

FORWARD IN HOPE

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN,
YOUTH & FAMILIES

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE
2018 ANNUAL MEETING

NWC 2018 Annual Meeting in Buffalo to focus on ministry with Children, Youth & Families

By Mark R. Stromberg, Superintendent

The 2018 Northwest Conference and Ministerial Association Annual Meetings will be held at Buffalo Covenant Church in Buffalo, MN, on April 26-28, 2018. The theme for the upcoming meeting is “Forward in Hope: Ministry with Children, Youth & Families.”

Within our mission region for the Evangelical Covenant Church, we have three distinct ministry priorities. These are: Congregational Vitality, Church Planting and Children, Youth & Families. While ministry with younger people is often listed last as we give voice to

our priorities, it is by no means less important. Far from it! Remember, we were all once young. We all had others believe in us and pour in to our lives. As such, it is now our calling to pour into those who follow after us. “Freely we have received ... freely we are to give.”

This year’s theme is especially relevant to the work of the Conference as we think about the explosion at our school, Minnehaha Academy, in August. Countless young people have heard the good news of Jesus Christ and been nurtured in their faith within its

walls. These walls are now gone, but its witness to children and youth continues on as expressed in the historic school motto, “Where Youth Meets Truth.”

We also think of our five camps and the incredible work that the Holy Spirit does at each one year in and year out. And then, we think of the high-impact Conference and Covenant events that take place each year geared ➡





➔ toward both the youth and children in our midst and in our neighborhoods.

And finally, we are mindful of the incredible faithfulness of a myriad of youth workers, children’s workers, pastors, Sunday School and Confirmation teachers, and other volunteers who have given of themselves sacrificially so that newer generations might come to know the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ.

The impact of all these things is beyond calculation and many of us have been the beneficiaries of the faithfulness and steadfast service of others. As such, we are pleased to be able to highlight this ministry priority at our upcoming meetings in April.

The Ministerial Association Annual Meeting (for pastors) will take place April 26-27. Then, the

Northwest Conference Annual Meeting (for church delegates, lay leaders, pastors and others) will follow on April 27-28.

At both the Ministerial and General Delegate meetings, participants will have opportunities to select specific workshops to attend that will provide different perspectives on children, youth & family ministry within the Church. Some of these workshops may be geared more for pastors and ministry staff members, while others will be focused more heavily on the work of volunteers.

We are also pleased that Tim Ciccone—Director of Youth Ministry for the Evangelical Covenant Church, and Acting Director of the Center for Youth Ministry Studies at North Park University—will be the preacher at the Ministerial Association Communion Service

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on Thursday evening. On Friday evening, Tiger McLuen, the former President of Youth Leadership will be the one sharing a message of inspiration and hope. At that service, there will also be an opportunity to receive an offering to support CHIC 2018 as it seeks to help students both find and grow in Christ. Please plan to help CHIC by giving generously!

I invite you to mark your calendars and begin considering who from your church should attend this year’s meeting. Registration details and more information are available online and will be delivered to each church in the coming weeks.

Come and learn. Be both encouraged and challenged.

Gather: ECC Annual Meeting coming to Minneapolis this summer

By Mark R. Stromberg, Superintendent

The Covenant Annual Meeting—called “Gather”—is coming to the Northwest Conference in downtown Minneapolis this June 21-23! In other words, this time around it will be our turn to host this important event.

The theme for the meeting this summer will be “Love Mercy, Do Justice.” It will also be a time when a number of important leadership decisions will be made, including the election of a new ECC president.

We want our NWC churches to be strongly represented as, we believe, this will be a very important time in shaping the Covenant Church in the years ahead. Please make the participation of your church a priority!

Children’s ministry volunteer needs for ECC Annual meeting

We are in need of individuals who love Jesus and love kids who can volunteer with children’s ministry during the ECC Annual Meeting. Contact Kara Stromberg at the NWC office if you’re interested.

