



*A conscious dependence on the  
Holy Spirit*

# 134<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH  
JUNE 27-29, 2019 Omaha, Nebraska

## **CANDIDATES' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

This folder contains biographical information and a personal statement for each candidate on the 2019 ballot.

## Agenda Item 13.

# CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

## Evangelical Covenant Church Annual Meeting 2019

### General Information Regarding Biographies:

- An asterisk ( \* ) before a name indicates incumbent.
- All information was provided by the candidate.
- Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.
- “Experience” indicates past and present activities.
- Guide to abbreviations:
  - CBC = Covenant Bible College
  - CHET = Centro Hispano de Estudios Teológicos
  - CHIC = Covenant High in Christ
  - CMB = Covenant Ministries of Benevolence
  - MHIPE = Ministerios Hispanos de la Iglesia del Pacto Evangélico
  - NPU = North Park University
  - NPTS = North Park Theological Seminary

### Board of Nominations Process for Recommendation of Candidates for Denominational Boards:

- Candidates are recommended and gathered from: Conference Annual Meetings, Conference Boards, Superintendents, local churches (pastors and laypersons), ECC Ethnic Associations, Council of Administrators, and via ECC Website.
- Candidate recommendations are reviewed and discussed by Board of Nominations during board meetings.
- Candidates recommendations are reviewed and approved by President of the ECC and Executive Minister of the Ordered Ministry.
- Local church pastors are contacted for reference checks for layperson candidate recommendations.
- Superintendents are contacted for reference checks for credentialed candidate recommendations.
- Candidates are contacted after all approvals and reference checks are completed to request consideration for denominational board ballot.

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

- One candidate needed for each position. -

#### **(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Albert Armstead**, member of Bayside Midtown Covenant Church, Sacramento CA. Experience: Founder and CEO of my company, To The Hoop Basketball Services. For the past thirty years my responsibilities have included training, marketing, developing, and basketball consulting. I have worked with over 200 NBA players and countless, high school, college, and overseas players as well as coaches and teams.

*Personal Statement: While I grew up in church and while there are a long line of preachers and pastors in my family's lineage, I didn't fully commit my life to the Lord until I was in college. It was at that time that I understood*

*the difference between religion and relationship. I realized that salvation wasn't based upon works, who I knew, my family history, or anything other than what Christ had done for me personally. It was only through the saving work of the cross that my sins were paid for and forgiven. It was at this point that I began to form an intimate and personal relationship with God through the ups and downs and high and lows of my life.*

#### **(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Byron Kaopuiki**, member of Cascade View Covenant Church, Vancouver, WA. Retired. Experience: 30+ years of engineering, design, manufacturing, and technical publications for underground mining heavy equipment followed by working 13 years in printing and publishing in a K-12 school district. I currently serve as chairman of the Cascade View Covenant Church (CVCC) leadership team and am in the middle of my second 6-year term. I am also the ministry leader of our "Aloha Team" (church greeters) and have responsibilities for Hospitality, Ushers, monthly communion service preparations, and any other special services we may have.

*Personal Statement: “As a child, I was raised in the Catholic Church. I never understood about a personal relationship with Jesus until I was 25 yrs. Old, when I accepted Christ as my Savior. In my 40+ years as a born-again Christian, I have experienced Christ's love and many blessings towards me and my family. I am by no means a Bible scholar, but my faith is strong.”*

#### **(2-year term; elect 1)**

**Bryan Murphy**, lead pastor of South Bay Community Covenant Church, Freemont, CA. Experience: 10 years full-time ministry experience. Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising and training in church revitalization. Serve on the PSWC Pastoral Care Commission and as the campus chaplain for James Logan High School.

*Personal Statement: “Growing up in a strict Christian household and attending college in the Midwest, my fundamental beliefs about God/Christ were not really challenged until I moved to California in my early 20s. By this time, I had fallen away from my Christian roots and was challenged by the exposure to so many people with such a varied understanding of God (e.g. Buddhist, Muslims, etc.). I read up on the various religions and examined a few but never really felt they connected me to God. Then one day, due the death of my girlfriend's grandmother, I attended a Christian church service. God ignited a passion for His Word in me that day. Within a year, I had read the Bible cover to cover and was hungry for the truth revealed in the Bible. Several months after the initial church service, the pastor delivered a message in which he described Jesus as God extending His hand of love*

and friendship. At that moment, I understood what it meant to accept salvation and have a personal relationship with God.”

