



September 2017

From the Northwest Conference Superintendent

Dear Friends and Co-laborers in Kingdom Work,

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

I kindly request that you take the time to read this entire letter.

As you are no doubt aware, our beloved Northwest Conference school, Minnehaha Academy, experienced a horrific explosion at its Upper School facility on Wednesday, Aug. 2. Tragically, two employees, Ruth Berg and John Carlson, were killed as a result. A number of other faculty and staff members were also injured. This included the loss of a leg by custodian and assistant soccer coach, Bryan Duffey. Please continue to pray for him in his rehabilitation.

Needless to say, this has created enormous complexities and continues to be a source of great pain and trauma for those who personally experienced the explosion, but also for the rest of the faculty and staff. There were also some students at the school at the time of the explosion. Thankfully, none were injured, but some of these young people are also reeling from what they witnessed on that day.

This event has also precipitated having to find an alternative site at which M.A. will conduct classes for its 9-12th graders for the next two years as the school seeks to rebuild. Praise God that a temporary facility has been found and classes have begun! As you can imagine, those of us on the Minnehaha Board of Trustees are having to lean heavily on the very people that are still experiencing the pain and shock of what took place. Please continue to pray for school leadership.

Minnehaha has been such a positive influence on so many within the Northwest Conference as well as within the entire Covenant Church, and beyond. Thus, as Superintendent, I am declaring the month of October to be **“Minnehaha Academy Month”** in our region.

As such, I am strongly appealing to each and every one of our churches and leaders by requesting the following:

- 1. Please identify one Sunday in October to highlight the ministry of Minnehaha Academy in your church service.** Let people know that Minnehaha is owned by the NWC. Please find the enclosed insert to be used with any bulletin you might have. These could also be placed in church mail boxes or mailed out to your people. You may also find a copy of this insert and an additional slide graphic for onscreen promotions on the NWC website for replication.
- 2. Pray for Minnehaha in the service.** While many churches prayed for the school immediately following the explosion, we want to assure school leaders of our continued prayers throughout the school year.
- 3. Announce prior to that particular Sunday service that an offering will be taken on that day for the school as a ministry we share in common with churches throughout our region.**
- 4. Have your people make out their checks to your local church designated for Minnehaha Academy.**

5. Have your church then send one check made out to the Northwest Conference designated for Minnehaha. We will then provide one check to the school with 100% of the funds collected from churches. We will also send an accompanying letter expressing our prayers and support, listing each church that participated in the love offering. The actual amounts received from each church will not be included in this particular letter. Rather, it will be a sign of solidarity with the school where “In It Together” participation will be the primary message conveyed. However, the dollar amount given from each church will be made available to the M.A. finance department for its records.

6. Our goal is to present these funds to school leadership by mid-November.

We know that on the front end of any tragedy, many people rally around to lend support. However, we also know that, in time, many move on to other things. This leaves the primary burden on those who are most directly part of the Minnehaha community, primarily administration and faculty members. Therefore, the offering collected will provide resources to be utilized at the discretion of school leadership. These funds may be for such things as classroom supplies or faculty assistance. The funds may also help cover other unanticipated and indirect needs as a result of the explosion and subsequent relocation. We believe that this is an appropriate and much-needed use of the funds for several reasons:

1. At the heart of what makes Minnehaha a special place where students are presented with the good news of Jesus Christ are faculty members. If they are resourced properly, the school will be made stronger.
2. With the recent tragedy, we believe that our shared gift will be a tangible sign of support and a source of great encouragement to the faculty and administration of the school as they carry out their responsibilities in leadership and in the classroom.
3. This allows us to aid the school in a very practical and much-needed way during this time of transition and recovery.

If ever there was a time to show our collective support for one of our most historic and life-changing ministries, it is now!

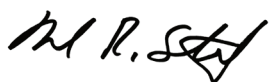
As a graduate of Minnehaha Academy, I can personally attest to the impact it had on my life. I know that many other pastors and missionaries can say the same, let alone the countless people that have gone on to serve the Lord as committed disciples in our churches and beyond.

Would you be willing to participate in standing alongside our school?

If you will plan to participate, please email me directly at mark@northwestconference.org or call me at 612-554-2643.

Thank you ahead of time for your willingness to be a blessing to those that help make M.A. a place where Christian faith and learning continue to be joined together.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Stromberg
Superintendent