

DEAR MINISTRY COLLEAGUES,

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." — Philippians 1:3-6

Paul writes this letter to the church in Philippi while under arrest and under very difficult circumstances—yet the word joy appears in this very short letter more than a dozen times as do other words like hope and expectation that at first glance seem to defy the circumstances. Yet that is what Jesus did then and continues to do for his children even today.

Many of us are coming out of experiences not as dire as Paul's but certainly spaces of challenge and it's my prayer that the hope and joy we have that is rooted in Jesus would pervade even the most arduous places in our lives and ministries. You are not laboring in vain as Philippians 2:16 reminds, and I pray that joy and hope Paul experiences in our text would not only fill you but be seen in your cities, towns, churches and contexts—and bring people one step closer to a God who can give hope and joy to us all, even in their most dire of circumstances.

This letter serves as a joyful invitation, and as a prayer, as we gather this year at Bemidji Covenant Church from April 27-28, for our Ministerial Association Annual Meeting. It will be a hopeful space to encourage one another and aid us all to move forward in our ministries for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

For the Praise of His Glory, Jeff Olson, NWC Ministerial Association Chair

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

We will gather the evening of the 27th for dinner followed by a Worship Service where we will hear from the Candidates for Ordination and celebrate communion. We will conclude the evening with a time of fellowship and refreshments. On Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. we will gather again to sing and pray and address important business items such as voting on our budget, the election of new committee members and vote on the Candidates for Ordination. If you have a comment or concern about any of our candidates listed below, please contact John Jacobi (johnkjacobi@gmail.com), Chair of the NWC Committee on Ministerial Standing. The Candidates are:

Ordination to Word and Sacrament

- John N. DePalma, Countryside Covenant Church, Milbank, SD
- Peter Andrew Frost, Brookdale Covenant Church, Brooklyn Center, MN
- Erico Vinicio Ortega Romero, Unidad Covenant Church, Fridley, MN
- Philip Kyle Tolbert, Lake Beauty Bible Camp, Long Prairie, MN

Ordination to Word and Service

- Christopher John Kelly, Linwood Covenant Church, Wyoming, MN

Transfer

- John Charles Lassen, Maywood Covenant Church, Foley, MN

GOOD STANDING

Dues: In order to be in good standing and have the ability to vote, all active Covenant credentialed clergy are asked to pay their yearly dues. Pastors who are officially Inactive, Retired or do not hold Covenant Credentials are exempt. The dues this year will remain at \$120 and can be paid with your Annual Meeting registration. Questions: Contact Jim Murphy, Treasurer (jim@redwingfirstcov.org) or Jeff Olson, Chair (jeff@catalystmn.org).

Attendance: If you are unable to attend the meeting, regrets can be sent to: Rob Jacobson at robjacobson@restorationcov.org.

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

2023 ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATION

ROOTED IN HOPE

BEMIDJI COVENANT CHURCH

APRIL 27 - 29

THEME

Rooted in Hope

"... like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither" (Psalm 1:3).

Roots matter. In times of drought, weather extremes or turbulence, the depth of our roots are a strong indicator of long-term health and sustainability. For the Christian, roots indicate a life of discipleship, lived in accordance with trust and faith in the Lord's promises. With all that swirls around us and threatens to discourage, distract or disorient us, let us join together as people of faith to remember and celebrate that we are rooted in the hope of Christ.

We've added the word "celebration" to our Annual Meeting description because that is what this is—a *celebration* of God's goodness and faithfulness and an opportunity for us to *celebrate* our shared mission and ministry as we gather together.

Our *celebration* will be a hybrid event—meaning we hope you can come in person for fellowship and encouragement, but if that doesn't work for you, you can still access the meeting and worship services online.

It is our hope that this offers greater accessibility and participation for *all* of our Northwest Conference churches. On behalf of the NWC staff and Executive board, I hope you are able to make plans to participate.

Kara Stromberg, Superintendent

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Engaging worship
- Practical workshops
- Shared stories of mission and ministry
- Fellowship and encouragement



northwest conference
developing leaders. thriving churches.

SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, April 27

- 4:30 PM** Registration (Ministerial Association)
- 5:15 PM** Dinner
- 6:30 PM** Worship
- 7:45 PM** Fellowship

FRIDAY, April 28

- 8:30 AM** Worship
- 9:00 AM** Ministerial Association Business Session
- 12 NOON** Lunch & optional Movil Maze Bike Ride
- 12:45 PM** Workshops
- 2:00 PM** New Delegate Orientation
- 2:30 PM** NWC Business Session
- 4:00 PM** Continuing Education
- 5:15 PM** Dinner
- 6:30 PM** Worship

SATURDAY, April 29

- 8:30 AM** Worship
- 9:00 AM** Business Session and Ministry Highlights
- 11:30 AM** Lunch

FRIDAY WORKSHOPS

Lunch workshops will provide an opportunity to learn from Covenant ministries. Or you can join a group for an off-site bike ride! Bring your own bike.

Afternoon workshops will provide further inspiration and learning from practitioners who understand the local church.



LOCATION

*Bemidji Covenant Church | 5405 Hart Lane NW
Bemidji, MN 56601 | 218.751.3699 | bemidjicovenant.com*



FRIDAY EVENING OFFERING

The Friday evening offering is designated for the Bemidji Community Food Shelf (bcfsmn.org).

2022 marked 40 years of service to Bemidji and surrounding communities. The food shelf started as a small store front in downtown Bemidji with a few dedicated volunteers and has grown to include a mobile truck and a farm. The farm provides high-quality fresh produce as well as an opportunity for community members to contribute their time and talents.

During 2022, 9,600 families, consisting of 28,000 people received almost 600,000 pounds of food. Nearly 10,000 of the recipients were children (a 40 percent increase over 2021) and 6,000 were seniors—the fastest growing segment of food insecure in the State of Minnesota.

Jim Fretheim, former NWC Superintendent, is on the Board of Directors and is grateful for this ministry that serves his neighbors in need.

LODGING

AmericInn

- \$117 + tax per night
- Breakfast Included

1200 Paul Bunyan
Drive NW,
Bemidji, MN 56601

218-751-3000

Hampton Inn

- \$119 + tax per night
- Breakfast Included

1019 Paul Bunyan
Drive South
Bemidji, MN 56601

218-751-3600

Double Tree Hotel

- \$149 + tax per night
- Onsite Restaurant

115 Lakeshore Drive
Bemidji, MN 56601

218-441-4400



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