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**(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Lisa Olson**, member of Catalyst Covenant Church, St. Paul, MN. **Experience:** As Youth Director at Catalyst, duties have included: training and development, overseeing volunteers, crafting and integrating theologically appropriate curriculum. At Crown College, worked in Student Development and served as a Resident Advisor. Served as Intersivity Christian Fellowship campus staff at the University of Rhode Island.

*Personal Statement: “My faith in Jesus Christ is the anchor of my life. I am in awe of his surpassing, sacrificial love and grateful for his ongoing pursuit of me. His hope and promises steady my heart with all that I am and all that I do. My passion is to live each day intentionally serving God fueled by his unending well of resources available to me.”*

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**(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Karen Almquist Stein**, member of Crossroads Covenant Church, Greeley, CO. **Experience:** ECC Financial Coach (with Don Meyer and Dan Pietrzyk) since 2018. 2012-2015 CHET Executive Board. Campaign - Dollars for Discipling Hillside Covenant Church, Walnut Creek Executive Pastor Search Committee, Crossroads Covenant Church Pastoral Search Committee. Church Council and Financial Secretary at Crossroads Covenant Church, Concord, CA. Designed and built a prayer garden there in 2001. Taught Confirmation for three years. Taught twos and threes classes for many years, assisted in VBS.

*Personal Statement: “I grew up in a Covenant home, at least the fourth generation of Covenant families. I don't remember ever not knowing Jesus. I was baptized as an infant and confirmed at Newport Covenant Church in Bellevue, WA. That child's faith became strengthened as my own personal faith as a camper at Covenant Beach in Washington. God's plan in scripture reveals his faithfulness to generation after generation, so we raised our daughters to love and serve Him. They continue teaching the next generation, our grandchildren.”*

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**(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Valerie Weyand**, member of Centennial Covenant Church of Littleton, CO. **Experience:** Discernment Team - a three year process of discerning direction for the church; Pastoral Design Team - member of team reviewing pastoral staff needs and direction for church hiring/re-design of positions; Governance Design Team - chair of team reviewing governance and proposing changes to governance aspects of church; Constitution and Bylaws Sabbatical Team - member of team developing Sabbatical Policy for the church; Adult Formation

Team - member, co-leader of Companions in Christ for 2 years; Sign Language Interpreter - member of the Interpreter Team; ECC Annual Meeting Delegate.

*Personal Statement: “I have put my trust in Jesus Christ for my personal salvation and continually seek to become more like Jesus in all aspects of my life, by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

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**BOARD OF THE ORDERED MINISTRY**

- One candidate needed for each position. -

**(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Steve Dawson**, member of Grace Evangelical Covenant Church, Chicago, IL. Retired. **Experience:** Worked for National Covenant Properties and the ECC, worked extensively with church planting, church revitalization, and with church building projects. Each of those had intense and varied pressures on clergy serving the congregations I sought to serve. Also served on Front Range Committee (Colorado) and as church Building Committee Chair and Capital Fund Drive Chair.

*Personal Statement: “I accepted Jesus Christ as personal savior in 1980 following a year of searching for reconnection to God after witnessing a bank robbery. That step of accepting salvation was the a result of the Gospel becoming real and relevant once I found Arvada Covenant Church where it was preached (perhaps I was just ready to hear finally). Having never looked back at that date, I have been richly blessed to have Godly men and women surround me over the past 40 years, and I cherish the seasons of laboring on behalf of the ECC for the last 30.”*

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**(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Samuel Williams**, member of Avenue Community Covenant Church. Senior Pastor. **Experience:** Preaching, teaching, pastoral care, pastoral counseling, leadership training, small group ministry. Teaching Pastor, Avenue Community Church, Toronto (2011-2016); Associate Pastor, Bridgeway Church, Toronto (2003-2010); Mission Worker, Christian Foundation for the Blind-India (1999-2000). Regularly participated in CAPA (Covenant Asian Pastors Association) Midwinter gatherings. Canadian Conference leadership board from 2013-2016. Co-founder and leadership team of "fluid" a yearly Ecumenical Young Adults Gathering. Fluid exists to join God's movement of awakening young adults to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and inspire them to live passionately and purposefully for him in whatever context their lives flow into. For the last six years, on the first Saturday of March, we have gathered 1000-1500 young adults together to collectively hear God's call, join His movement, be the change in the very places we reside. [www.fluidgathering.com](http://www.fluidgathering.com). Been involved in vocational Christian ministry since 1999. Served in associate pastoral roles since 2001 in Canada and served as president of my seminary student council in 2002-2003.

