

SPR 15  
VOL 13  
ISSUE 2

## HOPE Church purchases Grand Forks mall where congregation has met for 20 years

By Stan Friedman, News and Online Editor for the Covenant Companion

HOPE Evangelical Covenant Church recently purchased Grand Cities Mall, where it has met for nearly 20 years. The church had been negotiating to purchase extra space when current owners J. Herzog and Sons Inc. offered to let them buy the entire mall facility.

Hope launched in 1979 and moved to the mall in 1996. It purchased the space it currently occupies in 1998.

The church of about 1,000 people had explored the possibility of moving to another existing facility or constructing a new building but decided that purchasing the

mall was the most economical alternative.

Kmart and Ace Hardware anchor the mall, but the indoor mall also includes a number of specialty shops and two other churches. HOPE will expand into spaces that currently are not occupied.

"In the fall we will open up a long dreamed of child-care center and preschool," Knight said. "This is in direct response to a significant need in our community. Our church staff has been without 'official' offices for about five years, and our adult education and equipping

ministries have been out of space for quite some time as well."

### Long-term vision

Knight said the church has long-range dreams for the property. "Someday, we hope to create this mall property—27 acres—into a space that draws the community. We are imagining things like park space, walkways, senior adult housing, new retail spaces, a larger worship center, a spiritual life and leadership training center. Many of these dreams will be shaped in the future, but what we do know is that God has ➔



→ opened a door for us to pursue our vision of ‘touching with the hope and love of Jesus Christ at least 10 percent of the unchurched people in the Greater Grand Forks area.’”

There are no plans in the near future to take over any of the occupied space. Knight told the Grand Folks Herald that a separate limited liability company has been formed to oversee the mall, so the part of the building that is not a church will not be tax-exempt, and current mall management will stay in place for now.

“The goal really isn’t to be mall managers, the goal is to be a church,” Knight said.

Discussions had been ongoing for a long time. “It was at Midwinter in 2014, during the message by Wilfredo De Jesus, that I went forward at the altar call and committed to keep walking the path toward purchasing the mall for as long as the door was kept open,” Knight said. “Just over a year later we have congregational agreement to purchase the property.”

National Covenant Properties financed the deal.

“National Covenant Properties has been amazing in the way they have guided us, supported us and facilitated throughout this process,” Knight said. “There were many days that we thought that this was not going to come together, and God has clearly positioned the right people at the right time to keep us on the path.”



## Good Shepherd’s Manna Market has rescued, redistributed 2.25 million pounds of food

*By Hollis Kim, Lead Pastor, Good Shepherd Covenant Church*

Imagine 12,000 pounds of fresh produce, meat, dairy and bakery products dumped into landfill because it was close to or had just expired at your local supermarket. What a waste! Now, imagine a small Covenant church converting its sanctuary and fellowship hall into a “market” where guests can select from those six tons of food. Since 2010, Good Shepherd Covenant Church’s Manna Market in Blaine has rescued and redistributed just over 2.25 million pounds of food to our surrounding community.

Each week, 90 or more volunteers contribute to making this happen. The transformation begins Wednesday night, when pews are moved aside; Thursday, tarps and tables, coolers and crates are set up to create the marketplace. Early Friday morning, the first of two trucks from Second Harvest Heartland are unloaded, and volunteers arrive to begin the considerable task of sorting food, readying it for that night’s distribution.

Young and old, teens and retirees, folks from Good Shepherd and beyond, even current and former guests, work alongside each other to pull off this large, labor-intensive operation. Many of our church’s senior citizens really love this ministry because of the fellowship of working together to serve families who are struggling to put food on the table.

It started in 2009 when the Lord asked me, "Son, what are you doing to serve the poor?" I had no answer. We began by gathering and giving away leftover food from the local middle school cafeteria. Another area church had a Manna Market, so we checked it out and after several weeks of due diligence, communal prayer and discernment, we sensed God leading us to start one at Good Shepherd. With helpful mentoring from veteran practitioners, we learned on the fly and have never looked back. We now collect leftover food from five school cafeterias, as well as from area restaurants. Some of this is distributed; most is used to serve our guests a hot meal before the evening distribution begins.