- Help facilitate Go:Serve, a service and learning opportunity for families (Thursday)
- Set up children’s ministry rooms prior to evening worship (Thursday)
- Serve in nursery, toddler and grade school children’s ministry during daytime meetings (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday)

- Serve in nursery, toddler and grade school rooms during evening worship (Thursday, Friday, Saturday evenings)
- Clean up/tear down: take everything apart, and pack it up for next year (Saturday evening)

General Volunteers

Volunteers will also be needed for pre-meeting preparation, registration, worship service greeters and ushers, behind the scenes support, and business meeting sergeants-at-arms and tellers. Contact Cheryl Theilen at the NWC office for more information.



Sanctuary Covenant Senior Pastor **Dennis Edwards** (left), and planting pastor **Efrem Smith** (right)

Sanctuary Covenant dedicates new building in North Minneapolis

By Jessa Anderson, Administrative Coordinator

In 1885, congregants from the Swedish Tabernacle in Minneapolis felt called to bring ministry to the North Minneapolis community. A group from the church began preaching and ministering in the area and soon felt called to plant a church.

They built a chapel that mainly housed space for Sunday schools. In 1890, the group formally split from the Swedish Tabernacle and began the Swedish Mission Church. When the congregation became too large in 1905, the church moved to a lot at West Broadway and Aldrich and changed its name to Broadway Temple—and eventually Broadway Covenant Church.

The church built a sanctuary to seat 1,000 people with the hope of a thriving local ministry. In 1958, after many years reaching the community, the congregation moved to a new location—due to

the high cost of building maintenance and a neighborhood rapidly changed by new businesses resulting in the relocation of its members. After struggling to find a buyer, the congregation sold the property to a car dealership and the church was torn down.

Sixty years later, a new Covenant church with a heart for North Minneapolis would break ground and dedicate a new church building across the street.

Sanctuary Covenant Church

Sanctuary Covenant Church was birthed 14 years ago by a group of believers—including Pastor Efrem Smith, Cecilia Williams and Kevin Farmer—to bring reconciliation, multicultural worship, and embrace diversity in the community of North Minneapolis.

Sanctuary became a voice of reconciliation and cultivated a new

sense of worship and outreach. In 2011, many of the key senior leaders of the church were called to serve in other locations, and Sanctuary was forced to consider what God's intentions were for the church in the years to come.

"While there was a focus on deepening in our commitments to one another and God, we realized that our growth and potential was constantly bumping up against the reality that we didn't have a 7-day-a-week welcoming place in the community," said Mike Hotz, Associate Pastor of Care and Outreach. "The question we felt God asking was, 'Who are you becoming?'"

Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Dennis Edwards, who joined Sanctuary in 2012, along with other key leaders in the church began the conversation about building a "Gathering Place." After meeting in local public schools for over 14 years, they knew they needed

a place that could offer more effective ministry.

"We imagined a building as a resource for our neighbors," Edwards said, "not just for ourselves. We wanted a multi-purpose auditorium, not a Sunday-only room with fixed pews/chairs, to ensure that the space could be flexible. In my experience as an urban church planter and pastor, I know that church buildings must be flexible community spaces."

As they prayed for space in North Minneapolis, they searched all over and found nothing. Then, in 2013, they found an available space located in one of the busiest areas of North Minneapolis, almost directly across the street from the former Broadway Covenant Church that had the same heart for its community over 100 years ago.

"Many other ministry leaders have affirmed how strategic our location is near the busy Lyndale and Broadway intersection," Edwards said. "This location creates opportunity for us to shift resources to build better connections with our neighbors. We believe our church—the building and our congregation—are assets to our North Minneapolis neighbors."

On Jan. 7, 2018, Sanctuary Covenant Church officially celebrated with its congregation and neighbors in dedicating the new building at 710 West Broadway Ave. The ministries that will continue to happen in this new location will carry out the vision and calling that has been working in the hearts of God's people in this neighborhood for many years past—and many to come.