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*Personal Statement: "As a Christian counselor and spiritual care provider in training, I find that my basis for counseling is my Judeo-Christian understanding of who God is and what it means for me to be in relationship with him and others. It is clear that the priority of relationships in God's plan is seen from the very beginning of the Scriptures. How a person understands God significantly impacts the way the person relates to God, self, others, and the world. It gives me great joy to partner with Christ in His reconciling, restorative and healing work."*

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### BOARD OF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- One candidate needed for each position. -

#### **(2-year term; elect 1)**

**R. Hugh Magill**, member of Winnetka Covenant Church, Winnetka, IL. Executive Vice Chairman of the Northern Trust Company. Experience: Trustee of the Covenant Board of Pensions and Benefits, and serves on the boards of the Block Museum of Art, The Chicago Sunday Evening Club, and several foundations. Serves on the Editorial Board of Trusts & Estates magazine, has authored articles for Trusts & Estates, Trust & Investments, and Wealth magazines and the ACTEC Law Journal. In 2017, was inducted into the NAEPC Estate Planning Hall of Fame where he holds the designation of Accredited Estate Planner® (Distinguished). Hugh is an Eagle Scout and has served as a Scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America.

*Personal Statement: "I came to personal faith in Christ in 1981 and was discipled in my faith by a devoted minister in Minneapolis. I endeavor to walk by faith in all areas of my life."*

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#### **(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Richard Moore**, member of Evangelical Covenant Church, Sloan, IA. Pastor. Experience: Treasurer of Midwest Conference Ministerial Association; 4 years Chair of local ECC Cluster Group; 20+ years Church Planting Committee member and treasurer in Nebraska and Iowa. Head of Community Food Pantry. Chair of local Ministerial Association. Chair of Faith Committee for local NAACP. Outstanding Achievement award with Alzheimer's Association. Governor's Volunteer Award in Education. Iowa staff member of national tournaments of NAIA for basketball and volleyball. Chairperson of Professional Advisory Committee for ACPE Center of St. Luke's College, Sioux City.

*Personal Statement: "My faith in Jesus Christ continues to alter the way I live my life. On a regular basis, through time in prayer and reading God's word, I find areas that I am doing well in and areas that I need great amount of work in. Everything in my life is tied to my relationship with God through Christ Jesus. I strive to live my life in a way that is honoring to God."*

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#### **(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Dorean Reed**, member of New Zion Christian Fellowship Church, Dolton, IL. Experience: I have 30 years in the banking industry and a strong background in financial reconciliation. Worked closely with Lance Davis as his assistant until his recent appointment. Responsibilities included managing the day to day operations of the church building with three individuals reporting under my leadership, reconciling and reporting the financial condition of three entities (New Zion, BOOC, and Kinsmen), and maintaining confidentiality. Presently responsible to the Finance Committee for New Zion Christian Fellowship Covenant. Audited NPTS New Testament class at satellite location in Dolton. Also recently attended an African American Spirituality class for credit. It is my desire to complete the core 4 seminary classes at North Park. I'm a volunteer at the Joseph Storehouse food pantry in Dolton, IL where thousands of families are served yearly.

