

# **The 66th Biennial Convention of the Unity of the Brethren Convention Minutes**

**July 10 & 11, 2015 – Nelsonville Brethren Church**

**July 12, 2015 – Wesley Brethren Church**

**Friday, July 10, 2015**

**Registration began Friday at 8:00 a.m.**

## **Worship:**

The worship service began at 9:00 a.m. Rev Michael Groseclose and Nelsonville Board President Jon Schroeder greeted the Convention. The call to worship was given by Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill. President James Marek welcomed everyone to the service. Rev. Lawrence Junek led the Morning Prayer. Rev. Groseclose gave the message “Won’t Take Nothing But an “A”!” with scripture from Hebrews 11:4. Rev Groseclose said to bring the best you have and offer it to God, don’t settle for just passing, make an “A”. He encouraged everyone to “stand up and be the church that God wants us to be.” Communion was administered to all by Rev. Groseclose who was assisted by Rev. Junek and Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill. The Convention Hymn was “To God Be the Glory”. The pianist was Sondra Brau. There were about 110 in attendance.

## **OPENING Session:**

President James Marek called the meeting to order. The opening hymn was “Grace Greater Than Our Sin”. The convention pianist was Elizabeth Ripple.

There were 100 people in attendance (see attached Roll Call) as follows:

**73 VOTING MEMBERS present: Pastors (19):** Rev Linda Chandler, Pastor Tim Chaplin, Rev. Joe Emerson (Sat), Rev. Adolfo Gonzalez, Rev. Michael Groseclose, Rev Jim Heckman, Rev Jimmy Hejl, Rev Lawrence Junek, Pastor David Johnson, Dr. Larry Koslovsky, Rev Vanessa Mitchell, Rev Joseph Polasek, Rev. Kay Polasek, Rev Mark Sebek, Rev Nello Strickland, Rev Tommy Tallas, Dr. Jerry Terrill, Rev Ron Winsman, Rev Larry Zabcik.

**Lay members (16):** Caldwell – Dr. Ron Dusek; Crosby – Debbie Clark; Dime Box – Marvin Chlapek, Fayetteville – Liz Ripple; Houston - Dorothy Hinson; Industry – Harvey Treybig; Nelsonville – Dan Merz; Ocker – Robin Brinkley; Pasadena – Linda Planka; Rosenberg – Alice Kocurek (Sat); Seaton – Leonard Mikeska; Taylor – James Marek; Temple – Kellie Chaplin; Wall – Dewyan Weise; West – Roy Janek; Westheimer – Leroy Parthum.

**Delegates (37):** Austin – none; Bryan/College Station – Jim Baletka; Buckholts – none; Caldwell – Martha Huffman; Crosby – none; Cy-Fair – none; Dime Box – Roberta Brinkman; Fayetteville – Sandra Stepan; Good Shepherd – Maria Menn Osorna; Granger – none; Houston – Jay Zamora; Industry – Liz Treybig; Nelsonville – Sandra Merz, Brett Mikeska, Reesa Uckert, Alfred Zettel, Jr.; New Tabor – Albert Surovik, Connie Surovik; Ocker – Kim Dillard, Kevin Shiller, Lindsey Shiller; Pasadena – none; Rosenberg – Genevieve Elliott-Bowman; Seaton – Bob Haisler, Doug Rowald; Snook – Angie Hairrell, Yvonne Kovar; Taylor – Arnold Cuba, Linda Flens, Virginia Grow, Peggy Hejl, Bill Hickman, Carolyn Hickman, Ruth Ann Wuensche; Temple – Dorothy Schulze; Wall – David Miller, Linda Miller, Charmaine Smith, Nancy Weise; Wesley – J.T. Grounds; West – Sandy Borrenpohl, Dorothy Kocian; Westheimer – Betty Parthum.

**Committee Chairs (4):** PRC – Jon Farrow; Christian Ed – Tami Laza; Foreign Missions – Kent Laza; Home Missions – Bro David Johnson (also above); Hus Encampment – Mark Olsen (Sat).

**Non-Voting:** Guests - 27

**Reports from Officers and Denominational Boards: Reports are in the Convention Booklet.**

**President** - James Marek – p. 36-39 (Attachment A)

**First Vice President** - Rev Lawrence Juneke – p.40 (Attachment B)

**Second Vice President** - Rev Michael Groseclose – no report.

**Third Vice President** - Rev Dr. Jerry Terrill – p.41-42 (Attachment C)

**Secretary** - Liz Ripple – p. 43-49 (Attachment D) Six churches did not seat delegates at the Convention: Austin, Buckholts, Crosby, Cy-Fair Community, Granger, and Pasadena. Christ Covenant does not send in Questionnaires and does not send Brethren Fund assessments.