God didn't stop with us. At a revitalization pastors gathering, I shared what we were doing and invited Mark Ellingson, pastor at Fridley Covenant Church in Fridley, MN, to come and see. Shortly thereafter, Fridley Covenant started its own Manna Market. Folks from Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Francis, MN, heard about us, sending a team to investigate. Sensing God's call to start one there, they spent six months apprenticing, learning the "big picture" and the operational logistics, and launching their own market in 2012. A small Andover church partnered with a local food shelf to start Manna Market there. All told, six churches' Manna Markets currently serve their respective areas with hopes to grow more.

God is using Manna Market to forge and polish the character of Jesus in us. Working so hard and so closely together uncovers our character flaws and stresses relationships. God's provided plenty of opportunity to practice loving and

forgiving one another! It's given us fresh vision for mission and service together, putting feet on the faith we celebrate on Sunday mornings.

Manna Market has opened our eyes to who our neighbors are, people previously "invisible" to us: the chronic and situationally poor, those struggling financially, physically, emotionally/mentally, relationally and spiritually. We hear stories of our guests' pending evictions, some living in their car; folks ask us to pray for children or grandchildren facing court dates or jail time, drug/alcohol addictions, cancer and death. The world has come to us, as some of our guests are Ukrainian and Russian, Ethiopian, Somali, Iraqi, Thai, Vietnamese, Hmong, Mexican, Central and South American, Congolese. We've been learning anew Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself."

God speaks to us through Isaiah 58:6-8: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I."

It's easier to experience than to explain Manna Market. To volunteer or bring a group to serve, contact Bonnie Randall at **612-229-6296** or [gsblaineoffice@gmail.com](mailto:gsblaineoffice@gmail.com).

## A new approach to PRC/MMC

*By Jeff Burton, Director of Pastoral Care & Development*

Most of our churches have built into their leadership structures either a **Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)** or a **Mutual Ministry Committee (MMC)**. In my conversations with pastors and lay leaders, the reality seems to be that most of these committees find themselves at a loss for how to function effectively.

In reviewing ways to improve the functioning of such committees, it seems there may be some foundational flaws.

The Traditional Roles of the PRC/MMC:

1. Pastoral Care
2. Pastoral Development
3. Conflict Management
4. Personnel

All of these functions have value, but do they all fit well together under one team?

**Good Fit** = "Pastoral Care" and "Pastoral Development"

**Bad Fit** = "Conflict Management" and "Pastoral Care/Pastoral Development"

**Custom Fit** = "Personnel Issues" and the other three areas

If you are interested in reworking this area of your ministry and need assistance, please contact NWC Pastoral Care & Development at **(612) 721-4893 x3129** or **(218) 260-5545**.

# Zion Covenant Church moves forward in its pursuit of Congregational Vitality

By Leslee Hugare, Member of Zion Covenant Church

Ellsworth, WI—comfortably situated in western Wisconsin—is a township of 3,500 people, one stop light, one McDonald's, a strong tradition of state wrestling championships, multiple bars (with great food) and the best cheese curds in the land! On the surface, it may appear that Ellsworth is a community comfortable with its current pace and offerings; and for some that may be true. However, if you drive just north of downtown Main Street, you will find a group of missional people, passionately pursuing Christ and His priorities in the world.

Zion Covenant Church has a rich history that has afforded us the joy of celebrating 125 years of ministry as we seek to be obedient to who God has called us to be. And in the midst of what, for some, have been painful transitions of letting go, God has been present and has poured blessings on us.

## Vitality journey

Eight years ago, Zion recognized that if we were to be relevant and present for the next generation, change would need to occur. Therefore, we began the Vitality Pathway in partnership with the Northwest Conference and the Evangelical Covenant Church. Through this process, Zion went from a church identified as "Critical Moment" moving toward "At Risk," to now a "Stable" moving toward "Missional" church. This shift did not happen overnight. It took much prayer, commitment and courage.



Throughout Scripture we see God asking His people to take bold, faithful steps in order to lead His people to a new place of growth and life. Zion has seen this growth and new life through obedience.

## Moving forward

Zion has recognized the importance of investing in the lives of the young people and passionately wants to "pass the baton well" for the next generation. So, Zion is investing in meaningful and missional-focused ministries for children and youth. Zion has incorporated some of the concepts of "Sticky Faith," and we are confident this impact will benefit the ministry of the Gospel of Christ for years to come.

It has been important for Zion to continually think outside of ourselves. We have pushed ourselves to ask how we can make an impact in the world around us. A major part of the call of Zion is to share the Gospel to the lost and the hurting. We have recently partnered with the NWC and ECC in

planting Renew Covenant Church in Eau Claire, WI, and have helped provide for ministry needs of Keuring Covenant Church in Ethiopia. We are continually learning what it means to be truly missional and to be used throughout the world for Jesus—starting in our own neighborhood!

