

IMPRINTS



Summer 2008, Vol. 6 #3

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Summer

There may be some who see summer as a time of inactivity. This is not true for most. Our churches are busy this summer! Bible camps, vacation Bible schools, any number of specialty camps and outreach programs! New people are moving into our communities. Building programs are making great progress, and there seems to be action on every front.



Sigurd Olson comments on summer: "All living creatures gorge themselves and their young on the food that is at this season so rich and abundant. It is a time for building strength and storing energy for whatever may come. It is also a time of joy" ("Wilderness Days").

What an exciting season for ministry! Our church plants are sending out their shoots as they establish their roots systems. Our established congregations are serving their communities and giving leadership throughout our conference. Our worship services bring glory to God! Thanks for the many ways in which you serve our God during this summer season. We are grateful for your prayers and your financial support as we serve our God who gives so abundantly.

Jim Fretheim, Superintendent

ALASKA 2009



The parsonage and church in Shaktoolik, Alaska, are examples of buildings that will benefit from NWC sponsorship.

The first mission field that our denomination began working in was Alaska. We are thankful for the ministry there that continues to this day.

Our denomination is asking each regional conference to help our bush churches (plane access only) by assisting with improvements with their parsonages and church buildings. The Northwest Conference has been assigned the villages of Unakaleet and Shaktoolik.

There are a variety of projects that need to be accomplished. These include a variety of construction tasks that will greatly enhance the housing for our pastors and

bring needed repairs to the church buildings.

We are asking our churches to consider sending work teams or to contribute financially to this project. The Covenant works closely with Arctic Barnabas, a ministry that brings encouragement and help to those who are ministering in "the bush." They provide supervision and direction for our work teams.

All are encouraged to attend our next Alaska ministry informational meeting on August 19 at 7 p.m. at our conference office. We will discuss the projects, costs etc. Please call if you have questions.

NWC Ministerial Association Retreat

October 6-8, 2008, Cragun's Resort, Brainerd, MN

Our annual fall retreat is a wonderful time of renewal for our pastors, church staff and spouses. This year our theme will be, "Maintaining Momentum in Ministry." Our keynote speaker will be Ray Johnston, pastor of Granite Bay Covenant in Sacramento, CA. Gary Walter, our new President will be with us as well.

Specialty tracks in Youth Ministry, Town and Country Ministry, church planting, leadership development as well as sessions for clergy spouses will be offered.



Ray Johnston

Construction updates from around the NWC



*First Covenant Church,
Red Wing*

In June of 2005 the congregation of First Covenant Church, Red Wing, voted to increase its ministry, outreach and impact through the power and leading of the Lord Jesus Christ. After much prayer and planning a decision was made to put an addition onto the 1974 building, allowing the church to better serve the congregation and the community and to be a safe gathering place for all. With the theme, "Expanding to Serve", the congregation took that charge and in June 2008 is celebrating the completion of a 10,000 square foot, \$1.8 million expansion which includes a new family life center/gym, kitchen, offices, youth room, classrooms, fellowship areas, and an elevator. Additionally, remodeling of the older building provided a new library, nursery, children's classrooms and music room.

Mahtowa Covenant Church, Mahtowa, MN – By adding the ramp to our church many of our own church family can now more easily access our sanctuary and basement. In conjunction with the ramp addition we updated and expanded our restrooms which wholly created a handicapped accessible church facility for all to use. God is good!



*Mahtowa Covenant
Church*



*Thomastown
Covenant Church*

Thomastown Covenant Church, Staples, MN, recently added a Handicap accessible entrance and bathroom, as well as a Pastor's study to its existing facility.

Crossroads Church is relocating to Woodbury, MN late this November. This will allow Crossroads to expand its influence and have a regional impact for Christ on the east side of the metro. The new facility at 5900 Woodbury Drive consists of a 32-acre campus with a Phase 1 building of approximately 50,000 square ft. Total cost of the project is \$10.5 million.



*Crossroads Church,
Woodbury, MN*

Coming together for Children's Ministry

On Saturday, May 3, CrossRoads Covenant Church of Cottage Grove and the Northwest Conference co-sponsored a children's seminar held at our facility. Thirty children's workers representing 11 churches participated in the event. It was a joy for me to see the enthusiasm and commitment of those in attendance.

You see, I have been working with kids for a long time—first as an elementary teacher and more recently as a children's pastor. I cannot imagine doing anything else, and I have learned a few things along the way. Handy little tips like:

1) Bored kids will make their own entertainment, which will be specifically designed to interfere with whatever the adults in the room are trying to accomplish.

2) Never hand out the rhythm instruments unless it is actually time to play them.

3) No matter how cool the worship leader is, 9-year-old boys hate, hate, hate, doing actions to praise songs that look like cheerleader actions. They want gangster rap! Try doing that to "Big House."

Yet most importantly, I have discovered that my "holy discontent" (See Leadership Summit 2005) is boring kids with Jesus. I hate watching a Sunday morning group of children, staring off into space, picking their

cuticles or counting the specks in the carpet while their teacher drones on and on and on about how great Jesus is. It sets my teeth on edge! Therefore, I have stopped asking the typical Children's Ministry question, "What do kids need to know?" and started asking, "What do kids need?"