**Treasurer** - Dewyan Weise – p. 50 (Attachment E)

**Financial Secretary** - Dan Merz - 2013-14 & 2014-15 (Attachment F)

**Unity Organizations / other:**

Pastoral Relations Committee - Jon Farrow, Chair – Attachment I

Board of Christian Ed - Tami Laza, Chair – Attachment II

Hus School Encampment – Mark Olson, Chair – Attachment III

Hus School Encampment Treasurer summary - Ron Krueger – Attachment IV

Denomination Mission Giving chart – Attachment V

Foreign Mission Board - Kent Laza, Chair – Attachment VI

Home Mission Board - Pastor David Johnson, Chair – Attachment VII

Cade Lake Community Chapel (Home mission project)/In Gods Hands – Attachment VIII

Brethren Journal Business Manager – Ben Polasek – Attachment IX

Brethren Journal Treasurer - Dorothy Milberger – Attachment X

Ministers' Benefits Committee – Rev Tommy Tallas, Exe Sec/Treas – Attachment XI

Board for Grants and Bequests - Roger Runnels, Chair – Attachment XII

Youth Coordinator - Jennifer Chervenka – Attachment XIII

Christian Sisters Union - Ann Sebesta, President – Attachment XIV

Mutual Aid Society – Rev Joseph Polasek, President – Attachment XV

Hus Encampment Food & Activities Account Summary – Jim Baletka – Attachment XVI

**Moravian Representative Comments & Greetings:** Rev. David Guthrie (President Provincial Elders' Conference, Southern Province) greeted the convention.

**General Overview of Convention & Unity Gifts to Congregations:** James reported on the gifts that will be given to all congregations in commemoration of the 600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jan Hus' Martyrdom. One gift is a framed picture - on the left side is a time line of things that happened in ancient Brethren history and our Texas Brethren history. In the middle is a painting by Suzanne Huser (Granger Brethren) – all the items in the painting have meaning with us. On the right side is a paragraph from our Constitution about what the life of a Brethren should be and our responsibilities as a member of the Unity of the Brethren. Two other gifts are a book by Craig Atwood entitled “The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius” and a DVD on Jan Hus - “Truth Prevails.”

**Briefing on Minister's Insurance and New Tax Law:** On July 1, some of the tax laws that affect our pastors have changed. John Ball and Scott Larson, representatives from Total Administrative Services Corporation (TASC) gave a presentation. They were recommended by Wehring CPA who do the taxes for our pastors. They spoke about the changing healthcare reform regulations and benefit plans for pastors. (Handout information with other attachments)

**Presentation of nominations:** For 2015-2017 as presented by the nominating committee – Dorothy Hinson, Chair (Attachment XVII): (other nominations will also be taken from the floor) President – Rev. Dr. Larry Koslovsky (name was later withdrawn)

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Pres – Kent Laza (Bryan/College Station)

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Pres – Rev. Michael Groseclose

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-Pres – Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill

Secretary – open

Treasurer – Harvey Treybig (Industry)

Financial Secretary – Liz Ripple (Fayetteville)

Ministerial Alternate – Rev Mark Sebek

Lay Alternate – Wiley Marx (Ocker)

Board of Christian Ed Chair – Tami Laza (Bryan/College Station)

Board of Grants & Bequests – Eugene Haisler (Ocker), Leroy Parthum (Westheimer)

Brethren Journal Business Manager – Ben Polasek (Fayetteville)

Brethren Journal Editor – Cathleen Schlechte (New Tabor)

Foreign Mission Board Chair – Rev Lawrence Junek

Home Mission Board Chair – Martha Dove (Fayetteville)

Hus School Board of Trustees Chair – Mark Olsen (Taylor)

Pastoral Relations Committee – Connie Janac (Snook), Dr. Ron Dusek (Caldwell)

Ministerial Credentials Board – Rev. Michael Groseclose, Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill, open

**Committee Assignments – Committees organize / review work assignments:**

The work assignments were reviewed. There were some additions/changes to the committee members (See attachment XVIII).

**Approve Kellie Chaplin as the Synodical Rep for Temple to replace Gayle Farrow:**

James explained that Gayle has stepped down as Temple's representative and Temple has elected Kellie Chaplin to fill the term as their representative. Representatives for all congregations serve 2 year terms and are elected at the congregation meetings called for the referendum vote therefore the Temple congregation would need to re-elect a Synodical representative at their congregational meeting called to vote on the referendum.

**MOTION** by Bro Mike Groseclose to approve Kellie as the representative from Temple.

**Second** by Bro Jim Heckman. Discussion on if a pastor's wife or spouse can serve as the rep.

Passes unanimously.

James appointed Dewyan Weise to serve as parliamentarian.

Meeting adjourned for committees to meet and go over their assignments.

Lunch (Roast Beef catered by Schovajsa's Catering). Meal Prayer was sung - "Be Present at our Table Lord" was the selection used for the meal prayer.

**Session 2**

**Announcements:** Announcement made regarding meal tickets – we are keeping a count of them. Please use your blue meal tickets – these are paid for by the convention fund. Red tickets are available for visitors to purchase. Red name badges are voting members of convention; yellow badges are guests. The money in the convention packets is for travel pay which is determined by the mileage from your home church to the host church at .25 a mile both ways.