## Staying the course

Staying the course in the Vitality Pathway and being courageous in moving forward has allotted us the opportunity to plant a church, expand our missions impact, and create ministries within Zion that help us to achieve our mission and vision. So, next time you consider taking a drive and perhaps determine western Wisconsin is an ideal destination in your pursuit of beautiful scenery, pure maple syrup, and delicious cheese curds, consider Ellsworth, WI—a place with only one stop light, but also the home of Zion Covenant Church, a missional people, passionately pursuing Christ and His priorities in the world.



# Hope Covenant in St. Cloud experiencing vitality through outreach to international students

By Keith Meyer, Lead Pastor, Hope Covenant Church

Reenu was one of 120 St. Cloud State University international students served lunch at Hope Covenant's first partnership with the University's International Studies Center in August 2014. Our site is right next to the campus, the heart of downtown St. Cloud, MN. She is one of many international students who are revitalizing our church and helping us discern a new vision for Hope Covenant.

At one time we had a ministry to college students, but that had dried up as the church's mission started to atrophy due to ongoing inner conflict. Churches in decline, like ours was, slowly turn inward as they become self-absorbed and lose energy for organizational mission.

So we started the Vitality Pathway in 2011, discerned with our Vitality Team and the Pulse Survey what growth areas to work on, and plans were put into play for improving worship and developing missional focus. Soon the downward spiral toward "At

Risk" from "Critical Moment" was arrested, and we went on to "Stable" and are now tasting what it means to be "Healthy Missional."

The ministry to international students was a no brainer with SCSU staff in our church, and a strong college ministry presence at SCSU from a nearby sister congregation, Grace Covenant Church of Little Falls, MN, with whom we could partner and not start from scratch. The lunches have energized our people outward as a first and doable mission project. At that first lunch, a couple table hosts brought me a student with a question about our church, one curiously named Reenu. She asked, "So, what kind of church is Hope?"

After quickly deciding not to share in detail the six affirmations of the Evangelical Covenant Church, I explained, "We are just followers of Jesus here"—a shortened form of our new but rough draft vision statement: "Following Jesus from wherever we are, Experiencing God's belovedness of us,

Sharing our lives with the last, least and the lost.

Reenu, a Buddhist Graduate student in gerontology from Kathmandu, Nepal, said, "That's what I want!" Reenu is now regularly worshipping with us, has been invited into our homes and is even participating in Hope's mission as she follows Jesus from where she is at now.

Wanting to sign up as a greeter for our second orientation lunch in January, a Hope leader said to her, "Reenu, you don't have to sign up, the lunch is for you ... the international students." Reenu then explained she wanted to help as part of our team in reaching students—she had become one of us. Impacted by a series on Mark and Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?", Reenu has started reading Scripture and initiated a ministry project to the homeless in the area.

Reenu is a sign of the Spirit's renewal being out ahead of us in the people we meet and our need to simply join God as he works in their lives. And we are thankful to the ECC and Northwest Conference for the Congregational Vitality process and its part in bringing revived ministry to Hope Covenant. We are learning from Jesus what it means to simply call for people to follow Him and watch them begin to belong, and then to believe.

# **COVENANT CAMPS**

*in the northwest conference*



The Northwest Conference is home to five awesome Covenant camps. Each camp offers a unique set of activities, a beautiful outdoor setting, and a caring, welcoming staff. Children, youth and families throughout the NWC participate in summer camp, family camp, weekend retreats and other life-changing camp programs.



## ➤ **COVENANT PARK BIBLE CAMP**

**Mahtowa, MN • [covenantpark.org](http://covenantpark.org)**

Covenant Park Bible Camp offers youth camps for all ages throughout the summer. With the newly-acquired land across the lake, we are beginning to offer adventure camps in 2015. These camps will be much smaller in size (10-20 campers) with a "true" camping experience (sleep in tents, cook over a fire, etc.).

Also new for 2015, our adventure camping ministry is expanding offsite, taking campers into the Boundary Waters. Our hope for the future is to be able to offer more camps and guide outside groups into a number of adventure experiences, which include canoe trips, rock climbing, kayaking, hiking and mountain biking.

