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## Fall: The in between season

Greetings from your Northwest Conference Office. I trust that you have had a chance to find some rest during summer and are ready for the changes and opportunities that fall brings. Late in August I noticed a change in the air. We had a couple of cool nights that brought a hint of frost. It reminded me that things were changing, or as Sigurd Olson has written, "Make one question the permanence of summer."



Fall is my favorite time of year. The cool weather and beautiful colors in the woods bring joy and comfort to me. It is also a season of new beginnings. It is a time to harvest the work of summer and turn over the garden. It is the time to get ready for winter.

Susan Felch writes, "It is the season that teaches us that our lives are made not to run in smooth and easy paths, predictable and even always known. Our lives are messy, sometimes scheduled, sometimes random, sometimes prepared for, sometimes taken on the fly. It is the season that reminds us that maybe we are not our own; we neither mark out nor control all the paths we may take."

The responses we make to the

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### COVENANT YOUTH



*The 2006 AIL class following some acclimatization activities in the woods.*

## Adventures In Leadership

**J**une 17-24, 2006 — Twenty-five years ago the Northwest Conference (NWC) had a vision to offer an intensive leadership camp experience for high school students as a tool for further preparing the next generation for leadership in the church and society.

Through a partnership between the NWC and Adventurous Christians/Covenant Wilderness Center, Adventures in Leadership (AIL) was born. Today, the program continues to go strong and to honor its historic mission of preparing the next generation.

AIL is an 8-day intensive journey in leadership utilizing the unique context of the Boundary Waters Wilderness Canoe Area as its laboratory. It is available every June for up to 21 students from NWC churches.

Through group simulations, personality inventories, acclimatization activities, wilderness training and travels, peer coaching, worship and leadership studies, students are introduced to a variety of



*AIL students navigated an orienteering course during the 2006 program.*

leadership styles and skills, become aware of their own personal capacities and styles, examine characteristics of Christian leadership and develop a vision of who they are and who they are to become as God's leader in the world.

We celebrate our investment of 25 years in the younger leaders of our conference through AIL. The growing number of AIL alumni and their continued pursuits and accomplishments remain impressive.



*Church and community members in Moose Lake, Minn., gathered for a dedication ceremony at the new Sonshine Thrift Store and Ministry Center on Aug. 27. The ministry provides resources for families in crisis.*

## Moose Lake church opens thrift store

**O**n the same day that Moose Lake Covenant Church was celebrating its 110th Anniversary of ministry in its community, the church also dedicated and celebrated the grand opening of the new Sonshine Closet Thrift Store and Ministry Center.

Sonshine Ministries started about 5 years ago with a vision of church member Joyce Bogenholm.

That vision to provide clothes, household goods, larger home furnishings and

non-church donated funds to help families in need or crisis has been faithfully pursued by the congregation and joined by the broader community. This has led to the brand new center now boasting around 2,900 sq. ft. of retail space.

In addition, they facilitate a food and crisis fund distribution program from the center.

Sonshine Ministries has developed a regional impact as a direct outreach mission of the church.



*An inside view of the new Sonshine Thrift Store and Ministry Center.*

## Leadership Forum to feature president of Calvin Seminary

Our next Leadership Forum will be Jan. 20, 2007, at First Covenant Church in Minneapolis. Our presenter will be Cornelius Plantinga Jr. His topic will be, "Dying and Rising with Jesus Christ" based on Colossians 3:12-17. His first lecture will be "Rising with Humility." The second lecture will be "Rising with Forgiveness."

Cornelius Plantinga is president of Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich. Thomas Long says of Plantinga,

**"One of Plantinga's great gifts is the ability to communicate the depths of the Christian faith in ways that are clear, memorable and lyrical."**

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Dr. Plantinga is the author of numerous articles and books. His book "Not the Way

It's Supposed to Be" was named Christianity Today's 1996 Book of the Year. This forum is for our congregations, pastors, leaders, and everyone who would deepen their walk with God. A free lunch will be provided. More details will follow.



**RECHARGE conference features author Tiger McLuen**

The Northwest Conference (NWC) is co-sponsoring RECHARGE: A Conference for Those Serving Children and Youth on Jan. 6, 2007, at Incarnation Lutheran Church in Shoreview, Minn. RECHARGE will feature general session speakers Tiger McLuen and Dr. Roland Martinson.

McLuen has served as President of Youth Leadership for 15 years and is an instructor at Bethel and Luther Seminaries. He is author of the "Developing Student Leaders Handbook" and co-author with Mike Yaconelli of "Equipped to Serve."

Martinson is the Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Children, Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary. He is the author of numerous books including: "Gearing Up for Youth Ministry in the 21st Century" and "Effective Youth Ministry, A Congregational Approach."

Twin Cities musician Bruce Balgaard will lead RECHARGE attendees in worship and the conference will feature two workshop sessions and many opportunities to network.

The RECHARGE conference is designed for professionals, volunteers, leaders and parents involved in childrens and youth ministry. Contact the NWC office at (612) 721-4893 or (800) 756-6692 for more information.

**Friendship Place update**

**M**any of you will have heard that Northwest Conference (NWC) churches and ministry groups such as Covenant Women's Ministries of the Northwest Conference are partnering with Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB) to build Friendship Place, a new Covenant Enabling Residence for developmentally disabled adults, in Lino Lakes, Minn.

