misc. notes re

- Boards/elders being alert to the needs of their pastor(s)
- Regional property assets (Westland and Hubbardston)
- Including Bethel University in your church's budget
- Faithful support of the Region through ministry shares
- Support the unborn and prolife movement

Jim then invited Becky Thompson and Rev. David and Kathryn Kopka (Missionary Church for Life) to speak on the cause of the unborn and the born (Proverbs 24:1-12). In our churches and beyond we need to take a stand for the sake of the unborn and the born.

Rev. Keller also commented on the transition for him and Brenda as well as the succession process from Keller to Jordan.

**Report was received into the record by unanimous consent**

**MEMORIAL  
REPORT**

The Memorial Report was presented by Rev. Larry Van Slambrook. A prayer of thanks was given for the life of Doris M. Schlatter.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Dr. Al Yerke introduced new pastors/ordinates to the Conference.

**APPROVAL OF  
COMMITTEE  
REPORTS**

The following Committee reports were presented to the Conference: Regional Director (Rev. Jim Keller), Regional Ministries Coordinator (Dr. Al Yerke), Regional Oversight Council (Rev. Larry Van Slambrook), Ministry Multiplication Team (Dr. Al Yerke), Metro Detroit Network (Rev. James Thompson), Metro Detroit Network Financial Report (Gerald Gaughan), Thumb Network (Rev. Reginald Courliss), West Michigan District Report (Dr. Bill Hossler), Strengthening the Local Church Team (Dr. Al Yerke), Healing, Encouragement, and Reconciliation Team (Dr. Al Yerke), Pastoral Benefits Committee (Rev. Jim Keller), Christian Ministries Institute (Dr. Al Yerke), Committee on Ordination and Licensing (Dr. Al Yerke), Happy Time Children's Camp (Jeanne Palmateer), Brown City Camp Board (Kurt Tuckey), Mancelona Camp Board (Justin Milam), Nominating Committee Report (Rev. Jim Jordan), Michigan Missionary Loans and Investments Financial Report and Financial Review Report for the Region (Lehn King) Regional Treasurer Financial Reports (Harlan Gingrich).

RESOLVED: to adopt the above Reports. **M/S/A**

**CONFERENCE  
BALLOT**

Under the leadership of the Vice-Chairman of the Regional Oversight Council, the ballot was presented for members of the Mancelona and Brown City Camp Boards and the Regional Oversight Council.

RESOLVED: to close the nominations. **M/S/A**  
The ballot was cast.

**BREAK**

The Conference adjourned for a brief recess.

**WORSHIP**

The Davison Missionary Church Worship Team led us in worship.

**INTRODUCTIONS  
COMMITTEE**

Rev. Steve Jones (President of the Missionary Church)  
Rev. Bob Ransom (Director of Generate, Missionary Church)  
Rev. Tom Swank (Asst. Director of Prayer Ministries, Missionary Church)  
Rev. Dave Mann (Director of Strategic Partnership, World Partners)  
Tami Swymeler (Director of Operations, World Partners)  
Steve Sisson (Exec. Dir., Missionary Church Investment Foundation)  
Dr. Gregg Chenoweth (President, Bethel University)  
Dr. David McCabe (Missionary Church Endowed Professor of Biblical Theology, Bethel University)  
Don Pierce (President, Pierce Carter Agency, Brotherhood Insurance)  
Rev. Don and Pat Matteson (Missionary Church for Life)

**PRESENTATION**

Recognition was given to Jan Bartholomew on her retirement. Thanks was given for all her work for the Region through all the years.

**ELECTION  
REPORT**

RESOLVED: to report the election results without vote totals. **M/S/A**

Rev. Jim Jordan presented the election report:

Mancelona Camp Board: Bart Adams, Dan Bean and Just Milam.

Brown City Camp Board: Susie Gardner and Marcy Wagley

Regional Oversight Council

Laypersons: Ryan King and Bill Shaffer (4-year terms)

Clergy: Rev. Reg Courliss (4-year term)

Rev. Dave Engle (2-year term - filling an unexpired term)

Rev. Dale Rinke (2-year term - filling an unexpired term)

**2018 BUDGET**

Dr. Al Yerke presented the proposed budget for the year 2019 and responded to various questions. The Vice Chair of the Regional Oversight Council led the vote regarding the Proposed 2019 Budget.

RESOLVED: to adopt the 2019 Conference Budget. **M/S/A**

**NEW BUSINESS****EVERGREEN  
RESOLUTIONS**

Rev. Doug Connelly presented resolutions submitted to the Conference by the Evergreen Missionary Church, Lowell, MI.

