

Church of God in Michigan
Minutes from the 103rd General Assembly Annual Meeting
Friday November 10-2023
Session 1

- 9:00am Welcome: State Pastor Mark Richardson, opened the 103rd General Assembly.

Worship: Sarah Scharbrough McLaughlin and team led the assembly in worship.

Message: State Pastor Mark Richardson delivered the message from Hebrews 12:1-4 from the New Living Testament, "Running the Race with Patience and Persistence."

Worship: Sarah Scharbrough and team.

Benediction: State Pastor Mark Richardson.
- 10:45am Pastor's wives tea with Rev. Flynn and Pastor's Husband coffee with Rev. Sheppard.
- 10:50am The Vice Chair Charles Nebus, Covering for the Chair Tad Mellish, called the first session/meeting to order.

Special thanks to Sarah Scharbrough and State Pastor Mark for a great worship and message.
- 10:51am Vice Chair prayed over the meeting and events.
- 10:52am The vice Chair, presented the agenda and program booklet for all the activities and reports found in the booklet for 2023 Annual Meeting.
- 10:53am The vice Chair read the vision and mission statements found on the back page of our booklet.

The vice Chair also gave special thanks to Jeannette Flynn, and Dr. Horace Sheppard Jr. to Sarah Scharbrough and her family, to Jake Seaton and his team in the sound, and to Becky and Goldie in the State office.
- 10:56am The vice Chair presented to the membership the New Pastorates and Associates found on page 7 & 8 of our booklet with recognition.
- 10:57am The vice Chair read the statement of voting membership found on page 4 of the booklet, according to Article IV of the by-laws, and that a quorum was present and achieved.

The vice chair brought attention to the previous minutes, and the minutes from pages 9-13 of the 102nd General Assembly were accounted for, accepted and certified.

10:58am The vice Chair, called the State Pastor Mark Richardson to the podium.

Mark Richardson gave special thanks to the following people:

- Jim O'Bold and Rev. Mark Senseman from Servant Solutions
- Jim Walters for Vision Missions
- Rev. Lynnette Gillett for St. Louis Camp work.
- Scot Bale from Warner Camp.
- Dick and Ken Forsman and the Michigan Singers.
- Nathan Willowby who is the Dean of Anderson Seminary.
- Richard Fields in the Helping Hands in Motion.
- Jay and Laura Laffoon and the Marriage Seminars
- Pauline Neal from the Church of God registrations, with the hopes of finishing and completing 100% registration of our churches.
- Steve Starks Pastor of the First Church of God in South Haven for the work on teaching about End Times.

11:05am State Pastor Mark Richardson shared 4 things to accomplish and celebrate for 2024 and beyond;

- That we have a diverse contingency, and yet there is still a real need to plant a church in the upper north region.
- The Church of God in Michigan has a rich history.
- This is the 103rd General Assembly in Michigan and going strong.
- In 2024 we will celebrate 100 years of youth ministry for the state.

Also Mark shared that in 2022 that we had to close a church, and this was a tough lesson.

The Church of God had at one time 2200 churches and now we have roughly 1900 congregations, so the number is reducing.

Mark Shared that part of the joy is celebrating with churches like Crystal Springs Church of God in Benton Harbor and their 100 year Anniversary celebration. Mark apologized for missing the recent Hymn Sing Celebration yet, we have much to celebrate.

Mark shared about the return on investment and his prayer is that we as a body with intentionally and passionately exalt Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

11:12am State Pastor Mark Richardson reviewed his State Pastor's Report found on page 14 & 15 with a look back at 2023.