*Personal Statement: "I am overwhelmed by His love that has afforded me grace undeserved. I thank Him every day for His new mercies, and my desire to show His love to others grows stronger with each day."*

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### BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE

- One candidate needed for each position. -

#### **(6-year term; elect 1)**

**Tracy Hilts**, member of Faith Evangelical Covenant Church, Colorado Springs, CO. Chaplain, Pikes Peak Hospice Colorado Springs, CO. Experience: Hospice Chaplain: Provide spiritual guidance and emotional support by ministering to patients, families, and staff. Member and officer (vice-chair and chair) of the Executive Board of The Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church: Developed plans for meetings and retreats, lead the evaluation of the executive director and staff, and represented the conference at special events and annual meetings. Juvenile Probation Officer, Ramsey County (Minnesota): As one of the probation officers for an intensive supervision project, monitored clients and supported families as they fulfilled their legal obligations. In community settings and home visits, developed the ability to discern complex problems and deescalate situations effectively. Case Manager St. Paul YWCA Emergency Family Center: Advocated for women and children in crisis by accessing community resources to help clients manage their housing, employment, medical, legal, and personal affairs. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Certification through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.

*Personal Statement: "I was raised in a non-Christian home, but my mother sent me to church out of respect for her parents' beliefs. The closest church within walking distance of my home (thus I could attend without my family) was an Assemblies of God fellowship with strong Bible teaching and*

children’s programs. At age six, I heard the plan of salvation, knew it was right and was meant for me. After praying a salvation prayer I was at church virtually every time the doors were open. I truly do not remember my life without Christ being essential to me. I have tried to live my life with an unmasked desperation for Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

**(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Linda Schoonover**, member of Indian Orchard Covenant Church, Springfield MA. Physician. Experience: A practicing physician for 35 years, specializing in Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine. Served as a short-term Medical Missionary to Imeloko hospital in Congo from 1986-1988 and worked alongside my Zairean colleague in the hospital and clinic. During my time practicing in Chicago, I was Medical Director for Covenant Home for the Aging and had a large practice there and also treated patients at the Danish Home. On the staff of Baystate Wing Hospital in Palmer, MA, I served as Coordinator of Medicine from 2007-2016 and President of the Medical Staff from 2013-2016. Part of my responsibility as President was to sit on the Hospital Board. My experiences in health care to the elderly and underserved as well as past participation on the Covenant World Relief Commission and Hospital Board of Directors would contribute well to the mission of the Board of Benevolence.

*Personal Statement: “I was lucky to grow up in a Christian home and came to faith in Jesus as a young girl of 9. Over the years, my journey of faith had some ups and downs as I made it my own. I especially grew closer to Christ while on the mission field in Congo and as a mom helping my own children come to know Christ. I am comforted in knowing that God is always at my side, and I talk to him every day.”*

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY**

- One candidate needed for each position. -

**(5-year term; 1 elect 1)**

**Andrea Dennis**, member of First Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, MI. Physical Therapist Experience: I became familiar with North Park University through my experiences at First Covenant and Portage Lake Bible Camp. I’m a full-time physical therapist at a rehabilitation hospital and feel my experience in healthcare could be valuable to the North Park board as they continue to develop and grow their academic programs. Pediatric physical therapist: Clinical team leader managing a team of physical, occupational, and speech therapists as well as daily operations of the outpatient clinic. My current role allows me to serve patients while still participating in a management role in which I continue to gain leadership experience. Schroth Therapy C1 Certification:

Currently participating in Neurodevelopmental Training Certification Course (anticipated completion November 2019). Multiple volunteer experiences through Mary Free Bed Hospital including Bikes for the Rest of Us, West Michigan Miracle League, Halloween for the Rest of Us, Kids Hope USA.

*Personal Statement: “I was not introduced to Jesus until late elementary school, I accepted Jesus as my Savior in high school, and I was baptized as a senior in college. I strive to share the love of Jesus in my daily interactions with each and every patient I work with. My husband and I have chosen to raise our children in the Covenant church in which he was raised and where I currently serve in our children’s ministries program. I am thankful for a God who loves, forgives and is able to meet each of us where we are at in our faith journey.”*

**(1-year term; elect 1)**

**David Dwight**, member of Northbrook Covenant Church, Northbrook, IL. Retired. Experience: 37 years in ministries affiliated with Covenant Ministries of Benevolence—at Covenant Retirement Communities as a Campus Executive Director, VP of Operations and President/CEO. From 2002-2017 President/CEO of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence. Education in Social Work and Business. All of the boards associated with CMB include hospitals, senior care, and housing. Represented CMB on Covenant Executive Board and Council of Administrators. Central Conference Camp Board. Covenant Harbor Foundation Board. National Board/Commission—Leading Ages (housing and services for the aging) and Northbrook Rotary Northbrook Chamber of Commerce.

