

# Delegate Summary

## Introduction

The following is a distillation of the key decisions and highlights of this year's Annual Meeting to assist you in sharing what you have learned with your church. Among the potential opportunities to share with your congregation: highlighting key activities and decisions during a business meeting or worship service; providing a report to your congregation's board, council, or leadership team; submitting a written or oral report during a church business meeting, including a brief report in your church newsletter.

## Key Decisions and Highlights

- Throughout the weekend, pastors, delegates and attendees heard video and spoken testimony on the topic of leadership development and participated in workshops offering different perspectives on leading in the Church.
- Mark Seversen, Director of Missional Congregations, brought greetings and a ministry update from the Evangelical Covenant Church to delegates at both the Ministerial Association and Northwest Conference Annual Meetings.
- NWC Superintendent Mark R. Stromberg thanked churches for their individual ministries doing Kingdom work in the area in which they reside and challenged churches to consider our "Christian mandate to preach the Gospel and make disciples." Stromberg highlighted the NWC Second Miler program, which collects gifts from individuals within the Conference and distributes them in the form of quarterly grants to churches with specific needs.
- Jon Kramka, Director of Congregational Vitality, shared that throughout the last year, eight churches began their journey in revitalization through Veritas. Seven churches utilized Pulse to assess how well they are living out the 10 Healthy Missional Markers of a congregation—the largest number in a single year since Congregational Vitality efforts began in the NWC. And clusters of pastors and congregations that are "traveling the Vitality Pathway" together are forming around the NWC for mutual support and encouragement.
- Mike Brown, Director of Church Planting, shared that since launching "50 by '25: Our Mission to Plant" at the 2014 Annual Meeting, the NWC has seen 11 new churches started. Brown introduced one new church fellowship group, Lighthouse Covenant Church, Pastor Dee McIntosh (Minneapolis), which began earlier in 2017. Three new church plants also signed new Covenant Agreements on stage during the meeting, including: Awaken Covenant Community, Pastor Dan Lukas (St. Paul), Mid-current Covenant Church, Pastor Sten Carlson (Hudson, WI), and Lakeside Covenant Church, Pastor Steve Anderson (Chanhassen, MN).
- Kara Stromberg, Director of Children & Family Ministry, shared that 90 churches in the NWC have entirely volunteer-led children's ministries. "I get really excited thinking about some of these smaller, volunteer-led ministries that have lots of opportunities for intergenerational interaction," Stromberg said. Stromberg then highlighted the NWC's efforts to equip staff and volunteer leaders in Conference churches through ongoing initiatives like Go:Serve and monthly Connection gatherings for leaders.
- Ginny Olson, Director of Youth Ministry, praised NWC churches that are "stepping out in faith" to hire new youth pastors—with 12 new youth pastors starting ministry in Conference churches this year alone. She also highlighted

NWC youth events like MOVE, MUUUCE and Adventures in Leadership, which call students to leadership in the Church.

- Jeff Burton, Director of Pastoral Care & Development, highlighted two trends witnessed in pastoral ministry throughout the NWC—increased conversations with local churches around issues of caring for pastors (fair compensation, healthy workload, sabbaticals), and the sheer number of transitions that pastors are experiencing within the Northwest Conference (retirement, moving from one congregation to another). The ministry area of PC&D in the NWC supports over 500 church staff and other leaders, spread over four states.
- Greg Ellis, Coordinator of CHET NWC, shared the vision of CHET to transform communities with the good news of Jesus Christ through Latino and Latina leaders. While experiencing a lower number of registrations than in years past, CHET NWC is continuing to evaluate its programming to ensure “we are developing leaders in the way that best fits the need” to develop Hispanic leaders in the Twin Cities and beyond.
- Attendees heard a report celebrating 40 years of women in pastoral leadership from Jan Bros, Pastor of Abbey Way Covenant Church, liaison to the NWC for Advocates for Covenant Clergy Women, and a member of the ECC’s Commission on Biblical Gender Equality, which works to help clergy women fully live into their calls.

- The ECC’s 3StrandStrong giving initiative was also introduced during Friday’s business session. The ECC’s and NWC’s hope is that every congregation would advance its percentage giving over time to both the Covenant and Conference toward a combined 10 percent or beyond as together we pursue God-orchestrated opportunities to do Kingdom work.
- Minnehaha Academy President Donna Harris shared highlights from the life and activities of the school, including new action on the results of a recently conducted Spiritual Formation Assessment through Arbor Research Group. Harris shared updates on each recommendation from ARG, including the creation of a Faith Formation statement, and the creation of a new Executive Director of Faith Formation position at the school.
- Delegates also heard reports from leaders of the Ministerial Association of the NWC and Covenant Trust Company.
- The Maple Grove Covenant worship team led attendees in worship during the Friday evening worship service. Five Candidates for Ordination were also recognized and prayed for during the service.
- A special offering taken during the service raised over \$2,200 to support the Solid Rock School of Discipleship at Lake Beauty Bible Camp.
- Church representatives also brought forward prayer book-

marks collected as part of the ECC’s BLESS Intentional Evangelism initiative, which will be brought to Gather 2017, the national Covenant annual meeting in June.

- Emmaus Road Covenant Church (Hopkins, MN) and Good Shepherd Covenant Church (Blaine, MN) were honored with a special Living Legacy Litany. Both churches held their final services in 2016.
- During Saturday’s Business Session, delegates approved a ballot that included: electing Jim Volling (Excelsior Covenant Church, Excelsior, MN) to serve another year as NWC Executive Board Chairperson, Nichelle Kaul (Salem Covenant, New Brighton, MN) and Jeff Laabs (Mission Covenant, Poplar, WI) to 5-year terms on the NWC Executive Board, and electing Tim Carlson (Crossroads Church, Eagan, MN), Vanda Niemi (Bethlehem Covenant, Minneapolis, MN), and David Sylvester (Bethlehem Covenant, Minneapolis, MN) to 5-year terms on the Minnehaha Academy Board of Trustees.
- Delegates approved the MA budget, and the full NWC budget of \$1,566,047 at the meeting’s second Business Session on Saturday morning.
- During that meeting, attendees also heard verbal reports from leaders of Covenant Enabling Residences of MN, Camping Ministry in the NWC, and Women Ministries of the NWC.