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## Working together

Greetings from your Northwest Conference office! It is our pleasure to serve you and the many ministries that you are involved in. Our purpose is to promote healthy churches, plant new churches and to work with you in establishing new ministries in your community.



Each day our staff spends time speaking with pastors and church leaders. Often we discuss matters of leadership and training. Some wonder

what our pastors study in seminary. This past summer I read of a young boy who thought pastors went to seminary so they could pronounce words like Ahithophel and Mephibosheth!

We want your pastors to be as effective as they can be in the ministry that they share with you. It is our privilege to welcome them and help them in every way possible.

We have just begun a program entitled "New Call." We bring pastors together who have recently begun their ministry in our conference. This program gives them encouragement and helps them get off to a good start. In addition, we will work with lay leadership to help the new chapter of ministry in any way we can.

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### ANNUAL MEETING



*The 2007 Northwest Conference Annual Meeting will be held at Prairie Hills Covenant Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.*

## Join us in Sioux Falls!

On behalf of the Prairie Hills congregation, we want to invite all of you to join us for this year's Northwest Conference Annual Meeting April 19-21, 2007.

Sioux Falls is a growing "mini metropolis" with so much to do and see. There is our beautiful historic downtown area, with unique little stores and fascinating sculptures all along the sidewalks. Falls Park lets you walk around and see "the falls" as they plunge through our distinctive pink quartzite rocks.

For the "science geeks" there is the EROS Data Center where satellite pictures from all over the globe are collected. Our downtown pavilion features an art gallery, science center and fantastic concert hall. Come find out why our city is consistently voted one of the best places to live in the country.

Prairie Hills Covenant Church was founded in 1948 and has a wonderful his-

tory of ministry. Most Covenanters know us as the church where the Covenant's ministry partnership with the Sudanese got started.

We are a growing church, having moved into a new facility in the fall of 2003. We are so thankful for God's goodness at work among us.

Hosting along with us will be our sister congregation Living Springs Covenant Church. A blessing to so many people, this church plant has been growing and thriving in our next-door town of Brandon, S.D. With their active ministry in the community and contemporary worship style, they have been able to reach many people with the love and good news of Jesus Christ.

We hope to see you in April as we are able to celebrate together God's faithfulness in our common ministry! So come out for a visit!

*Blessings to you,  
Pastors Dawn & Andrew Burnett*

## Susan Beaumont to speak at NWC Annual Meeting in April 2007

In January of 2006, the Northwest Conference sponsored a Leadership Forum at Salem Covenant Church (New Brighton, Minn.) with the Rev. Susan Beaumont of the Alban Institute. The Alban Institute is an organization that serves as a resource for local congregations.



The response to Beaumont's presentations was very positive. Therefore, the NWC is bringing her back in order to make presentations to the delegates and pastors at our next conference Annual Meeting in April.

Beaumont is a Senior Consultant with the Institute. Her areas of expertise include change management, leadership development and conflict management. She believes that every church has a God-given mission that is a unique reflection of the community it serves and the giftedness of its membership.

Further, she believes that a ministry that is spiritually vital, relationally whole and organizationally strong will naturally respond to the leading of God's Spirit, discovering and engaging its mission. Beaumont's mission is to support churches and their leaders as they seek to renew vision and revitalize ministry in their context.

We look forward to the sessions that she will lead throughout our time together in Sioux Falls. We know that our churches will benefit from her expertise and insight.

## Book Reviews

by Jim Fretheim

### "Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge"

— Edited by Kouzes and Posner

Every Christian—and certainly every church—needs to be concerned about leadership. Kouzes and Posner have compiled a series of powerful essays that provide insights on faith and leadership.

They encourage Christian leaders to put what they call the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership into play. They are: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart.

In one essay John Maxwell says, "The domain of the leader is the future." This book will introduce you to leaders who encountered huge



challenges and dealt with them. I strongly recommend this book.

### "Otherwise: New and Selected Poems" — by Jane Kenyon

Our culture has little interest in poetry, yet the Bible is filled with it.

Jane Kenyon reminds us that "the poet's job is to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, in such a beautiful way that people cannot live without it ..."

This is a powerful collection of poems that I commend to you. A number of these poems were written during her battle with leukemia. She writes, "I slept in a bed in a room with paintings on the walls, and planned another day just like this day. But one day, I know it will be otherwise." Someday it will be otherwise for all of us.

## NWC launches redesigned Web site

The Northwest Conference is pleased to announce the launch of a new Web site in January 2007.

The new site features an updated look and feel reflecting the NWC's desire to be forward thinking and focused on its mission of "healthy churches, planting churches, planting ministries."

Many of the colors, fonts and style elements of the IMPRINTS newsletter—which was also recently redesigned—are carried over into the new site, building a consistent communications palette that will help the conference convey information across multiple platforms.

The new site will have many similar elements of the old Web site including: regularly updated NWC news and events, a youth calendar, links to conference and denominational resources, links to affiliated ministries, church planting information and the NWC church directory.



Visitors will also be able to download or view current and past issues of the IMPRINTS newsletter and the NWC Leader.