- Mark shared that he is still working on his health and time management, which he is doing better, but still is a work in progress and he is thankful for all the prayers.
- On Sept 16th they celebrated one year with Rev. Mark and Heather Robb and the connect church.
- Celebrated the Sanford Cultivate Coffee shop and Eagle Ridge Church.
- Mark also shared another success in the Eau Claire Satellite Church along with the Bethlehem Temple Church.
- The Anchor Church in Berrien County with their Community work. Building a separate building to house supplies and over 1000 people served in their community over the last two quarters.
- A testament to the wonderful things happening in the State.
- Mark Shared that we have six new Pastors in the State, where we originally had 12 open positions for pastors, we now have 3 open slots.
- Mark shared information regarding the Winter Youth Retreat.
- The 360 conference was a success with nearly 400 people attending.
- Mark shared about the Academy of Servant leadership with the first session featuring- Karl Vaters and the second session featuring Bob Moss.
- Mark shared that the MSLI will be at New Creation Church in March of 2024
- Mark also talked about the many connections events and the excitement available to all.

State Pastor Mark, bridged into sharing about the Midwest Multiplication Initiative, which is a joint initiative between Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana.

Mark shared about the 120 people involved in the support of the MMI, who participated in the Mission 120, with 26 of those in Michigan.

Mark turned our attention to the Launch 32- and the excitement surrounding the 32 new expressions of the church in all four states over the next five years. We have already launched two this year.

Mark talked about the Midwest Hispanic Church Planting Initiative between Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Western PA- and the work of the Gomez family as consultants working with the five states to plant Hispanic Congregations.

Mark focused on how 15 couples from 5 states with 4 in Michigan are part of the Midwest Hispanic Planting Initiative, and how the Orchard View Church of God in Grand Rapids has made space available for a Hispanic Church Plant in 2024.

Mark talked about the planting of a church in Flint also, as West Court Street Church of God has agreed to host a Hispanic congregation in the future.

Mark then shared the excitement over 4 people ready for ordination who will be presented to the assembly later in the meeting.

11:25am

Mark turned our attention to the 2024 vision for the State Offices, where there is a specific need for a part time office staff to assist in the ongoing work, and his vision for an Associate State Pastor. The specific needs are designed to keep the functions of the State office running without everything left in the hands of one person, and then the Associate State Pastor to help Mark extend the reach of the State office to congregations across the state.

Mark shared about the Academy of Servant Leadership and upcoming Zoom meeting on February 3, and the May and Sept. meetings would be in person.

Mark shared about the 7 Theological Statements which Joshua Brandt would elaborate about later, with the working particulars.

Mark share about some of the resources to the Ministers; including the Mental Health and Counseling through the Ministry to Ministers program which the State office would cover the \$120.00 co-pay of the sessions, up to 12 sessions. Mark also shared about the Full Strength Network with coaches and counselors.

Mark shared about the opportunities to develop and train coaches for the Pastors and the State office is looking for those who would desire to get involved.

Mark shared about Mission Insight, where for the Church of God in Michigan investing \$500.00 all of our churches can utilize the demographic studies to help target and develop missions and ministry with a specific focused core group.

Mark shared about Retreats, including those for Women, MALU, and the Wesleyan Retreats.

Mark turned his attention to the Ministry for the Youth.

- No State Youth Convention next fall.
- There will still be the IYC and NIYC.
- The team is working on restructure and providing resources, instead of just having retreats, where the emphasis has been too many in one year.
- The idea is to develop Youth and a focus on the developing potential new Pastors for those sensing the call into ministry.
- The state is looking for Youth and what is the plan to develop the future leaders.
- Trellis is a development plan or program for the youth to answer the call to ministry.

Mark also shared about Financial Literacy-Outreach Ministry to the churches in the State and that we are still seeking funding for this program.

11:40am

Mark talked more about the staffing needs and the visual graphics to share with the state assembly, of the current status, the 2024 status, and the future state. The visual graphics provided details on the breakdown of job duties along with functions and roles with each position.

11:44am Budget and Finance Reports

Mark shared the budget report found on page 16 and following of our Booklets.