**Unity Business: By-law amendments offered** – p 29 of convention booklet. (Attachment XIX)

**Approval of the proposed Revisions to the Constitution of the Board of World Mission (BWM):** Rev David Guthrie explained the revisions. (Attachment XX)

**MOTION** by Kent Laza to accept the revisions to the Constitution of the BWM as presented.  
**Second** by Dan Merz.

Discussion. These revisions do not affect our by-laws. It was reported that Kent Laza, as chair of the Foreign Mission Board is serving on the BWM in a voting seat. Passed unanimously.

Roy Janek from West Brethren came forward to give a report on the West fertilizer explosion.

**YouTube music video:** “Your Endless Glory”, words and music by Josh Bissell, Chris Kelarek and Paul Michalik. The song was written to commemorate the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus. The video can be found on the internet.

Committees meet again.

**Session 3 – attendance: 95.** Song of Praise “Glorious Day”

**Mission Presentation & Update: (\*not supported by the Unity)**

Rev Jim Heckman gave an update on his health scare with double vision. He reported on Cade Lake (Home Mission project since Oct 22, 2011) and showed a slide presentation.

Phil & Eunice Raiford – The last convention they were at was at New Tabor in 2011. Phil spoke about transformation and understanding God’s purpose for us all. He read a passage from Romans 12: 1-2. Gave an update on their mission work. Eunice’s practice has seen over 3000 patients and helps many people. Their son, Ian (age 2) was also in attendance. (Attachment i)

Carolyn Groseclose – New Day Orphanage in Zambia, Africa: Reported on her mission work in Africa at the orphanage, currently with 24 orphans. The area and language is Tonga.

Robert Thiessen: Gave a report on his wife, Annie who was diagnosed with breast cancer in March of this year. He thanked everyone for their support.

\*John Brinkley: Gave a slide presentation on the work he is doing in Zambia with prosthetics called “Prosthetic Promises In His Name”. (Attachment ii).

\*Rev Lawrence Junek & David Miller: Gave a presentation on Kairos Prison Ministry. Bro Lawrence read from Matt: 25:31-46 - “The final judgement”. David talked about how he tries to witness to people. Kairos is very evangelical. David has been involved for about 12 years with Kairos. Their motto is “love, love – listen, listen”. Texas is a state that allows Kairos to come in to minister to the prisoners, who have to apply to take part in the program.

The *Denominational Mission Giving Graph* as of 6-2-15 is on p. 60. We will try to have updates of mission giving available throughout the year to keep us focused on what the needs are. Announcement made for everyone to register for door prizes being given by the Nelsonville Brethren Church. Bro Mike gave the blessing for the Fried Chicken supper.

**Session 4 – Attendance 80.** Hymn “Revive Us Again”

**Presentations from congregations:**

**Faith in Action: Austin Brethren, Rev Linda Chandler:** Pastor Linda read from Psalm 34. She has been at Austin Brethren for 12 years. She is working with Martha & Jerry Dove from Fayetteville Brethren and some young people in her church in a quilting initiative called “Wrapped in the Word.” A slide presentation about the mission work being done with quilts was

shown. She has HOST ministries – which has helped to pay those working with the project a little salary. She had quilts available for purchase to help this self-sustaining ministry.

**Faith in Action: New Tabor Brethren, Pastor David Johnson:** Bro David reported on a ministry New Tabor is doing called “Sustaining Food Ministries.” The church collects food and dry goods, then go into the projects at the end of each month to do the work of Christ.

**Unity Business – Committees Meet:** Temple Brethren has offered to host the convention in 2017. There were no other invitations.

**MOTION** by Dorothy Hinson to accept the 2017 Convention invitation from Temple Brethren.

**SECOND** by Connie Surovik. No discussion. Passes unanimously.

**Recommended by-law changes on page 29 & 30 (Attachment XIX)**

There were comments / questions on:

Article I. B.4 (Sacraments and Rites) regarding the issue of marriage;

Article I. A.2 - the wording of open communion;

Article III (Office of the Ministry) – C. 1. Pastoral License.

**\*MOTION** by Rev Jim Heckman to accept all the recommended amendments (includes Articles VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XX, XXI) except for Article I. A.2, Article I. B.4 and Article III, C.1.

**SECOND** by Bill Hickman.

Discussion. Questions on adding J. to Article IX. regarding submitting website changes to the Unity Secretary. This will add more duties to the secretary position. Passes.

**Discussion on adding item “e” to ARTICLE III. Office of the Ministry C. 1. as follows:**

“Licensees serving as a full time pastor in the Unity of the Brethren for 10 years consecutively shall be eligible to petition the Synodical Committee for a 5 year renewable license. The Synodical Committee may issue a 5 year renewable license in this situation by a simple majority vote.”