The site redesign focused on the goal of making a wide range of available content and resources easily accessible through a site wide reorganization and a fresh new look. Come visit the new site and get in touch with us soon.



## Church Planting

*Clockwise from far left: Riverwood Covenant, Laotian, B.P., and Nueva Vida are examples of NWC-assisted plants.*

# Planting healthy, reproducing, kingdom-minded churches

At one point in time every church in the Northwest Conference was a church plant. It may have been 10 years ago or 100 years ago, but every one of our churches was begun by mission-minded Covenanters who understood that people seeking Jesus needed to be able to find a place to worship and grow.

Someone once said, "The kingdom of God is the rule of Christ in the hearts of people."

If that's what the kingdom of God looks like, then the goal of every believer should be to see that God's kingdom grows. We need to stay busy doing whatever it takes to partner with Christ Jesus in starting new communities of faith that will reach every neighborhood, ethnic group and age group in the cities and towns where we live. This is risky work, but the impact on individual lives, the Kingdom of God, and the community we call the Covenant Church is worth whatever it costs.

Kevin Mannoia wrote, "The Dead Sea is dead because it's not flowing into anything. Species die because they don't reproduce. Seeds rot if they are not planted. Churches and districts stagnate if there is

no new life. Inherent within a district are the seeds of its own reproduction—its churches. Church planting is to the larger district what new converts are to individual churches. Without them we become self-serving, self-perpetuating, self-centered flat-liners. If there is to be life, there must be reproduction—of disciples and of churches. It keeps us growing, it keeps us effective, it keeps us on mission."

The leadership of the NWC understands the vital necessity to be planting new churches. That's why I was called to the conference as the Director of Church Planting.

Almost all of our conferences have someone dedicated to this role. This conference is committed to planting healthy, reproducing, Kingdom-minded churches. Planting new churches allows us to reach people groups and individuals we would most likely reach no other way. The mission of planting new churches involves every single one of our congregations in the NWC.

I come to the conference with a passion for church planting. My last call was as planting pastor at Living Springs Covenant Church in Brandon, S.D. My wife and I are

in the process of getting settled in the Twin Cities as I begin serving in this new role.

The work is challenging, the opportunities are enormous, and I am thrilled at serving you and your churches in this new call. We live in a time when people's hearts are no longer focused on the things of God. Yet, God steps in and offers us words of hope and promise, just as He did to the people of Israel so long ago.

The verse God gave me through this transition is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." I believe this verse was given to me, to the church I was leaving, and to the conference as I come to this new position.

I believe our best days are ahead as a group of churches joined together in a common mission. Together we will work to bring the rule of Christ to the hearts of people throughout the NWC. Call me and let's talk about how you and your church can be a part of this vital piece of growing God's Kingdom.

*Mike Brown*

*Director of Church Planting*

# Adventurous Christians ownership transferred to Covenant Pines

**W**e are very happy to celebrate the transfer of the ownership of Adventurous Christians/Covenant Retreat Center to Covenant Pines Bible Camp.

Together we celebrate the past 20 years of ministry at AC and look forward to an expanding and growing ministry on the Gunflint Trail. Our executive board and staff have always been committed to the continued growth and development of this ministry.

We know that Covenant Pines has the capacity to continue to strengthen this significant outreach.

We encourage our conference churches



to utilize this facility and the unique setting that it offers. We will continue to use this facility for our Adventures in Leadership Retreat and our Youth Workers Retreat in coming years.

We will pray for God's ongoing blessing on the ministry of AC!

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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

**February 3** NWC Youth Pastors Gathering at Covenant Youth Pastors Connection

**February 5-9** Covenant Midwinter Conference

**February 15** Youth Pastors Connection

**March 15** Youth Pastors Connection

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

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

**April 26** Youth Pastors Connection

**May 7-9** Youth Pastors Retreat at Adventurous Christians

**June 16-23** Adventures in Leadership

## Working together

*continued from pg. 1*

I am privileged to serve with a strong team. Mark Stromberg, our Associate Superintendent, works in many areas and is eager to help with questions regarding compensation, insurance, etc. In addition, Mark is trained in Natural Church Development and is available to present that to your church.

Jon Kramka is our Director of Mission Development. Jon has a heart for the city and mission development in your commu-

nity. Jon also chairs a monthly gathering of our youth pastors. He is an experienced administrator and can provide strong assistance to your ministry.

Mike Brown has just joined our team as our Director of Church Planting. He comes to us with lots of experience in church planting and a passion for evangelism. Welcome Mike!

Nicole Stenstrom is our Office Manager and can answer your questions regarding the processing of clergy credentialing. Don't hesitate to call her.

Cheryl Theilen is responsible for confer-

ence communications. This newsletter, the Web site and other updates come under her bailiwick. Cheryl looks forward to hearing from you as well.

Three times a year we offer a Leadership Forum—in the fall, at our Annual Meeting, and at our clergy retreat. These are opportunities for you to learn from some of the most knowledgeable teachers and leaders in the country. Be sure to get a group from your congregation and participate in these presentations! Be certain of our commitment to you and your ministry!

*Jim Fretheim, Superintendent*