*Personal Statement: “I was blessed to grow up in a Christian family and realized I needed a personal relationship with Jesus at a youth camp when I was in middle school. I have been able to experience His leading in my life on my faith journey over these intervening years. My faith has been nurtured and developed through the praery and mentoring of parents, teachers, pastors, business partners and leaders, friends and my wife, Jan. I am assured that whatever life holds for me in the years ahead, I continue to walk with Jesus and seek to be his light in a world that more than ever needs Him.”*

**(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Dawn Helwig**, member of North Park Covenant Church, Chicago, IL. Consulting Actuary. Experience: Actuary consulting to insurance companies (primarily Medicare Supplement and long term care) serve as principle (one of nine leading a group of one hundred and 110). Skills include analysis, financial projection, and leadership. Currently completing a 5-year term on the Board of Pensions and Benefits. At North Park Covenant, served on Budget Committee, Trustee’s Board and Stewardship Committee.

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*Personal Statement: "I grew up in a Christian home with strong and faithful parents as examples. The church and my Christian faith have always been central in my life. I have been very blessed in my life and look forward to as many opportunities as possible to 'give back.'"*

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### **(5-year term; elect 1)**

**N. Marcia Jimenez**, member of Winnetka Covenant Church, Wilmette, IL. Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Swedish Hospital. Experience: Secured major capital funding, exemptions for property taxes, and City ordinance exceptions for hospitals when warranted. Served the City of Chicago as Commissioner of Environment, Project Manager for Shoreline Reconstruction, secured funding to pay for rail and lakefront improvements, and more. For many years supported the missions of Winnetka Covenant Church, served on the Missions Committee and Education Committee. Regular Volunteer for the Chicago Food Depository and serve on City Special Service Area Commission.

*Personal Statement: "I believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his only son who was born of the virgin Mary, died for my sins, was buried and rose again on the 3rd day. He will come again. I believe in the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and my guide for living."*

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### **(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Jodi Moore**, member of First Covenant Church, Lincoln, NE. Pastor of Connections. Experience: Secured major capital funding, exemptions for property taxes, and City ordinance exceptions for hospitals when warranted. Served the City of Chicago as Commissioner of Environment, Project Manager for Shoreline Reconstruction, secured funding to pay for rail and lakefront improvements, and more. For many years supported the missions of Winnetka Covenant Church, served on the Missions Committee and Education Committee. Regular Volunteer Chicago Food Depository and serve on City Special Service Area Commission.

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### **(5-year term; elect 1)**

**Kristian Werling**, member of Winnetka Covenant Church, Wilmette, IL. Partner at McDermott Will & Emery in Chicago. Experience: Practice Healthcare Law representing large healthcare organizations and their investors in consolidation transactions. Lead McDermott's Life Sciences Practice Group which consists of over 100 lawyers that work in the healthcare industry. Specific skills involve negotiating complex

transactions and leading complex projects. Covenant Denomination Board: Swedish Covenant Hospital, Covenant Conference Board: Foundation for Covenant Harbor, Ecumenical Roles: Citywide church associations, involvement with other denominations, Youth for Christ, Board of Directors of North Park Friendship Center.

*Personal Statement: "I put my faith in Christ at a young age, and it has flourished through membership in Covenant Churches and attendance at Covenant Camps my entire life. Christ is my Lord and Savior and guides all that I do."*

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### **ANNUAL MEETING OFFICERS for 2020 & 2021**

- One candidate needed for each position. -

#### **Secretary**

### **(2-year term; elect 1)**

**Nilwona Nowlin**, member of Kingdom Covenant Church, Chicago, IL. Writer, Editor. Experience: Previously served as the ECC's Administrative Specialist for Governance. In that role, one responsibility was to provide support to the Annual Meeting Officers and work directly with the Annual Meeting Secretary. Served two Annual Meetings in this role; have a good understanding of the needs and competencies and am confident that I bring those to this position.

*Personal Statement: "I accepted Christ and was baptized as a child. In my college years, I learned how to truly embrace my faith and own it for myself. I've lived long enough to know that it really is in Christ that I live and move and have my being."*

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