**MOTION** by Kent Laza to accept the recommended amendment to Article III as written.

**SECOND** by Debbie Clark.

Discussion to change the 10-year time period to 5-years. Discussion on full-time/part-time.

**\*MOTION TO AMEND** by Bro Jim Heckman to strike the word “full time” and insert “5 year consecutively” instead of “10 years consecutively.”

**SECOND** by Jon Farrow.

FOR the amendment 45. Against 3. The amendment to the motion passes.

VOTE FOR THE AMENDED MOTION. Passes. Item “e” will read as follows:

“Licensees serving as a pastor in the Unity of the Brethren for 5 years consecutively shall be eligible to petition the Synodical Committee for a 5 year renewable license. The Synodical committee may issue a 5 year renewable license in this situation by a simple majority vote.”

**Discussion on striking “as well as of the State” in Article I. Sacraments and Rites, B (4): Marriage is an ordinance of God between a man and a woman and shall be solemnized in accordance with the laws of the Church as well as of the State.**

Marriage is not a sacrament in the Brethren church. Some pastors are not performing marriages with a state license and using instead a church certificate. New Tabor is putting out their own marriage certificate. James commented that he would like us (the Unity of the Brethren) to all be unified on this issue and to have the same documents. Discussion on having our own marriage license for the Brethren churches and to have the clergy discuss this.

**\*MOTION** by Jim Baletka to accept the recommended amendment and also strike “laws of the Church” and insert “doctrine of the Unity of the Brethren”. It would now read “**Marriage is an**

**ordination of God between a man and a woman and shall be solemnized in accordance with the doctrine of the Unity of the Brethren.”**

**SECOND** by Pastor Tim Chaplin. Discussion. Discussion on the Supreme Court decision regarding marriage.  
Motion passes.

It was questioned when the election of the Pastor to the Pastors will take place since time has not been made on the agenda for the Pastors to meet. Rev Dr. Larry Koslovsky announced that the pastors would meet tonight to start the process of electing the Pastor to the Pastors. More discussion on marriage certificates, doctrine and policy. It would be good if the pastors could meet on this, they are the best tools to equip us for this situation. Session ended at 8:35 p.m. James closed the meeting with a prayer.

### **Saturday, July 11, 2015 (at Nelsonville):**

**8:00 a.m.-8:45 a.m.** Breakfast

Hymn “Sweet Sweet Spirit”. Devotional – Pastor Tim Chaplin

Pastor Tim opened with a prayer. Read from Luke 5:12-13, “The Expression of Love” about the life of a leper; said we need to love the people as Jesus did. Tim shared the experiences of visiting people in prisons and preaching the word of God to them and being able to love them.

**Faith in Action – Temple Brethren, Pastor Tim Chaplin** – “Feed My Sheep Ministry”. In this ministry, they make sack lunches and take them to the homeless. They go once a month and are at 225 bags – anyone can participate. We can do something to make a difference in the community. They also have a prison ministry – give muscle or money – whatever is needed. Ended with a prayer.

**Session 5 – Attendance 85; 74 VOTING MEMBERS present:**

#### **Minister’s retirement eligibility and rules update: Benefits Programs for Pastors**

**(ARTICLE XX).** Rev Tommy Tallas (Executive Secretary/Treasurer Minister’s Benefits Committee) & Leonard Mikeska (member of the committee) spoke about this program. Bro Tommy explained how the program was set up and that it is to provide pastors with retirement benefits. Due to new tax laws, for new pastors to come into the program we have to do something different with the plan. The committee hopes to have a seminar in September for the pastors to meet with an independent professional investment advisory firm from Austin - Alpha Capital Management. The program is solvent and on-going – they hope to catch everyone up from the time of their ordination. Leonard Mikeska also spoke about the program – instead of a having a 403B plan an option is a simplified annuity plan. A motion is being worked on thru the motion committee to extend this to part-time pastors. The Synodical Committee will have the responsibility of determining what qualifies a part-time pastor.

#### **Continue discussion on Recommended by-law changes - Article I. A.2 - the wording of open communion:**

James spoke about a Brethren service he attended and for communion, the ministers’ invitation included “if you are a friend of Jesus” you are welcome at the table. James feels there are Biblical bars that need to be met for us to participate in communion. James cited examples from the Bible to start the discussion and the Ministers Guidebook refers often to making a “public profession of faith.” He thinks that having ministers across the Unity doing communion the same way is important for our denomination. Discussion. Discussion on children being baptized, when they go to communion and when they make a public profession of faith. Discussion. How do you get a public profession of faith without baptism?

**Article 1. Sacraments and Rites, A (2):** The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every congregation a minimum of four times a year. A service should be held preparatory to it. The elements used shall be bread and wine. Bread shall be both, or either, leavened or unleavened. Wine shall be either fermented or unfermented. All who have ~~professed their~~ **Add: been baptized and made their public profession of** faith in Jesus Christ, including members of other denominations, shall be invited to participate.