RESOLVED: to amend the final sentence of the proposed resolution by adding "without error in its original manuscripts." **M/S/A**

RESOLVED: to adopt the following resolution: **M/S/A**

Whereas, we support the strengthening and clarification of our Articles of Faith in its statements on the Bible and on human origins, be it resolved that we affirm the work of the Evergreen Church and the Missionary Church Constitution Committee and fully support the statements proposed by the Constitution Committee to the National Conference. We further ask the Constitution Committee to give consideration to the resolution of the Evergreen Church to change the last phrase of the first sentence of the articles on the Bible from "and without error in all it addresses," to "and without error in its original manuscripts."

**MMLI DISSOLUTION**

Dale Rinke provided an update on the dissolution of MMLI.

**MISSIONARY  
CHURCH  
INVESTMENT  
FOUNDATION**

Steve Sisson, Executive Director of the Missionary Church Investment Foundation, commended the leaders of MMLI. He reported on the investments that have been made thus far in MCIF. He indicated that MCIF is willing to help local churches with financial matters.

**MISSIONARY  
CHURCH  
HIGHLIGHTS**

Steve Jones and Robert Ransom gave thanks for emphasis on prayer at our Conference. An invitation was extended to our Conference to be involved in the 30 days of prayer leading up to the SHIFT National Conference. Rev. Ransom reported on what the Lord is doing to bringing people to faith in Christ and be baptized in various places in our country. He also reported re: new churches starting up.

Rev. Steve and Sue Jones, Rev. Bob and Donna Ransom, then presented a plaque and gift to Rev. Jim & Brenda Keller in recognition to their service to the Michigan Region and the Missionary Church!

**BETHEL  
UNIVERSITY  
HIGHLIGHTS**

Dr. Gregg Chenowith, President of Bethel College (soon to be Bethel University) shared that Bethel has a new logo, which is far more than just an updated font. It includes a cross and a much larger flame, which is representative of a move of the Holy Spirit on campus--a “fanning of the flame” so-to-speak. God is on the move at Bethel as evidenced in such events as the widespread student participation in a powerful extended season of prayer and commitment at a recent Wednesday Chapel service. Dr. Chenowith also spoke excitedly of a concerted effort to “fan the Flame” in better preparing students to apply their faith as they graduate out into the world in their various fields.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

**Business meeting No. 2**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m.

**WORSHIP**

We were led in worship by the Davison Worship Team.

**WORLD  
PARTNERS**

Tami Swymeler and Dave Mann gave a report on World Partners. A word of appreciation was expressed to the Michigan Region for our support and involvement in World Partners. Rev. Mann referenced the work we had been involved with in East Africa. That ministry has now spread into 9 different countries. He then described how 4 men who were bankers had sensed a call to go into ministry in the country of Mogadishu. After answering the call and going forth, it was later reported that all 4 had been executed. Now their wives are going into that same area to continue the work their husbands had begun.

God is pouring out His blessing and raising up missionaries to go into difficult areas. They need our help to support them. Obviously, we still need to send missionaries, but support is also needed for these indigenous missionaries. Churches in our Region are encouraged us to include World Partners in their budgets--to get behind these national partners.

Rev. Mann reminded us that the 2% covers denominational expenses **but not** World Partners. He also shared with us what is being done in the Global initiative by World Partners.

**RECOGNITION OF  
DISTRICT-  
NETWORKS**

Jim Keller recognized and gave thanks to the District-Network leaders. Three-Districts/Networks (Metro Detroit, Thumb, West) are organized with the others in various stages of development.

**FAREWELL  
ADDRESS AND  
CHARGE TO THE  
REGION AND THE  
NEW REGIONAL  
DIRECTOR**

Rev. Keller shared with the Conference some farewell statements which burn in the vision of his heart and soul for our Missionary Church movement.

- The Leadership Culture is changing and becoming more focused on the harvest.
- Discipleship starts with unbelievers. It starts with a friendship and works through the process.
- Follow Jesus into the culture. We need to both gather and scatter. We need to excel at going to “them” (those who won’t come to us).
- Remove the lids of leadership obstruction.
- Have courage to deal with old wineskins.
- We need to be open to the new wine--the move of the Holy Spirit.

- Be alert to defining moments.

We were then asked to join Rev. Keller with an open mind to the future and how the Holy Spirit may want to lead us in our leadership over the church. He stated that ministry in the future may look a lot different than what we are used to.