50 by '25: Our Mission to Plant update

By Mike Brown,
Director of Church Planting

Our exciting Northwest Conference commitment to the "50 by '25: Our Mission to Plant" initiative is continuing. We are trusting God to see 50 new churches planted by 2025 and we have been praying and working toward that goal.

As a Conference, we continue to see God raise up gifted church planters who are being assessed, trained and resourced to birth healthy, missional new churches.

On Jan. 1, 2018, we saw the birth of our newest church plant—Genesis Covenant Church East, led by Pastor Aaron Freer. Genesis East is being planted in White Bear Lake, MN, which is the northeast edge of the Twin Cities metro area.

This newest plant is a network plant, parented by Genesis Covenant Church in St. Louis Park, MN. Aaron recently completed a six-month residency at Genesis where he was able to raise support, gather people and complete a well-conceived church planting project plan.

Please pray for Aaron and the other new planting pastors who will hopefully begin planting this spring/early summer.



Navigate 2017

By Jon Kramka, Director of Congregational Vitality

The Navigate Conference is an annual event facilitated by the ECC Congregational Vitality ministry team in November. The event offers a weekend of training for pastors and lay leaders representing cohorts of churches who are walking the Congregational Vitality Pathway.

At the November 2017 event, workshops centered on the 10 Healthy Missional Markers, along with plenary sessions on the Holy Spirit, Church Culture and Congregational Renewal. Following the weekend schedule, pastors remained for several more days of training specific to the pastor's role in vitality ministry.

This year, a record 29 churches from eight conferences attended—totaling 156 conferees! Participating from the NWC were Brookdale Covenant (Brooklyn Center, MN), Calvary Covenant (Evansville, MN) and Living Springs Covenant (Brandon, SD).

Evangelism Cohort continues into second year

By John Jacobi, Lead Pastor of Crosstown Covenant Church



On the first Monday of the month, for the second consecutive year, 10 pastors continue to meet for the Covenant's Intentional Evangelism Cohort. These sessions are led by ECC Evangelism Director Dr. Beth Severson, who travels to the "Bold North" to provide leadership and expertise. The purpose of the cohort is to move forward in understanding Paul's word to Timothy that we might "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5).

In year one, cohort sessions focused on the concept of "Organic Outreach." Pastors and congregations were provided with specific tools and resources that would allow evangelistic passion to be grafted into the DNA of each congregation. One specific practice was to foster the raising of an individual's "Evangelistic Temperature" by one degree.

In year two, cohort sessions are moving further in what it is required to fuse evangelistic passion into the heart of a congregation. We've spent time in theological reflection through interacting with Reggie McNeal's volume, "Missional Communities." This book has been a catalyst in leading pastors to ponder the "missional amnesia" of the Church.

We've been challenged to consider how the church in North America has forsaken its "sentness." As a result, the Church has been content to take up residence in a safe and comfortable "holy huddle."

Our hope is to move forward as congregations who "break the huddle" and move with thoughtful hearts of mission to engage all those outside the church.

At our most recent gathering, pastors were challenged to bring a sermon to preach. Our purpose was to move forward as communicators who are able to clearly articulate Jesus' good news to those outside the Church. After these were shared with the cohort, we engaged in a time of feedback and critique with each preacher.

Our diagnostic questions included: Did the preacher internalize the message so that it would be experienced as authentic? Was the preacher able to "translate" what was being said so that unchurched people would stay engaged? How might this preacher move forward in communicating with unchurched people?

The Intentional Evangelism Cohort is equipping pastors with fresh skills to share Jesus in a new day!

Marshall selected to lead ECC Congregational Vitality

By Stan Friedman, Covenant Newswire



Shaun Marshall has been named the Director of Congregational Vitality for the Evangelical Covenant Church. He previously served as Senior Pastor of Community Covenant Church in Calumet Park, IL, and began his new duties in January.

