



March 4, 2021

Dear Central Conference Churches,

Warm greetings on behalf of the Executive Board of the Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church!

It is my great pleasure to invite each of our churches to the Central Conference 2021 Virtual Gathering to be held on Saturday, April 24, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm CDT.

Like last year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related safety concerns, regrettably, we will not be meeting in person this year for our Celebration and the respective Annual Meetings of the Central Conference and Harbor Point Ministries (HPM). Being a relational people, we mourn the loss of spending time together in the same physical place to celebrate, worship and do the work of the Lord. But we do hope that one silver lining of a virtual gathering is that, with the reduction of administrative logistics and costs required to host and attend an in-person event, this year's gathering will be more accessible and allow greater participation across the Conference.

As there are some important details and considerations regarding the gathering, we greatly appreciate your reading through to the end of this letter and sharing the information with your leadership teams and congregation, as appropriate.

Changes to Voting

Regarding voting this year to elect board members and officers and for other time-sensitive matters, per Article VII. Section 7.4.m. of the bylaws of the Central Conference, "Delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Central Conference must be physically present at the Annual Meeting of the Central Conference in order to participate." Due to this stipulation, as well as a similar provision in the HPM bylaws, we are once again having to postpone a formal Annual Meeting and official voting by the delegates. So, as we did in 2020, the Executive Board of the Central Conference and the Board of HPM will vote to approve board members, officers and other matters on a pro tem (for the time being) basis until the next time we are able to hold the Annual Meeting in person.

We recognize this is far from ideal, and it is not our preference. Our intention was certainly not that the "for the time being" decisions and approvals made by the Central Conference Executive Board and HPM Board in 2020 would have to hold for more than one year's time. But after extensive internal discussion and consultation with our advisors, this is our most viable option. We considered various methods of conducting the vote by delegates to a virtual gathering, but in the end, they were not adequately robust to meet the requirements laid out by our constitution and bylaws.

So, as the bodies elected to serve as the agents of the Central Conference when our respective Annual Meetings are not in session, the Executive Board of the Central Conference and Board of HPM humbly ask for your trust, confidence and understanding again this year. And we, in turn, commit to submitting to and honoring the Lord and serving in the best interest of the Conference, as he leads and directs.

April 24th Virtual Gathering Process and Agenda

Even under these restrictive circumstances, we would like to incorporate some of the collaborative and interactive experience of meeting in person. While we cannot hold an official vote, we will invite delegates to affirm or deny the items that are up for subsequent approval by the Central Conference Executive Board and HPM Board during our gathering. This will be conducted via the online polling feature in Zoom. While this action by the delegates is not an official vote, we hope in this way to give some voice to the delegates. And, if there should be some new information presented through this process, the Central Conference Executive Board and HPM Board will take this into consideration in our review and approval of these items.

More details to follow, but our tentative agenda is below:

- a. Central Conference Ministerial Association 2021 Virtual Gathering
- b. Central Conference 2021 Virtual Gathering, Part 1
- c. Break for Lunch
- d. Harbor Point Ministries 2021 Virtual Gathering
- e. Central Conference 2021 Virtual Gathering, Part 2

The items to be presented for affirmation to the delegates and subsequent approval by the Central Conference Executive Board (and HPM Board, in brackets), until the next in-person Annual Meeting, include:

- a. Approval of the 2019 Central Conference Annual Meeting Minutes
- b. Election of officers and elected members to the Central Conference Executive Board [and election of elected members to the HPM Board]
- c. Election of the superintendent of the Central Conference to a second term (please see the included notice regarding the nomination of Rev. Dr. H. Danny Martinez for a second term as superintendent of the Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church)
- d. Approval of the 2021 Revised Budget and 2022 Budget Proposal
- e. Recommendation on Central Conference churches to be added or removed from the ECC roster of churches
- f. Approval of Central Conference delegates to the 2021 ECC Annual Meeting

Virtual Gathering Delegates and Credentialing

- While not an official vote, we see affirmation by the delegates as an expression of the voice of the Annual Meeting. So we request that your delegate/s be selected by your church per your standard practice. And we ask they be credentialed by submitting the enclosed credentialing form, due back to the Central Conference office no later than April 12, 2021.
- Only credentialed delegates will be provided with the link to the Virtual Gathering via Zoom. Other participants will be invited to join via another social media platform so that they can view the meeting but will not be able to participate in the polling. Specific details for the items to be presented in the poll will be part of the Virtual Gathering notebook that will be sent to delegates on / around March 22.
- For your reference, per the Bylaws of the Central Conference:

- The number of delegates for your church is based on the number of members in your congregation. Member congregations shall be entitled to representation as follows:

No. of Congregation Members	No. of Delegates
Up to 99	2
100 to 224	3
225 to 449	4
450 to 699	5
700 to 999	6
1000 or more	7

- Each permanent and standing commission of the Central Conference shall be entitled to one delegate.
- Each association recognized by the Annual Meeting of the Central Conference shall be entitled to one delegate.
- Each corporation or institution affiliated with the Central Conference and recognized by the Annual Meeting of the Central Conference shall be entitled to one delegate.
- Each delegate to an Annual Meeting of the Central Conference shall be a member of a member congregation of the Central Conference. No delegate may represent more than one entity.

ECC Gather 2021

The Evangelical Covenant Church’s Gather 2021, which includes the 135th Annual Meeting, will be held on June 23rd through the 26th as a virtual event, due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. As the 2020 Annual Meeting was canceled because of the pandemic, an extra day has been added to the schedule in June to address unfinished business from last year. The Service of Ordination, Commissioning and Consecration will be live cast the evening of June 26th.

Thank you very much for reading through this letter and for your flexibility, understanding and grace as we try to navigate these unusual times.

Our prayers continue to be with you, your families and your congregations, and we hope to see you at this year’s Central Conference 2021 Virtual Gathering!

Thank you very much and God bless,



Rebecca C. Nakamura
Chair, Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church

Enclosures: Announcement of nomination of Rev. Dr. H. Danny Martinez for second term as superintendent, CCECC; CCECC Delegate Credentials Form; and instructions for participating in the CCECC Virtual Gathering 2021.