This home will be similar to the two successful Christian group homes in Duluth—Our Place and North Place. The care provided at Friendship Place will be a witness to our community, a visible expression of God's love for those who are vulnerable. The need for homes like Friendship Place is great. Most of us know personally of families with developmentally disabled members who need, or will someday need, a supportive Christian group home.

Fundraising update: Rice Creek Covenant Church donated the land for Friendship Place and over \$160,000 has been raised from individual donations/pledges and grants from the NWC and CMB. In April, a sports car donated by Dick Gordon of Salem Covenant Church was sold and raised \$12,000 for Friendship Place, an

event that was covered in the local newspaper. Covenant Women's Ministries of the NWC are also supporting the development of Friendship Place by planning events such as Friendship Place ice cream socials to raise funds for ministry.

To raise the remaining \$140,000 needed for down payment and startup costs, we are asking additional NWC churches and groups to join the Friendship Place partnership by sponsoring construction of a room or specific part of Friendship Place. First Covenant of Minneapolis and Fridley Covenant are two examples of churches that have recently responded to the partnership opportunity, and these churches are eager to encourage others to join in so that Friendship Place can be built soon.

By partnering together across the NWC, we can raise the funds needed to begin construction of Friendship Place in 2006 or early 2007. Friendship Place will be a testimony of what God can do when his people work together in ministry!

**For more information about Friendship Place or the sponsorship program, please contact Sharon Penner at (763) 786-7789.**

**Free Web site set up**

Roger Peck from Mission Covenant Church is still offering the free set up of the "self-managed, database-driven" Web sites he markets. The only cost involved is a \$19.95/mo. hosting and support fee. The commitment for the free sites is limited to 50 churches. After that, the cost is \$1,500.00.

Lakeview Covenant in Duluth ([www.lakeviewcovenant.org](http://www.lakeviewcovenant.org)), Mission Covenant in Poplar, Wisc. ([www.missioncovenantchurch.org](http://www.missioncovenantchurch.org)) and Knollbrook Covenant in Fargo ([www.knollbrook.org](http://www.knollbrook.org)) are just a few sites you can visit to see how they work. These churches love their new



sites and the fact that they are so easy to build and maintain. Mission Covenant has "streaming audio" sermons. Take a listen.

There are still sites available so if your church would like one, please contact Roger by e-mail at [roger@superiorlighthouse.com](mailto:roger@superiorlighthouse.com) or call (651) 983-5549 or (877) 386-0134.

## Steps of faith for Pine Valley Covenant

**P**ine Valley Covenant Church in Cloquet, Minn., has undergone a transformation over the past couple of years—changing its name and loca-



tion and building a new church. Bethany Covenant Church was in need of costly repairs and had limited on-street parking. This 40-member congregation made the decision to buy land and begin a nearly half-million-dollar building project. A 175-seat amphitheater style sanctuary, narthex and basement are now complete. There

are plans to build an education wing in the next 5-10 years. The name of the church was changed to Pine Valley Covenant earlier this year to reflect its location and its

new building. Services began in the new building in May and the building dedication was Sunday, Sept. 10. The congregation has grown to about 65 members, with 75-80 people attending worship services. Pine Valley is eager to reach out to the community and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### CALENDAR

**October 2-4** Ministerial Association Retreat at Cragun's in Brainerd

**October 7-8** SALT – high school student leadership training conference at Salem Covenant Church, New Brighton

**October 12** (Noon-3 p.m.) Youth Pastor Connection at the NWC – Recruiting/Empowering Adult Volunteer Leaders (\*note change of time)

**November 16-17** Youth Pastor Connection – a 2-day spiritual renewal retreat (details to follow)

**January 6** RECHARGE Conference (details on page 3)

**January 18** Youth Pastor Connection

**January 20** Leadership Forum – “Dying and Rising with Jesus Christ” with Dr. Cornelius Plantiga

**February 15** Youth Pastor Connection

**March 15** Youth Pastor Connection

**April 13-14** MOVE (Mission Outreach Venture & Experience) for high school students at First Covenant, Mpls.

**April 20-21** Northwest Conference Annual Meeting – Prairie Hills Covenant Church, Sioux Falls, S.D.

**April 26** Youth Pastor Connection

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*The Northwest Conference is a regional conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. We are 137 churches in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.*

## The in between season

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changes in our lives are what are most important. There will be renewal, death and many ordinary moments. The way in which we respond is at the heart of our walk with God. The good news of the Bible is that we have a God who has gone on before us, a God who suffers with us. I don't know what your summer was like—what changes have come to you personally or to your congregation. I do know that it is fall—the in between season—

a time to respond.

Fall brings changes to our office. I am pleased to announce that Mike Brown, pastor of our Living Springs congregation in Brandon, has accepted our invitation to become our new Director of Church Planting for the Northwest Conference. Mike is an experienced church planter with a genuine heart for evangelism. We anticipate Mike joining our staff in November.

All through the summer we have been working on the transfer of Adventurous

Christians (AC) from the Northwest Conference to Covenant Pines Bible Camp. We are thankful that the strong ministry of AC will continue.

What changes have occurred in your community and in your congregation this summer? How are you responding? May God give you the wisdom and strength to offer the hope of our risen Christ to your community!

*In His service and yours,  
Jim Fretheim*