**MOTION** by Dewyan Weise to leave it as it is now with no change.

**SECOND** by Brett Mikeska. Discussion.

**MOTION** by Rev Kay Polasek to leave it as it is written. .

**SECOND:** by J.T. Grounds.

FOR – majority. Against – 1. Motion passes.

**\*MOTION** by Bro Tommy Tallas to add “or grape juice” to the elements used and strike “Wine shall be either fermented or unfermented”.

**SECOND** by Jim Baletka.

A. (2) would read: The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every congregation a minimum of four times a year. A service should be held preparatory to it. The elements used shall be bread and wine *or grape juice*. Bread shall be both, or either, leavened or unleavened. ~~Wine shall be either fermented or unfermented.~~ All who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ, including members of other denominations, shall be invited to participate.

Discussion.

For – majority; MOTION passes.

### **History Presentation – Jimmy Pokorny (Taylor Brethren):**

Lecture on Unity History – Spoke about Martin Luther, who compared the Bohemian Brethren to the apostles of Jesus; George Israel; Jan Hus; Agusta; John Amos Comenius (described him as a genius). Comenius said the world cannot offer true happiness, it can only be found in Christ. He wrote “The Labyrinth of the World” (which is incorporated in the painting by Suzanne Huser).

**Session 6:** Hymn “Wonderful Grace of Jesus”.

Rev James D. Hejl presented a manuscript from Rev. Dr. David Schattschneider who was unable to attend due to health concerns. Hejl was dressed in a “Hus Hat” and robe styled from the 1500's and delivered a first person portrayal of Jan Hus. Bro David sent greetings to the convention. The manuscript will be published in the Brethren Journal. There were to be three presentations by Bro David, the other two are also planned to be published.

Rev Larry Zabcik gave the prayer for lunch. Chicken Spaghetti was served.

**Session 7 – attendance 89.** Hymn – “Victory in Jesus”

James announced that Bro Larry Koslovsky has withdrawn his name as a nominee for the President position. James said a prayer before the Committees went into their meetings.

**Session 8 - Hymn “My Savior's Love”**

### **Ministry Unity Business:**

#### **NOMINATIONS:**

James asked for nominations from the floor, received as follows:

Foreign Mission Board Chair – David Miller (Wall) by Kent Laza

Unity Secretary – Angie Hairrell (Snook) by Tami Laza

Nominations continued:

PRC member – Martha Huffman was nominated from the floor by Rev Kay Polasek.  
PRC nominees are: Martha Huffman, Ron Dusek, and Connie Janac.

Teller Committee appointed to count votes: Jimmy Pokorny, Mike Kocian and Kathryn Laza.

**PRESIDENT:** Rev Joe Emerson nominated by Dan Merz; Kent Laza nominated by Nello Strickland; Rev Mark Sebek nominated by Dorothy Hinson – declined by Bro Mark.

Kent, Bro Joe and Bro Mark came forward to say a few words about themselves.

James gave a prayer for the nominations.

MOTION by Alice Kocurek to have a secret ballot for each position that is contested.

SECOND by Rev Kay Polasek. It was clarified that if one person asks for a secret ballot, no motion is needed to have this done. Motion is unnecessary.

MOTION by Rev Jim Heckman for nominations to cease. Second by Bill Hickman. Passes. Ballot vote. Kent Laza – 39; Bro Joe Emerson – 24; 1 blank.

PRESIDENT elected – Kent Laza.

**1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:** Rev Kay Polasek nominated by Rev Nello Strickland; Rev Mark Sebek nominated by Dorothy Hinson.

MOTION by Jon Farrow nomination cease.

Second by Albert Surovik.

Passes. Pastor Kay came forward to say a few words about herself.

Ballot vote. Mark Sebek – 40; Pastor Kay – 23; 1 blank.

1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT elected – Rev Mark Sebek.

**2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:** nominee is Rev Michael Groseclose. Motion by Rev Heckman and second by Debbie Clark to close nominations passed. MOTION by Dewyan Weise and second by Bro Junek to elect Rev Groseclose by acclamation. Passes.

**3<sup>RD</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:** nominee is Rev. Dr. Jerry Terrill. MOTION by Dorothy Hinson and second by Roy Janek to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.

**SECRETARY:** nominee is Angela Hairrell. MOTION by Albert Surovik and second by Liz Treybig passed to close nominations. MOTION by Rev Joe Emerson and second by Ron Dusek to elect Angela Hairrell by acclamation. Passes.

**TREASURER:** nominee is Harvey Treybig. MOTION by Bro Mike and second by J.T. Grounds to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY:** nominee Liz Ripple. MOTION by Liz Treybig and second by Connie Surovik to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.

**PASTORAL ALTERNATE:** Nominated from the floor: Rev Larry Zabcik. MOTION by Jon Farrow and second by Dan Merz to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.

**LAY ALTERNATE:** nominee is Wiley Marx. MOTION by Dorothy Hinson and second by Albert Surovik to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CHAIR:** nominee is Tami Laza (*serving as Chair since 2011*). MOTION by Debbie Clark and second by Betty Parthum to close nominations and elect by acclamation. Passes.