- Mt. Pleasant church land contract sale finally closed.
- We are currently \$400,000.00 above the budget
- Some of the expenditures included supplemented the many events throughout the year.
- Final results will come later, but we are on track to be under budget.
- The roof work on the state office came in \$20K under budget.
- The parking lot work was only \$8K and is working okay so far.
- 2024 the plans are to replace the Glass works on the offices to make a more secure entryway.
- Nothing stands out at this point
- The new positions such as the State Associate Pastor will generate expenses due to technology cost and supplies.
- Please review the rest of the budget provided in the booklet and let Mark know of any questions or concerns that you might have.

11:51am Mark turned the meeting back over the Vice Chair Charles Nebus.

11:52am Vice Chair Charles Nebus introduced two videos from Cleveland Howell III, and Rachel Green, both candidates for ordination from page 25.

12:00am Charles Nebus gave a special thanks to those completing terms of service found on page 28 with a round of applause.

12:01am Charles Nebus introduced the videos for Jesse Hargett and Alexander Young from page 25 the final two ministers for ordination.

12:07am Charles Nebus acknowledged all the candidates.

12:08am Charles Nebus turned the meeting over the Mike Potter the Chair of the Business Committee.

Mike Potter shared the presentation of the Ballots passed out to the General Assembly. Mike asked the voting members of the General Assembly to please mark their ballots and turned them into the tellers for counting. It was noted that prior to the General Assembly Meeting some of the ballots were prepared via electronically. If anyone has reservations please mark the ballots accordingly and with reasons.

Mike Potter turned the meeting back over to Charles Nebus the Vice Chair.

12:10am, Charles Nebus introduced two videos, one about the MSLI and the other regarding the Winter Youth Retreat.

12:13am Charles Nebus acknowledged Servant Solutions, Reverend Jim O'Bold, and Mark Senseman for sponsoring the lunch today at the General Assembly.

Charles Nebus prayed over the lunch.

12:14am The 103rd General Assembly Meeting is adjourned until Saturday November 11th at 8:30am.

General Assembly Annual Meeting-Second Session

8:33am Vice Chair Charles Nebus called the second session of the 103rd General Assembly to order.

8:34am Charles Nebus opened with a word of prayer.

8:35am Charles Nebus led the assembly in a special tribute to the Veterans on this Veterans Day Celebration, asking the veterans both past, present along with anyone currently serving and anyone who has family in active service, to stand and be acknowledged. Chuck also offered a moment of prayer and a moment of silence for those who have given their lives and the families left behind.

8:36am Charles Nebus announced that all of the candidates on the ballot have been fully ratified.

8:37am Charles Nebus turned the meeting over to Jerry Lyon the Church Health for his report. Jerry asked the assembly to review his report on page 33

- Jerry shared his excitement regarding the 360 conference, and this is his fifth year of working with the conference. Jerry wanted to recognize those helping on the team, with 2024 goal of 500 in attendance;
 1. Mark Staton II.
 2. Cameron Kreager.
 3. Rob Trammel.
 4. Erin Glezman.
 5. April Crump.
 6. Sharon Richardson.
 7. Debb Lyon.
- Save the date and mark the calendar with the special flyer passed out the assembly.
- Theme is King Jesus taken from Daniel 7:14b, King of Kings Jesus

8:47am Rev. Jerry Lyon turned the meeting over to Mark and Heather Robb to share about their good news story.

Mark and Heather shared about the Big Rapids story, along with the 1 year anniversary at Connect, and the offer to help fund the church plant to keep the church plants alive and vibrant with funding and prayer.

8:49am Rev. Jerry Lyon shared information about the National Discipleship forum and there will be more information to come about the forum.

Charles Nebus introduced Mike Potter the Business Committee Chair.

8:51 am Mike Potter shared about the budget ballot and asks the General Assembly to please mark your ballots, folding once and turn them into the tellers.

8:54am Charles Nebus turned the meeting over to the State Pastor Mark Richardson.

Mark turned the General Assemblies attention to pages 38 & 39 of the General Assemblies package to share about recognitions.

Mark shared about the importance of the Lifetime and Outstanding recognitions, along with 15 years at the same congregations, 25 years in Michigan, and the partnership with Servant Solutions who provided a \$200.00 gift card to each.