Covenant Park celebrates 75 years of ministry in 2015 with a special family camp/all staff reunion July 3-5. We would love to have anybody connected to camp come out for the weekend or the day. If you are interested in the reunion, our youth camps, our adventure camps, or any other aspect of our ministry, please check out our website for more info.

## ➤ **LAKE BEAUTY BIBLE CAMP**

**Long Prairie, MN • [lbbc.com](http://lbbc.com)**

As many of you know, Solid Rock, Lake Beauty's new 1-year school of discipleship, is well underway. Our first class graduates on May 16! Applications for next year are available to interested students ages 18-25.

This summer at Lake Beauty Bible Camp we are going on an adventure in search of the true "Treasures of the Kingdom!" On the high seas of life we must learn to navigate and seek after the things that lead us to our ultimate goal: eternity in heaven.

Also this summer, a Dining Hall addition will be under construction, providing key new meeting and dining spaces for our guests, Solid Rock students, and summer staff. For more information on any of Lake Beauty's ministries and programs, visit us online.





## ► **BLUEWATER COVENANT BIBLE CAMP** Grand Rapids, MN • [bluewatercovcamp.org](http://bluewatercovcamp.org)

Bluewater Covenant Bible Camp is set beside a Caribbean blue lake outside Grand Rapids, MN. We know that God is powerful and works through camp experiences. What's the power in camp? Think about these things:

- Laughter on tube rides
- Campfire talks
- Bonds over shared experiences
- Discovering, Deepening,  
& Depending on Your  
relationship with God.

Bluewater has youth camps from 3rd grade to graduating seniors, plus Family Camps and Men & Women retreats. Currently, we are building a new Welcome Center and Retreat Housing, which will expand our ministry seasons.

Our theme this year is "ALL IN." We trust that God went all in for us by the power of the resurrection, but He also gave us the same power to live our life ALL IN for Him—to be steadfast, firm and continue to work for the Lord. Register today and be ready for the power of Bluewater Covenant Bible Camp in 2015.

### *Covenant Pines Ministries*

## ► **ADVENTUROUS CHRISTIANS** Grand Marais, MN • [adventurouschristians.org](http://adventurouschristians.org)

The big news at Adventurous Christians (AC) is the continued development of the new retreat building. A plan is made, the location has been determined, and the outlook is to break ground this May/June. The goal is to have the building ready for occupancy by Christmas.

AC will continue to provide wilderness experiences during this building phase, which includes Boundary Waters canoe trips during the summer months and fall retreats beginning in September. Scheduled events/programming include AIL (June 20-27), Super SWEAT (June 29-July 4), and Soothing Waters, an annual women's canoe trip (August 20-23).

Youth leaders should check out our promotional deals—especially the Senior Discount. Partner with AC this summer and experience God in His backcountry in a powerful way.



## ► **COVENANT PINES BIBLE CAMP** McGregor, MN • [covenantpines.org](http://covenantpines.org)

Covenant Pines Bible Camp has been a place for kids and families to rest, play and encounter Jesus since 1954. Located just 2.5 hours north of the Twin Cities, Covenant Pines has many year-round options for you, your church and your family.

We offer Youth Camps in the summer for students entering 2nd grade through 12th grade, as well as Family Camps in July and August. Our summer theme is "Rooted" and will focus on what it means to be rooted in Christ's love as Paul discusses in Ephesians 3:17-18.

There's a lot of summer fun at Covenant Pines. From the outdoor high ropes elements to our Craft Hall on a hill; from a speedboat ride on the lake to a game of GaGa Ball in the mud, there is something here for everyone.

We also have newly constructed, deluxe cabins that are available to rent at our family area, Silver Beach.





JULY 12-17, 2015  
**CHIC2015.ORG**

## CHIC 2015 mission focus is Project Blue

By Ginny Olson, Director of Youth Ministry

*"I had two CHIC students feel the call to full time ministry—one to youth work and the other to full time missions. Nothing could make a youth pastor more proud!" -*

### Youth Leader at CHIC2012

*"CHIC made me WANT to make time to spend with God ... the experience made me actually want to grow in my relationship with Him." - Student at CHIC2012*

CHIC is the Covenant's triennial conference for high school students. This summer, the theme is "Shift" and it takes place July 12-17 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN. It's five days packed with worship, Bible study, excursions and educational experiences. A highpoint of CHIC is the evening large group gatherings at the UT Thompson Boling Arena where students are challenged by speakers such as Louie Giglio, Eugene Cho, and Judy Peterson. This CHIC will also feature artists Lecrae, Rend Collective, DJ Promote, for King & Country, Moriah Peters, KB, and Propaganda.