### **Nominees for uncontested positions:**

Board for Grants and Bequests – Eugene Haisler (re-election for second term);

Board for Grants and Bequests – Leroy Parthum (first term)

Brethren Journal Manager – Ben Polasek

Brethren Journal Editor - Cathleen Schlechte

Home Mission Board Chair – Martha Dove (serving on Home missions since 2011)

Hus School Board of Trustees – Mark Olsen (appointed in 2009, Chair since 2011)

No other nominations from the floor. Motion by Bro Jim Heckman and second by Alice Kocurek to close nominations on all uncontested positions and vote by acclamation. Passes.

**FOREIGN MISSION BOARD CHAIR:** nominees are Rev Lawrence Junek and David Miller. Bro Junek withdrew his name as a nominee. MOTION by Bro Junek and second by Ruth Wuensche to close nominations and elect David Miller by acclamation. Passes.

**PASTORAL RELATIONS:** nominees are Ron Dusek, Connie Janac, and Martha Huffman

MOTION by Linda Flens and second by Sandra Stepan to close nominations. Passes.

Ballot vote as follows: Connie Janac – 39; Ron Dusek – 48; Martha Huffman – 23; Jon Farrow – 2; Dorothy Kocian -1; 1 blank and 1 illegible.

Members elected for a 4 year term: Connie Janac (2<sup>nd</sup> term) and Ron Dusek (1<sup>st</sup> term).

**ELECTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONS CHAIR:** MOTION by Ron Dusek and second by Rev Heckman to nominate Jon Farrow as the Chair. Discussion – no motion needed – due to the 2013 by-law change, the nominees for chair are the 4 members – Jon Farrow, Connie Janac, Dorothy Kocian and Dr. Ron Dusek. Ballot vote for chairman. Votes: Connie Janac - 1; Dorothy Kocian - 4; Ron Dusek - 16; Jon Farrow – 38, 1 blank. CHAIR – Jon Farrow.

**Ministerial Credentials Board** – Before the by-law change in 2013, the Pastoral Credential Committee was composed of the pastors who serve on the Executive Committee and the Pastor to the Pastors. It was changed in 2013 to be the Pastor to the Pastors and three ordained pastors elected by the convention. 2 have volunteered to be on the board: Rev Mike Groseclose and Rev Jerry Terrill. Rev Jimmy Hejl was nominated by Bro Mike. **Rev Koslovsky has been elected as the Pastor to the Pastors.** MOTION by Dorothy Hinson that nominations cease and elect by acclamation. Second by Liz Treybig. Passes.

**ELECTION of Board for Grants and Bequests Chair:** nominees are – Eugene Haisler, Ron Tyson, Alan Tomasek, Roger Runnels & Leroy Parthum. Ballot vote: Eugene Haisler – 6; Ron Tyson – 12; Alan Tomasek – 6; Roger Runnels – 16; Leroy Parthum - 20  
Since there was no majority, a hand vote was taken between Roger Runnels and Leroy Parthum. Votes: Roger – 12; Leroy – 23. CHAIR - Leroy Parthum.

### **CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**HOME MISSIONS;** Committee Chairman – Rev Larry Zabcik: Attachment XXI

**FOREIGN MISSIONS;** Committee Chairman – Kent Laza: Several items were discussed. Recommendation to leave 2 boards as it is, but come together on occasion. Will ask for some amount of money to give to the Board of World Missions to show us being full partners with them. Future projects & having a future budget of \$75,000.00 was discussed. (Didn't get report)

**HISTORY SYMPOSIUM;** Committee Chairman – Rev Larry Koslovsky. Symposium would center on the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus and Brethren history to be held on

Nov 14, 2015 (Saturday). Suggested speakers include Dr. Thomas Fudge (England & Australia) & Craig Atwood. The planning committee would be: Dawn Baletka, Roberta Brinkman, Betty Parthum, Jean Davis and Bro Larry. Budget request will be for \$25,000.00. Attachment XXII

**FINANCE:** Committee Chairman – Marvin Chlapek. Attachment XXIII

**\*MOTION** from the Finance Committee: That the salary of the State Youth Coordinator be increased from \$22,000/yr. to \$23,000/yr. and increase the expenses allowance from \$1500/yr. to \$1800/yr. SECOND by Bro Mike Groseclose. Discussion. Passes unanimously.

**\*MOTION** from the Finance Committee: That the Brethren Fund be increased by \$5/member from \$30 to \$35/member. (Article II. Congregations, L).

SECOND by Bro Lawrence Junek.

Discussion. Credit was given to Ben Polasek (Business Manager) for collecting ad money and subscriptions for the Brethren Journal.