Page 38, Mark shared about Mary Hirakis and the Lifetime Achievement Award along with her work, not only at North Avenue COG, but within the COG in Michigan.

Page 38 Revs. Shelton and Chariese Matthews for the Lifetime Achievement Award for over 34 years at South Side COG Pontiac, and over 40 years in the State.

Mark shared 3 outstanding service Awards.

1. Rev. Dr. Julian Guzman for his work on Raising Hispanic Ministry and the work in Grand Rapids.
2. Rev. Dale Turner and her work at Redford Lighthouse Community Church.
3. Rev. Julie Wiseman and her work at Eagle Ridge and the Mission work in Uganda.

Mark now shared about those who have served 15 years at one congregation.

1. Rev. Greg Prather at Washington Ave. Church.
2. Rev. William Greiner at Eagle Ridge Church.
3. Rev. David Perry at Edgewood Church in Ithaca.
4. Rev. Stephen Burrow at Cornerstone Church in Otsego.
5. Rev. Ben Kreider at Alma Church of God.

State Pastor now shared those who served 25 years in Michigan.

1. Rev. Dale Turner at Lighthouse Community Church of God in Redford.
2. Rev. Andy Hannich at the Church of God St. Joseph.

9:16am With the technical issues resolved with the videos, Charles Nebus introduced the video concerning the 360 conferences.

- 9:17am Charles Nebus turned out attention to the video regarding the Music and Worship Coaching Initiative and Team Power Coaching.
- 9:19am Charles Nebus announced the passing and overwhelming approval of the 2024 budget from the General Assembly.
- 9:20am Charles Nebus turned the meeting over to Joshua Brandt, the Chair of the Credentials Committee for his report found on page 24 of the Assembly Package.

Joshua shared the recognition and Tribute to Pastors we have lost over the last year.

1. Dr. Wayne Warner.
2. Rev. Henry V. Schwartz.
3. Rev. Raymond Abbey.
4. Rev. Gerald St. Cin.

Joshua Called for the Assembly to Pause and remember, followed with a prayer.

Joshua brought recognition to the team for their dedication and work,

1. Terry Bernard
2. Bob Confer.
3. Chariese Matthews.
4. Ron Nuckles.
5. J.J. Perry.
6. Emily Sparks.
7. Mark Richardson, State Pastor.

Joshua shared that we have 27 leaders in the Credentials Process with 4 moving on to ordination.

Joshua shared the importance of moving from 16 theological statements to 7 Theological Commitments, and some would call this less work, but this is actually their work, and not less but focused work.

Joshua shared about the work of Women in leadership Advocate

The goal is not perfection, but better.

He celebrated the 4 leaders moving on to ordination;

1. Rachel Green.

2. Jesse Hargett.
3. Cleveland Howell III.
4. Alexander Young.

Joshua Brandt invited all the candidates to the front of the General Assembly, along with family, church members and leaders to surround and pray with the candidates, then Joshua Brandt closed with Prayer

- 9:48am Charles Nebus turned the meeting over to our State Pastor Mark Richardson who shared applause for the candidates.
- Mark shared the recognition of the Hispanic Church Plant with the General Assembly, asking Jose and Patricia Gomez, the Hispanic Planting Consultants to stand.
- 9:49am State Pastor Mark Richardson shared that the MALU from the greater Detroit area has been going strong since 2018, with purpose, and opportunities to prepare for service, along with an upcoming Mass Revival in 2024, and finally Charles Nebus introduced the video from MALU.
- 9:54am Charles Nebus recognized the General Assembly Program Committee members and asked the Assembly to give them a round of applause for their great work.
- Charles Nebus introduced the new incoming Vice Chair Dale Turner who closed the 103rd General Assembly with a word of prayer.
- 9:56am Charles Nebus Formally called for a close to the 103rd General Assembly
- All agreed and the Assembly was closed.

Respectfully submitted:

James Matt

Minute proof readers: Melissa Daniel, Sheila Granger, and David Mulherin