CHIC started in 1956 when several hundred Covenant high schoolers gathered for Covenant

High in Christ (now CHIC). At CHIC 2012, there were over 6,000 students and leaders in attendance.

### Volunteer

A lot of volunteers are needed to pull off an event for 6,000+ people. If you're interested in volunteering, visit [chic2015.org/volunteer](http://chic2015.org/volunteer). CHIC is looking for staff in the areas of administration, hospitality, recreation and support.

### Excursions and Service Projects

Groups can choose from experiences like white water rafting, cave tours, paintball, horseback riding, and more. There are also opportunities for students to go off-site and serve by assisting refugee families, working with a rescue mission, and lots more. Check out [chic2015.org/excursions](http://chic2015.org/excursions)

### Project Blue

Every CHIC, a major mission project is chosen. This CHIC, it's Project Blue, which focuses on clean water and sanitation in India and around the world. Besides raising awareness, students can also become

engaged in the issues of injustice that exist due to the lack of clean water and sanitation, and work together to raise funds for the work that Covenant World Relief is doing in India and throughout the world. For more info on this project, visit [chic2015.org/project-blue](http://chic2015.org/project-blue)

### Transportation

The Northwest Conference will be transporting groups via coach bus transportation. Pick-up and drop-off sites will be assigned in the coming weeks. The great thing about riding a NWC bus is that churches don't have to worry about exhausted leaders driving, renting vans, or taking out extra insurance policies.

### Scholarships

We have many students who would love to go to CHIC, but finances are a challenge for them. If you're interested in helping send a student, or an adult volunteer, to CHIC you can send a check to the NWC office with a note designating that it goes to the CHIC scholarship fund. Information about CHIC can be found at [chic2015.org](http://chic2015.org)

# Boston couple forms ‘long distance relationship’ with NWC Church Plant

By Steve Wiens, Senior Pastor, Genesis Covenant Church

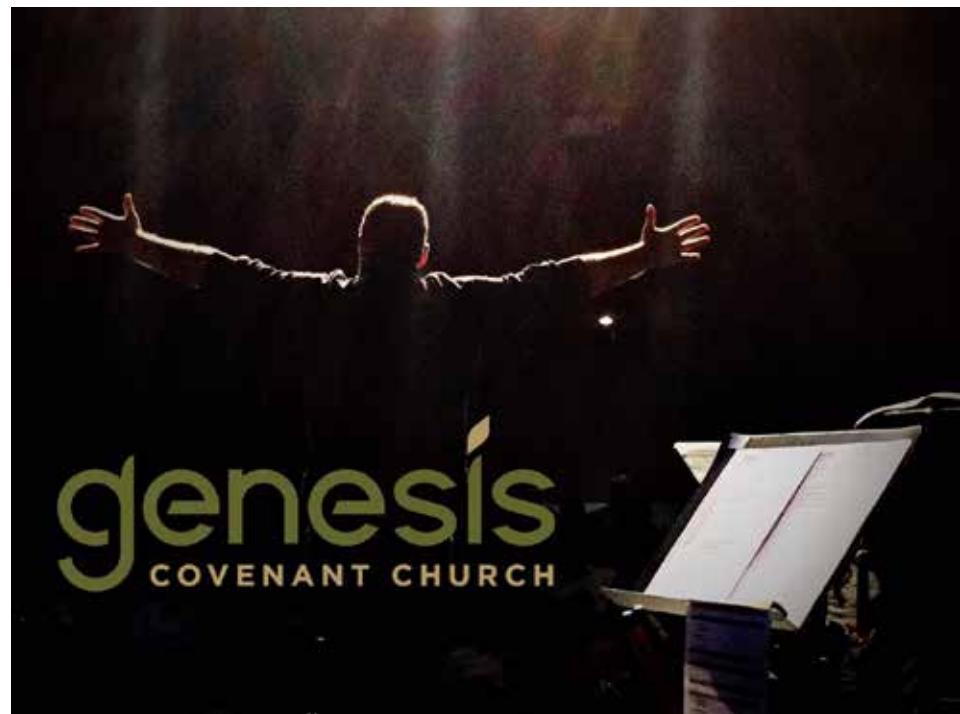
It was an odd but delightful request. “Would you mind if my husband Lee and I came to Minnesota to visit Genesis? Lee hasn’t ever been on an airplane before, and neither one of us are connected in any real way to a church. But we have been reading your blog and listening to the podcasts, and we’d like to see it in person.”