This is a huge shift for Children's Ministry. After all, conventional wisdom says the more they know the better-equipped children are to make Godly choices. Thus, for years, I worked really hard to teach kids everything they need to know about God, about the Bible, and about prayer.

They knew all the right answers, knew not to lie, but also knew to share, be kind and help others. Yet in daily life, nothing was very different for them. In my desire to share content, I was wrong. Head knowledge alone does not change lives, especially for kids. So now, I begin by asking, "What do children need?"

I believe that the answer includes four core, tangible things:

Kids need God – People were made to be in relationship with God. (Acts 27:27-28)

Kids need Love – Human beings who love and are loved thrive. (1 Corinthians 13)

Kids need to Grow – We must be allowed to grow physically, emotionally and mentally

to become fully what we were designed to be. (Ephesians 4:15)

Kids need to Share – People who think of others more than they think of themselves live lives full of meaning and joy. (Galatians 5:13)

In Children's Ministry, we must use ideas and methods that not only give head knowledge, but also foster curiosity, imagination and include opportunities for life experience. This combination is changing the lives of kids in Cottage Grove. They are having real conversations with God. They are coming up with interesting ways to serve and help others ... on their own.

However, most importantly, children's lives are changing—really changing. Boys and girls are growing and maturing into authentic, loving, self-discipling Christ-Followers and they are inviting others to do the same. I love being a Children's Pastor!

Further, I hope we can gather Children's Ministry people together again from our NWC churches, in order to grow in our ability to be effective partners in this incredibly important aspect of congregational life.

Suzanne Elliot

CrossRoads Covenant Church

Christi Pease named new Director of Women Ministries

Hello, my name is Christi Pease. I was born and raised in Massachusetts and grew up attending The Evangelical Covenant Church in Springfield, MA. My husband Ben and I live in Shoreview, MN, and we have three energetic children: Tim is 9, Corinne is 7 and John is 10 months old. Ben serves as the Youth Pastor for Salem Covenant Church in New Brighton.

On May 1, 2008, I began the exciting adventure of serving as the Director of Women Ministries for the Northwest Conference. I feel privileged, honored and humbled by God's call on my life to serve Him in this capacity. I believe that God has affirmed His call to me by filling me to overflowing with a passion for Him and for



the people I am serving.

Most simply put, I desire to be a catalyst in connecting people in God-honoring, transformational relationships. I believe that the most critical and transformational

relationship possible is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God alone has the power to direct and empower people to do His will, and our sovereign God has plans for us beyond our wildest dreams. Our diverse Northwest Conference provides wonderful opportunities to reach out in relevant ways to women of various communities, generations and socio-economic groups.

I covet your prayers that as I seek to follow Jesus Christ and encourage others to do the same, we will all advance God's kingdom through women, and connect women in transformational relationships and unite them in Christ to impact our world.

Did you know ...



The Groundbreaking Service for **Friendship Place** took place on Sunday, June 1, 2008, on the property of Rice Creek Covenant Church in Lino Lakes. God blessed those in attendance with a beautiful day. Attending this event were many family members and friends from NWC Covenant churches. Also in attendance were representatives from Covenant Ministries of Benevolence in Chicago. Work continues to progress on the project despite the rainy month. An opening date is projected for the fall of 2008.

Book Review

by Jim Fretheim

'The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken about Pastoral Transitions' by Carolyn Wieese & J. Russell Crabtree

One of the most important issues in the local church is that of pastoral transition.

How should it be done? How much notice should the pastor give? How does church leadership respond? How does a pastor function during this time? It is a subject that is typically avoided.

Our authors call it, "the elephant in the church board room."



Our Place in Duluth celebrated the 10 year anniversary of its ministry on Sunday, June 22, with a BBQ.

Once again, many family members and friends from Covenant churches participated in this special celebration.

Amazingly, all of the residents living at Our Place have been together since its inception.

Additionally, the residents of North Place in Duluth will be celebrating the five year anniversary of their home this coming fall.

They remind us that every church goes through leadership changes and that these changes do not have to be times when momentum is lost, or the mission of the church put on hold. The authors provide practical advice for a serious issue.

Pastors and congregations want smooth transitions. This book will be an important resource for every pastor and lay leader who is facing this issue. The authors provide material that is biblically based and matched with sensible management thinking.

This is a great resource. I encourage every pastor and lay leader to read it.

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The Northwest Conference is a regional conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. We are approximately 130 churches in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.



CALENDAR

August 14-16 MUUUUCE – Faith Covenant Church, Burnsville, MN

October 6-8 Ministerial Association Retreat – Cragun's, Brainerd, MN

October 18 Constructs Seminar with Dr. John Wenrich – Maple Grove Covenant

Church, Maple Grove, MN

January 10 RECHARGE – One day conference for those serving children and youth

January 17 Leadership Forum – Excelsior Covenant Church, Excelsior, MN