The current Brethren Fund split is as follows: (annual contributions currently at \$30 for each active communicant member, divided as follows for a membership of 1,700: (\$51,000.00)

25% - Hus School	\$12,750.00
20% - to the Brethren Journal	\$10,200.00
21% - Contingency Fund	\$10,710.00
14% - Educational Ministries	\$7,140.00
10% - Church Extension	\$5,100.00
10% - Administrative Fund	\$5,100.00

Motion passes unanimously.

**\*MOTION** from the Finance Committee: That the History Symposium be funded from the Grants and Bequests Fund in the amount of \$25,000. (Balance in the fund is - \$373,330.59 as of July 1)

SECOND by Bro Jim Heckman. Discussion. For – 49. Against – 6. Motion passes.

**\*MOTION** from the Finance Committee: That the following Brethren Fund split be approved (Article II. Congregations, L.): (Divided as follows for a membership of 1,700 based at \$35)

21% - Hus School	\$12,495.00	
17% - Brethren Journal	\$10,115.00	
30% - Contingency Fund	\$17,850.00	
13% – Educational Ministries	\$7,735.00	
9% - Administrative Fund	\$5,355.00	
10% - Executive Assistant	\$5,950.00	(Total: \$59,500.00)
0 – Church Extension		

SECOND by Connie Surovik

Discussion. For the Youth Coordinator salary (Educational Ministries) – the split is not the total funding, it is the difference. Mutual Aid puts in \$1,000.00 a year & Grants & Bequests \$8,000.00 a year. Passes unanimously.

**ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION:** Committee Chair – Dewyan Weise. Report given by Kellie Chaplin. Recommend to create a part-time position. Reason why – to keep projects in place. Attachment XXIV

**MARKETING & WEBSITE:** Committee Chair – Rev James D. Hejl. Along with the committee members listed in the booklet, Cathleen Schlechte also sat in on the meetings. Attachment XXV

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:** Committee Chair: Rev Jerry Terrill. Report given by Tami Laza, committee member. Discussed the following: revision of the Catechism, concern for the safety of our children during church sponsored activities, and some topics regarding the possible direction for the BCE for the next 2 years. Attachment XXVI

**MOTIONS COMMITTEE:** Motions read by Dan Merz, Chair:

**MOTION** from the Ministers' Benefits Committee (Bro Tommy & Leonard Mikeska committee members) to amend Article XX. Section A. Paragraph 1 (Page 29 of the 2013 by-laws) by adding "and part-time Unity Pastors as defined by the Synodical Committee" as follows:

"A retirement program for full-time Unity pastors *and part-time Unity Pastors as defined by the Synodical Committee* with special emphasis given to the anticipated length of service in the Unity." (Attachment XXVII)

**MOTION** by Arnold Cuba to accept the amendment to Article XX. Sec. A.1. as read.

**SECOND** by Bill Hickman.

Discussion on anticipated length of time of pastors.

**\*MOTION TO AMEND** by Arnold Cuba to delete "with special emphasis given to the anticipated length of service in the Unity". It would now read: "A retirement program for full-time Unity Pastors *and part-time Unity Pastors as defined by the Synodical Committee* ~~with special emphasis given to the anticipated length of service in the Unity.~~"

**SECOND** by Bill Hickman. DISCUSSION.

The amendment to the motion passed unanimously.

**VOTE FOR THE AMENDED MOTION** passes unanimously.

**\*MOTION** by the Administrative Assistant Committee:

To approve development of an executive assistant position to serve the executive committee of the Unity. The executive committee shall develop the job description by the Fall 2016 Synodical Committee meeting. The executive committee has the authority to fill the position. This position will be non-voting, part time and pay \$400 per month. (Attachment XXVIII)

**SECOND** by Kim Dillard.

Discussion. The job description could be developed before the Fall 2016 meeting.

Passes unanimously.

**MOTION** by the Board of Christian Education Committee:

To have the Synodical Committee appoint a team of three (3) Unity Pastors to review the catechism and make recommendations regarding revisions / updates as they deem appropriate to the Synodical Committee for further action if any is required. (Attachment XXIX)

**SECOND** by J. T. Grounds

Discussion.

**MOTION TO AMEND** by Bill Hickman to add after 'action' "by the 2017 convention" and delete "if any is required".

**SECOND** by Albert Surovik

The amendment to the motion passes unanimously.

**VOTE FOR THE AMENDED MOTION.**

Passes unanimously.

**MOTION** by the Foreign Mission Committee:

The Foreign Mission Committee moves that the Unity of the Brethren contribute financially to the Moravian Board of World Missions with the amount and funding source to be determined by the Synodical Committee. (Attachment XXX)

**SECOND** by Rev Lawrence Junek. Discussion. Passes unanimously.

**MOTION** by the Board of Christian Education Committee:

To have the Synodical Committee encourage each congregation to develop a policy and procedures manual outlining ways to protect the safety of children participating in congregational Unity activities. Each congregation's insurance carrier may provide resources to complete such a policy. (Attachment XXXI)

SECOND by Pastor Tim Chaplin.

Discussion. Wall Brethren already has a policy in place to handle this.