Lee and Mary live in Boston, but they got on a plane last fall and visited Genesis Covenant, our brand new church plant that meets in a Jewish Community Center in St. Louis Park, MN. As we talked after the service that Sunday, I heard their story of pain and hope. They are on a sacred and beautiful journey with God. They listen to our podcast every week; they also give regularly online. They’re planning another visit to Minnesota this spring, and we can’t wait to see them.

I get emails from Mary about once a week or so, and they are always filled with encouragement. Here’s one I received recently:

Hi Steve,

So I’ve been struggling since Christmas with the whole “long distance relationship” thing. As I write this it just makes me smile ... it seems so dramatic! But honestly, I am so grateful to have found you and the Genesis community. On the flip side, it’s so bittersweet; you are all so far away! A few weeks ago in your sermon you asked, “What is your favorite memory of Christ?” My response .... “I don’t



have one, I don’t even know him.” Ha!

I’m not the type of person that sits around and stews, so I decided I needed to get more pro-active (again) and find a place for us to go to church. Now mind you, I’ve been looking for a long time. What we experience with Genesis is something we have not had in 30 years ... can you imagine, 30 years?

I found a church I could walk to in Boston ... nice, big, great location and it appears to serve the community well. The sermon, well, there really wasn’t one. The priest talked about the “Sword in the Stone” and it lasted all of 10 minutes. I had a hard time holding it together, a tougher time not crying. I just wanted to yell, “Stop, tell me about this ‘person’ Christ

that I can barely imagine, never mind feel connected to!”

So ... thank you for your sermons, the care and time you give to them. I feel like I’m a kid again, learning, and hopefully will feel more and more connected to Christ as time goes on. Heaven knows I’m seeing him everywhere, especially at Genesis!

Warmest regards,  
Mary

Can you believe it? The Northwest Conference is reaching people who are hungry for God. We’re telling people about this person Jesus, and helping them get connected to him. Some of them even live in Boston! It is such an honor to be a part of this generative movement.

# A Living Legacy in the NWC

By Mark R. Stromberg, Superintendent

In the past year, the Northwest Conference has seen the closure of two of its churches. The Evangelical Covenant Church in Deer River, MN, and Maplewood Covenant Church in the Twin Cities, both held final services and officially voted to cease to be worshipping congregations. However, this does not mean that the effects of the ministry of each will no longer be seen.

When churches close their doors, the properties and other assets are turned back to the NWC and the Evangelical Covenant Church. Both the Conference and Denomination, in turn, use the proceeds of the sale of each property for the furtherance of ministry within the NWC, primarily through the planting of new churches. One life has ended, but new life springs forth! As such, we give thanks for the ministry of each closed church, even as we celebrate the birthing of brand new ones.

## Maplewood

Maplewood Covenant Church began as a Sunday School ministry in 1932 led by Marian Johnson, eventually forming a church with 30 charter members in 1945. After purchasing land across the street from the school where the church began, the congregation moved into its new basement in 1947. The new sanctuary, with a bell from the old school, held its first worship service in 1952 and an education wing was then added in 1967.

A generation of faithful members shared the fellowship of church picnics, Bible studies, New Year's Eve Parties and spaghetti dinners; raising their children

through confirmation classes and youth groups; supporting missionaries, Covenant Pines Bible Camp, and Minnehaha Academy; reaching out to the neighborhood through summer Bible School and other evangelistic endeavors. The church was served by seven full-time pastors (Paul Bjorklund, Don Krause, Eldon Johnson, Don Ostrom, Richard Schriber, Roger Mollett and Don Ebb) and many interim pastors.

In God's timing, Maplewood's final service was held on Feb. 1, 2015. A weekend of work, worship and remembrance will be held May 9-10. A "Friends of Maplewood" Facebook page has been established as well as an email for memories: [maplewood.cov.archives@gmail.com](mailto:maplewood.cov.archives@gmail.com)

## Deer River

In International Falls, MN, Harvey Jackson, a godly man, was concerned about his unsaved relatives and friends in Deer River, MN. He agonized in intercessory prayer to God for their salvation. In the fall of 1933, the Rev. Alrick Olson of Little Falls, MN, came to Deer River and held meetings in various homes. A number of souls were won for the Lord. Harvey Jackson's prayers were answered. Among the first who were saved was Harvey's brother and his family. Later, other relatives and friends found Christ. Interest grew, souls were being saved, and it became evident the seed sown with tears and much prayer was bringing forth fruit.