- Your future church will understand and practice focused prayer and crying out to God at the center of church life where signs, miracles and wonders will be normal occurrences. YFC will be radically obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit as it fulfills Christ's command to be a "house of prayer."
- The people of your future church will be so filled with the love of Christ, so passionate for the lost and filled with the Holy Spirit, that motivation to love and serve God and people, will bubble up from the inside out.
- YFC (your future church) will be free from the fear of change and paralyzing rigidity. It will be filled with flexibility, joy and anticipation of how God wants to work in and through the church family.
- YFC will have a pastor and leaders who will be men and women of God, of prayer and of the Word. They will be humble, servant leaders with integrity, managing their private life as a foundation for who they are in public.
- YFC will be far less contained and far more distributed out into your community and beyond. What you celebrate when you are together will catalyze this shift in balance between "in" and "out."
- YFC will have anointed preaching that teaches and motivates, but the mark of the church will be in how well the people live out the Gospel of God's love with each other and with lost people out in the harvest field.
- YFC will be laser focused upon the basics and fundamentals of becoming mature disciples in Christ, making friends for Jesus in everyday life, the skills of asking questions and engaging in crucial conversations, prayer walking, and relational disciple-making.
- YFC will have a growing number of "missionaries" who are taught and disciplined to be on mission within the mission field of their everyday world.
- YFC will have at least 10-40% of the church family active in the art of neighboring and making friends for Christ and the discipling process.
- YFC will be a church where the pastor and staff are all active, modeling the art of neighboring and making friends for Christ and the discipling process.
- YFC will measure growth more by the number of people engaged in the process of making disciples and make disciples, than by the attendance or how well the facilities, programs and finances are managed.
- YFC will have creative ministries you may now know nothing about, which will be motivated by God's love to meet human need for the purpose of connecting with people out in the harvest field.

Rev. Keller then shared with us his very positive feelings about Jim Jordan as his successor!

## **COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW REGIONAL**

Rev. Steve Jones led us in the commissioning of Rev. Jim Jordan as our new Regional Director. In his message he shared that it is crucial that we choose leaders who are humble. Humility means I don't think about

**DIRECTOR**

me, but I think about you. Our leaders need to get themselves out of the way and be obedient to Jesus--to live as Jesus lives.

He spoke to Jim Jordan of the need for him to be exemplary in living as a follower of Jesus. Becoming the Regional Director will be a big transition and a different kind of leading. What Jim Jordan will need is the prayer of this body. We have the leader we prayed for. The vision God gives Jim Jordan, will be in rough form to be polished by the leaders around him. He will need God's help in fulfilling his responsibilities as Regional Director.

Leading is like pedaling a bicycle--the first pedal is wisdom to do something--the second pedal is the courage to do it.

The Regional Oversight Council then gathered around Rev. Jim, Ruby and Isaac Jordan as Rev. Jones prayed and commissioned him as our new Regional Director.

**RESOLUTIONS**

Rev. Ann Harrington then gave the report of the Resolutions Committee.

Whereas, we are thankful that we do not need to learn a new name after twenty years of having a Regional Director named "Jim";

And whereas, we are committed to praying for and encouraging Pastor Jim Jordan as he begins his new role as Regional Director;

Be it resolved that the Michigan Region of the Missionary Church express our earnest support of Jim Jordan with a hearty "Amen."

Whereas, Jim Keller has served faithfully for twenty years as Regional Director and for twenty-nine years in Regional leadership;

And whereas, Pastor Jim has imparted his wisdom, humor and love to our churches, our denomination, and to countless believers;

And whereas, a lost card with checks inside has not stopped him from completing his task;

And whereas, Brenda Keller has been a committed wife and support to Jim as well as a valued team mate in the ministry;

And whereas, we all know countless disasters have been avoided because of Brenda's guidance and intervention in Jim's life;

And whereas, the Region and especially Brown City Camp have been blessed by Brenda's sacrifice and humble service;

Be it resolved that we declare April 30, 2019 to be **Jim and Brenda Keller Recognition Day**, and we express our appreciation with an exuberant round of applause.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

**RECOGNITION OF THE KELLERS**

Rev. Jim and Brenda Keller were then recognized for their faithful years of service to the Michigan Region. This recognition included a video, numerous testimonials, the reading of a poem, the presentation of gifts, and a prayer of blessing by Rev. Steve Jones. The Kellers were then escorted to a reception by Rev. Jim and Ruby Jordan in a walk of honor through a hallway lined by the pastors and spouses of the Michigan Region.

**RECEPTION**

A reception in honor of the Keller's was held in the gymnasium.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Lawrence E. Van Slambrook

Secretary – Regional Oversight Council