**MOTION TO AMEND** by Rev Heckman to change the word "encourage" to "require".

Second by Rev Kay Polasek.

The amendment to the motion passes.

**VOTE FOR THE AMENDED MOTION:**

Passes unanimously.

**MOTION** by Mark Olsen, Hus School Encampment Chair:

To have the Unity appoint a five (5) person committee to identify appropriate improvements to the HUS Encampment and identify / procure necessary funding to accomplish the recommended improvements. (Attachment XXXII)

Second by Bro Junek.

Discussion. Mark Olsen explained what the motion is about and how he would like to have more Unity involvement in a project of this scope and size, which could cost \$500,000.00 to one million dollars and upwards. This is not a question on if improvements need to be made but when. A report was found from the 2013 Convention Hus School Committee that mentioned a previous survey done of the camp to begin discussion of potential improvements. James read the 5 recommendations that came from this committee (Attachment XXXIII).

**MOTION** by Bro Junek to give Dawn Marie Baletka speaking privileges.

Second by Jon Farrow. Passes. Dawn spoke about the Hus Encampment. More discussion.

Mark Olsen withdrew his motion but was satisfied that there was discussion on this subject.

Bro Jim Heckman gave the prayer before the supper of Beef and Chicken Fajitas.

**Evening Celebration:** Song of Praise "The Victory Dance"

Thanks was extended to Nelsonville Brethren for hosting the convention and the volunteers were recognized. Trish Groseclose, wife of Bro Mike thanked everyone for coming and gave thanks to the Nelsonville church members who put in tons of hours in preparation for the convention.

Carolyn Groseclose gave an update on her and Bro Mike's dad, Charles Groseclose.

Presentation – Jan Hus Video "Truth Prevails"

**MOTION** by Dorothy Hinson to split the offering 50/50 between Nelsonville and the UOB.

Second by Roy Janek. Motion passes.

The amendments to the By-laws and any financial decisions will go to all the churches for a referendum vote. The results will then be canvassed at the Fall meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

### **Sunday, July 12, 2015 (at Wesley):**

Everyone gathered at Wesley Brethren Church for the closing service of the convention. The service was held outdoors under a big tent set up next to the church that was built in 1866, the

oldest Brethren Church in North America. James Marek gave a prayer before the devotional, which was given by Jimmy Pokorny on Jan Hus. Jimmy urged everyone to remember Jan Hus – his legacy lives on in each and every one of us.

Marek and Rev Mike Groseclose welcomed everyone to the worship service. Bro Mike proclaimed the event a family reunion. Wesley was celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization of the Wesley congregation (1864-2014). The pastors who had served at Wesley were given time to reflect on their ministries at the church: Rev Nello Strickland (1998-2002), Rev James Hejl (1981-1985) and Rev Michael Groseclose (2004-present). Bro Jimmy extended greetings from Rev Gordon and Pat Hejl who were unable to attend. Bro Gordon served at Wesley from 1970-1982. Others serving at Wesley but unable to attend were Rev Albert Michalik (1965-1969) and Rev Milton Maly (1986-1998).

Recognition was given to the oldest member in attendance, Miss Sylvia Vavra (99) who is a member of Houston Brethren and has family ties to Wesley. The pianist was Brenda Garrett. Rev Tommy Tallas delivered the message entitled “Playing Right Field in God’s Kingdom” with text taken from John 15:5 which was the Convention Text: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” and John 15:16. Bro Tommy said “the Lord gives us opportunity to reach out and touch someone so fruit can be born. We [the Brethren church] suffer from an identity crises. If we die, it won’t be on the vine – it will be a job well done. There are a lot of things that can steal our song. We are God’s chosen people – we are the Unity of the Brethren!” A video was shown with the song “Right Field” played by Peter, Paul and Mary. Bro Tommy explained that sometimes “we think we are in right field – no one knows we are here. We’re playing right field in God’s kingdom – get in the game!”

Rev Hejl led the invitation to Holy Communion which was administered by Groseclose, Hejl, Tallas and Rev Lawrence Junek. Special music was presented by former students of Hus School in the singing of “Hoj Verni v Boj” in Czech directed by Tallas and accompanied by pianist Donna Tallas.

After the service, everyone enjoyed a BBQ brisket and sausage lunch served under the pavilion. Approximately 200 people were in attendance including ten pastors: Groseclose, J. Hejl, Strickland, Tallas, Junek, Rev Jim Heckman, Rev Dr. Larry Koslovsky, Rev Joseph Polasek, Rev Kay Polasek and Rev Larry Zabcik. Several churches had canceled their services so their members could attend this memorable worship service. The year 2015 also marks the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Czech Protestant Preaching held in Texas at Ross Prairie in the homes of the Czech-Moravian Brethren settlers (near Fayetteville Brethren Church).

**Respectfully submitted,**

Liz Ripple, Secretary, 2011-2015

**Unity of the Brethren**

**\*Note:** Motions in **RED** will go on to congregations for referendum decision.