Before the church was built, meetings and a Sunday School program were held in the Deer



**Maplewood Covenant Church**  
Maplewood, MN / 1932-2015

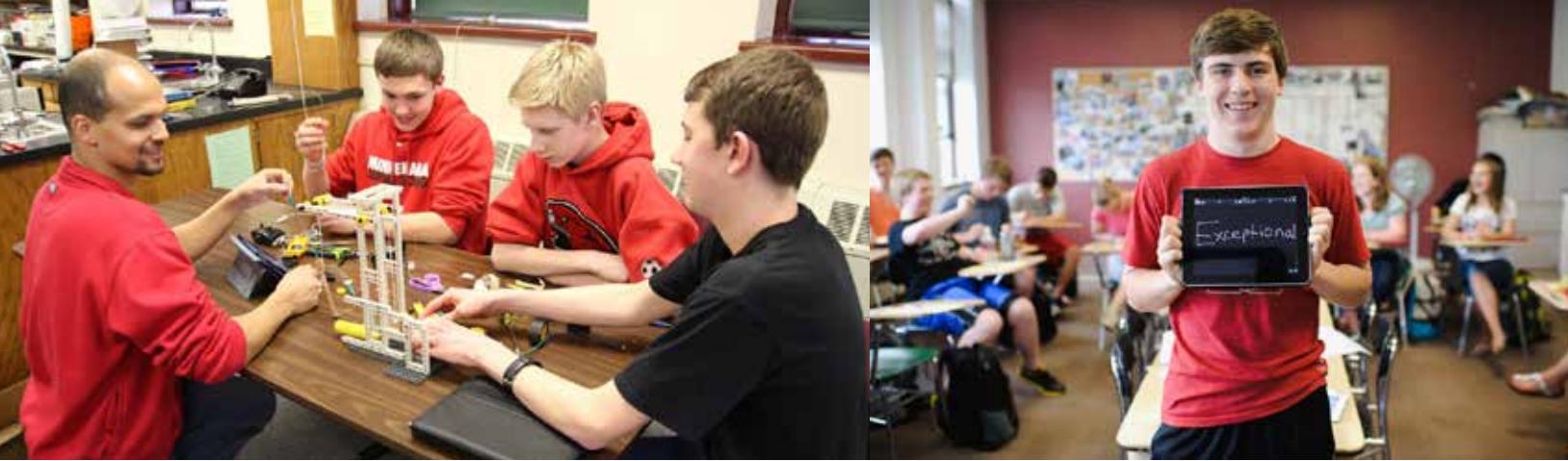


**Evangelical Covenant Church**  
Deer River, MN / 1935-2015

River Village Hall. It was finished in 1935. Much of the material and labor was donated. The NWC helped with a substantial loan. In the summer of 1935, the church was organized with 34 members. Dedication services were held Dec. 1, 1935, and the church officially joined the NWC and the ECC in 1936. In 1955, the church was extensively remodeled.

The church has continued to preach the good news of Jesus Christ up to this very day, but a decision was made by its members to become a Living Legacy church in order to provide resources for the development of new churches, as well as to help resource other NWC churches that remain viable. The final service was held March 8, 2015.

*We thank God for both Maplewood and Deer River! We are grateful for the willingness of each to give of their lives so that others might live through Christ our Lord.*



# Minnehaha Academy staff member honored for creation of Digital Citizenship program

## **Sam Meyers**, Academic

Integration Specialist, has won the 2015 Private and Independent Education Program Award from the Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF) for the Digital Citizenship (DC) program he developed at Minnehaha Academy. Each year, MISF recognizes a select group of individuals, schools and/or programs that model outstanding service to students, the school and the school community.

“Digital Citizenship” is a hot buzz phrase in education and this program at Minnehaha Academy establishes norms regarding the use of technology by students, teachers and parents.

“Sam’s interactions with both students and adults highlighted for him the gaps many seem to have in knowing how to use all forms of technology, both personal and academic, in a safe and effective way,” said Nancy Johnson, Minnehaha Academy Upper School Principal.

