

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

- Northwest Conference Superintendent Mark R. Stromberg, who was re-elected to serve a third four-year term, shared, "I'm grateful to God to be able to serve the very churches and ministries that have played such a significant role in my own life."
- Throughout the weekend, pastors, delegates and attendees heard video and spoken testimony on the topic of evangelism.
- Michelle Sanchez, ECC Executive Minister of Make & Deepen Disciples, brought greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church. Sanchez shared that "disciples making disciples through evangelism" is one aspect of ECC President John Wenrich's six-point vision for the denomination. She announced that the ECC will soon be hiring a Director of Evangelism.
- During his report, Superintendent Stromberg shared about the many good things that can happen when we join together, including sending missionaries, starting new churches, resourcing existing churches, facilitating group homes for the developmentally disabled, supporting Bible camps and much more.
- Stromberg shared that Director of Pastoral Care & Development, Jeff Burton, will retire from full-time ministry this summer but will continue to serve the NWC in a part-time capacity. Pastor Hollis Kim was announced as the incoming Director of Pastoral Care & Development.
- In place of individual reports, this year's meeting featured a NWC Ministry Director Panel where Conference staff shared how their areas of ministry oversight have seen fruit in the area of evangelism.
- Mike Brown, Director of Church Planting explained that the NWC helps church plants reach new people through ongoing resourcing and coaching. "We plant churches because it shows our love for those God has placed around us," Brown shared. "More churches results in more church attendees. Church Planting is a very effective way for us to reach the unchurched."
- Jeff Burton, Director of Pastoral Care & Development, highlighted the work the NWC does to help its pastors have a healthier rhythm in ministry—and "have a life outside the Church," in order to stay healthy and continue the work of being in evangelism.
- Ginny Olson, Director of Youth Ministry, said research shows students often make a decision to follow Christ when they are in a setting that's "away from their normal environment." Special events like the NWC's MOVE, Adventures in Leadership and MUUUUCE, give students an opportunity to pause, reflect and experience Christ during this adolescent time of life. Olson announced the formation of a Youth Ministry Coaching Cohort launching in September.
- Jon Kramka, Director of Congregational Vitality, shared that many churches are seeing success in evangelistic efforts through affin-

ity groups, created around common points of interest, that allow for fresh intersection with others—particularly those who are not yet followers of Christ. “Intentional evangelism is a fundamental component to being and becoming a healthy, missional church,” Kramka said.

- Kara Stromberg, Director of Children & Family Ministry, said evangelism is most effective among kids and young people because children are so receptive to the Good News of Christ. Stromberg shared that her ministry area works with Minnehaha Academy, with Covenant Camps and summer camp speakers, new church plants and established churches—in a variety of ways—to strengthen ministry to kids in the Conference.
- Brown introduced three new church fellowship groups, including: The Crossing Covenant Church, Pastor Michele Arndt (Houlton, WI), North City Covenant Church, Pastors JD and ChristianAnn Larson (Minneapolis, MN), and Nuestra Esperanza Covenant Church, Pastors Hector and Betty Reyes (New Hope, MN).
- Mauricio Dell’Arciprete, Coordinator of Latino Ministry, shared that over 40 students are being prepared for ministry through CHET happening in two Covenant church locations in the Twin Cities.
- Minnehaha Academy President Donna Harris again expressed gratitude for the pastoral support from the NWC and its staff follow-

ing the Aug. 2, 2017, explosion at the school’s Upper Campus, as well as for the financial support given by the NWC and its churches.

- Harris shared a slideshow of photos from the life of the school that highlighted recent athletic and academic accomplishments of MA students, as well as highlights from the reconstruction of the Upper Campus. Substantial completion of construction is expected by the first week of August, with students returning this fall for the 2019-20 school year.
- The HOPE Covenant worship team led attendees in worship during the Friday evening worship service.
- Nine Candidates for Ordination were also recognized and prayed for during the service.
- A special offering taken during the service raised \$2,500 to benefit the HOPE Church Community Care Center & Food Pantry.
- Church representatives also brought forward prayer bookmarks collected as part of the ECC’s BLESS Intentional Evangelism initiative, which will be brought to Gather 2019, the national Covenant annual meeting in June.
- All three of the New Church Fellowship Groups recognized during the Business Session earlier in the day, signed Covenant Agreements on stage during the service.
- During Saturday’s Business Session, delegates approved a ballot that included the election of Jim Volling (Excelsior Covenant Church, Excel-

sior, MN) to serve another year as NWC Executive Board Chairperson, Paul Knight (HOPE Covenant, Grand Forks, ND) to a 1-year term, Linda Solie (Bethlehem Covenant, Minneapolis, MN) and Chris Studenski (Emmanuel Covenant, Shoreview, MN) to 5-year terms on the NWC Executive Board, and electing Sean Mahoney (Plymouth Covenant, Plymouth, MN) and Todd O’Bert (Bethlehem Covenant, Minneapolis, MN) to 5-year terms on the Minnehaha Academy Board of Trustees.

- Delegates approved the NWC budget of \$1,619,175, as well as the budget for Minnehaha Academy.
- On Saturday morning, attendees also heard reports from leaders of Camping Ministry in the NWC, Women Ministries of the NWC, the NWC Ministerial Association, Covenant Enabling Residences of MN, Covenant Village of Golden Valley, National Covenant Properties and Covenant Trust Company.
- Following the Saturday Business Session, staff and lay leaders from several NWC churches shared examples of how evangelism is practiced in their local contexts. Teams from Excelsior Covenant Church (Excelsior, MN), Dawson Covenant Church (Dawson, MN), HOPE Covenant Church (Grand Forks, ND), Eden Community Covenant Church (Coon Rapids, MN) and Unidad Covenant Church (Fridley, MN) shared stories of life change through intentional evangelism.