

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

- Over 150 Zoom users participated in the Annual Meeting, including some households and churches with multiple viewers in one location. The day before, over 150 pastors took part in the Ministerial Association Annual Meeting as well.
- Throughout the worship, business session and educational workshops, pastors, delegates and attendees heard video and spoken testimony of God's faithfulness as we've all had to cling to the hope we have in Christ throughout the COVID pandemic and recent racial injustices.
- The Northwest Conference Annual Meeting began with a time of worship, prayer and reflection at 9 a.m.
- NWC Superintendent Mark Stromberg then welcomed delegates and attendees, saying, "Is there any better time in which to preach the Gospel? Is there any better time in which people need the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Now is the time to lean into the very things that we say, the very things that we profess to be true."
- Following the greeting, a slideshow of photos from the 2020 ministry year—submitted by NWC churches, camps and Minnehaha Academy—told the story in images of how we moved from hardship to hope.
- NWC Associate Superintendent Kara Stromberg offered a devotion, highlighting the many hardships of 2020—from COVID to injustice, violence and a racial reckoning, to a contentious political environment and presidential election.
- The worship session concluded with a performance of Deitrick Haddon's "He's Able," by the worship team at The Sanctuary Covenant Church in Minneapolis, MN.
- Attendees then heard testimony from leaders of four NWC churches about their ministry journeys through the challenges of 2020. The Hardship to Hope video highlights Epiphany Covenant Church (Minneapolis, MN, and Turtle Mountain, ND), Destino Covenant Church (Minneapolis, MN), Brookdale Covenant Church (Brooklyn Cen-
- ter, MN), and Alexandria Covenant Church (Alexandria, MN).
- In place of individual staff reports, this year's meeting featured a joint report given by Superintendent Mark Stromberg and Associate Superintendent Kara Stromberg.
- During his report, Mark shared some of the many blessings of God in the adversity of 2020. Superintendent Stromberg highlighted how the pandemic, loss and discomfort of the ministry year, and more, brought on a time of awareness, maturity and growth. He also thanked attendees for their faithfulness during these challenging days, as evidenced by ongoing support of the NWC, Covenant camps and Minnehaha Academy, through prayers, finances and a willingness to serve.
- During her report, Associate Superintendent Kara Stromberg shared how the NWC staff pivoted throughout the year to adjust to the realities of COVID and other hardships. Kara highlighted

how NWC staff members coordinated requests for counseling and spiritual direction, increased communication and online resourcing throughout the year, helped churches navigate health department guidelines for re-opening, continued to assist in planting new churches, supported children and family ministry leaders as they adapted to new realities, and continued to walk alongside churches in the journey toward vitality.

- Four churches that will be removed from the roster of the Evangelical Covenant Church were announced: Monticello Covenant Church (Monticello, MN) and Grace Outreach Covenant Church (Coon Rapids, MN) concluded their ministries, and Abbey Way Covenant Church (Minneapolis, MN) and Genesis West Covenant Church (Robbinsdale, MN) made the decision to disaffiliate with the ECC.
- 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.
- The Minnehaha Academy report began with a video of the Upper School choir's performance of "Stand Up" from the movie "Harriet," filmed for the 2021 Revue—exemplifying creativity in fine arts programming during COVID.
- Minnehaha Academy President Donna Harris then greeted attendees via a recorded video message, saying, "As a ministry of the North-

west Conference, Minnehaha Academy has been blessed and encouraged by our ongoing partnership."

- Harris shared how school faculty and staff worked to prepare MA campuses for in-person learning during the pandemic—including modified schedules, health protocols, upgraded ventilation systems and reduced cohorts of students.
- Harris shared a slideshow of photos from the life of the school that highlighted recent athletic and academic accomplishments of MA students, the new Minnehaha Leadership Institute and increased enrollment statistics—despite the "unusual" school year.
- During the Business Session, delegates approved a ballot that included the election of Jim Volling (Excelsior Covenant Church, Excelsior, MN) to serve another year as NWC Executive Board Chairperson, Nikki Kahoud (Rochester Covenant, Rochester, MN) and Dan Riley (Buffalo Covenant, Buffalo, MN) to 5-year terms on the NWC Executive Board, and electing Erica Jensen (Sanctuary Covenant, Minneapolis, MN), Jenny Johnson (First Covenant, St. Paul, MN) and Aaron Kardell (Sanctuary Covenant, Minneapolis, MN) to 5-year terms on the Minnehaha Academy Board of Trustees.
- Delegates approved the NWC budget of \$1,607,404, as well as the budget of \$15,234,200 for Minnehaha Academy.
- A special offering was taken during the meeting to benefit Covenant

Ability Network-MN Group Home Residences, serving those with physical and mental disabilities. The amount to be given will be announced at a later date. The funds will be used to bless these front-line workers who work tirelessly to care for those among us who need additional assistance to live full and meaningful lives, seeking to focus on what these residents can do rather than merely the challenges they face.

- The Business Session concluded with a video from the Evangelical Covenant Church called 3Strand-Stronger.
- Eleven candidates for Ordination were recognized in a pre-meeting slideshow.
- Following the Business Session, delegates and attendees had the opportunity to attend educational workshops hosted on Zoom, including: Looking Ahead in the ECC, Looking Ahead in the NWC, Managing Finances and Facility During a Crisis and Beyond, Faith and Fake News, and First Steps: Equipping Parents for Discipleship in the Home.