This program provides guidance on how to navigate the digital world, use it for effective and efficient acquisition of knowledge



(and goods), communicate with each other clearly, and establish an online presence that doesn’t put them at risk for bullying, theft, or crime.

## Setting an example

Unlike most schools, Minnehaha Academy utilizes school-wide time, such as during assembly and advisory, to provide this guidance to students. Beginning in the spring of 2014, Minnehaha started a series of assemblies on DC, including digital footprint, effective communication, and copyright/fair use issues. The school will continue to use the assembly avenue for occasional discussions about these topics, as teachers appreciate the effort to communicate these concerns with students, but find it difficult to add

it to regular class time.

Sam also gave the digital footprint presentation to the incoming freshmen and parents at the freshmen retreat. The parents appreciated the presentation and the fact the school wants to make this a priority.

“One of the many measures of the success of this program is the fact that Sam is beginning to receive inquiries from other schools who want him to make similar presentations to their students and faculties,” Johnson said. “This additional visibility for the issues related to digital citizenship is an important step in addressing a primary need related to increased use of technology in schools.”

Meyers and the Digital Citizenship program at Minnehaha Academy, along with other award recipients, will be recognized at the 2015 Minnesota Private and Independent Education Awards celebration on April 26, at the James B. Woulfe Alumni Hall on the University of St. Thomas campus. Nominations were accepted from all private and independent schools in the state.

# Covenant Enabling Residences of Minnesota

By Dana Norton, Executive Director of CER-MN

Covenant Enabling Residences of Minnesota (CER-MN)—comprised of Our Place (Duluth, MN), North Place (Duluth, MN) and Friendship Place (Lino Lakes, MN)—is a ministry extension of Covenant Initiatives for Care in the Northwest Conference. Each eight-bed duplex group home serves intellectually disabled, brain injured, and mentally ill adults.

These homes provide 24-hour staffing and programming that enable our residents to be as independent as possible. Our homes fill the needs of families who are seeking a Christ-centered home for their loved ones—with many church activities. Each home is strategically located in close proximity to a Covenant Church so that the home church is able to spiritually and socially nurture our residents.

CER-MN also has a partnership with the Women Ministries of the Northwest Conference, which has been an integral part of our ministry since its inception in 1998 via



fundraising and startup of our first home, as well as through continued financial support. We would not be here today without WMNWC.

However, with the government's continued budget cuts and future outlook, we will need to enlist the help of more Northwest Conference churches to help fund future budget shortfalls. We would like to build our benevolent fund so that we are fully able to care for those we serve in their home as long as possible, and/or develop other homes for those who are in need.

There are several ways in which you can help. Send donations to CER-MN, 322 N. 60th Ave. W.,

Duluth, MN 55807. Support our upcoming fundraisers: Camperships of \$450 in July, Miles of Smiles Walk-a-thon on Sept. 12, 2015, and our Annual Fundraiser at Rice Creek Covenant Church on Oct. 9, 2015. Contact CER-MN Executive Director Dana Norton at **218-391-9203** to find out other ways in which you can help.

## NWC Staff

### **Mark Stromberg**

Superintendent

### **Jon Kramka**

Director of Congregational Vitality

### **Mike Brown**

Director of Church Planting

### **Ginny Olson**

Director of Youth Ministry

### **Kara Stromberg**

Director of Children & Family Ministry

### **Jeff Burton**

Director of Pastoral Care & Development

### **Judy Swanberg**

Assoc. Director of Pastoral Care & Development

### **Sandy Norris**

Director of Finance

### **Cheryl Theilen**

Director of Administration

### **Bryan Malley**

Director of Communications

### **Jessa Anderson**

Administrative Coordinator

### **The Northwest Conference**

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[northwestconference.org](http://northwestconference.org)

Phone: 612.721.4893 // 1.800.756.6692

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## NWC Calendar

**5.2 » Go: Serve** – Redeemer Covenant Church, Brooklyn Park, MN

**6.20-27 » Adventures in Leadership** – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

**7.12-17 » CHIC 2015** – University of Tennessee

**8.6-8 » MUUUCE** – Crossroads Church, Woodbury, MN

**9.9-11 » CRIM Retreat** – Covenant Pines Bible Camp, McGregor, MN

**10.5-7 » Ministerial Association Retreat** – Chase on the Lake, Walker, MN

**10.20-21 » Faith Community Nurse Retreat**  
– Covenant Pines Bible Camp, McGregor, MN

**11.7 » VIVE** – Twin Cities