"Shaun is a strong and gifted leader," said John Wenrich, Executive Minister of Start and Strengthen Churches. "He is consciously dependent on the Holy Spirit. Shaun's understanding of both congregational vitality and church planting makes him an excellent choice for the Start and Strengthen team."

Prior to serving Community Covenant, Marshall was the executive pastor at Citadel of Faith Covenant Church in Detroit, and served on the boards of

the Great Lakes Conference and National Covenant Properties.

His expertise has been recognized beyond the Covenant as well. Marshall founded and has served as principal consultant of Marshall & Associates Consulting, which has provided leadership development, training and coaching services to numerous churches and faith-based nonprofits for the past 12 years. He has also served as a speaker and trainer with the Willow Creek Association.

"Looking back over my life, I can see how God has been at work preparing me to serve in a role like this," Marshall said. "As I join this team, my hope is to serve our congregations in every context as they partner with the Holy Spirit to strengthen the health and mission of their local ministry."

Shaun is a native of Chicago, married to Veronica. They have a daughter, Sage Olivia.

Hop on the bus to Go:Serve 2018!

By Kara Stromberg, Director of Children & Family Ministry

An intergenerational, family-friendly service and learning experience. Appropriate for ages 5-105.

Come and see what God is doing in the Twin Cities through an interactive and experiential bus tour, with stops to serve and to connect with our larger Covenant family through visits to some of our Covenant churches that partner with community ministries.

The Minneapolis and St. Paul metro area is a rich and culturally-unique landscape. We invite you and your family to take a day to participate in some interactive service and learning opportunities to see how we can be better together as we impact our communities with the good news of Jesus. Learn from Covenant ministries in the Twin Cities and dream about how God might be inviting you to impact your community back home. Come and see, then go and serve.

For event updates, go to northwestconference.org/event/go-serve-2018.



Go:Serve
Thursday, June 21, 2018
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Twin Cities, MN

Marcy Baumann to speak at WMNWC Renewal Conference



By Rachel Kleinschmidt, Consultant for Women Ministries of the Northwest Conference



The WMNWC Spring Renewal will take place March 16-17, 2018, at Bloomington Covenant Church in Bloomington, MN. The speaker will be Pastor Marcy Baumann from Crossroads Church in Eagan. She will be speaking on the theme of BLESS—the Intentional Evangelism Initiative put

out by Make & Deepen Disciples.

The weekend will also include a selection of break-out sessions, featuring topics such as prayer, starting women ministries at your church, women and

finances and more. Other session topics will focus on the WMNWC-sponsored mission trip to Sweden and the trip to Congo to visit the Lycee Vanette School for Girls.

For those interested in early-bird opportunities, there will be an AVA workshop led by Amy Deike on Preventing Childhood Sexual Abuse on Friday afternoon, followed by a hands-on project at the Closet of Hope at Bloomington Covenant.

Registration packets will be sent out to all churches, and all registration materials can be found online at www.wmnwc.org.

NWC Calendar

2.3 » Recharge – New Covenant Bible Church, Cedar Rapids, IA

2.10 » Recharge – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Duluth, MN

3.13 » Ministerial Association Theological Symposium – Salem Covenant Church, New Brighton, MN

3.16-17 » Women Ministries Renewal Conference – Bloomington Covenant Church

4.6-7 » MOVE 2018 – Minnehaha Academy South Campus, Minneapolis, MN

4.26-27 » Ministerial Association Annual Meeting – Buffalo Covenant Church

4.27-28 » Northwest Conference Annual Meeting – Buffalo Covenant Church

6.16-23 » Adventures in Leadership – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

6.21 » Go:Serve – Twin Cities, MN

6.21-23 » Gather '18 – Minneapolis Marriott City Center

7.15-20 » CHIC 2018 – University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

10.8-10 » Ministerial Association Fall Retreat – Pier B Resort, Duluth, MN

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