



The Mystery of Christmas

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

God clothed in humanity – a mystery we can't wrap our minds around, but it has changed our lives. Eugene Peterson says it this way, "*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.*"



Christmas is a surprise! God moved into places inhabited by hurting, lost people. He came in the humblest way possible, without resources, without a big announcement, but from a place of weakness and anonymity. He brought grace and truth clothed in the human flesh of a vulnerable child. **God showed up and he accomplished the work of salvation for us!**

God continues to show up, moving into neighborhoods bringing salvation and touching the lives of lost and hurting people. The mystery of the incarnation continues as the people of God move into places to bring God near.

I experienced a dramatic example of God's incarnational presence when at Freedom Covenant Church in Kansas City. Located in the heart of one of the nation's most dangerous neighborhoods, Freedom brings Christ into a place where homeless people gather. I worshipped with about 150 people – most having no home, some struggling to overcome drug addictions or mental health issues, and most with limited financial resources. In the midst of the brokenness and poverty I sensed God's presence. Scanning the crowd I was struck with the awareness that each and every one of these folks were precious people that God came to save. **I listened to the raw stories of those full of gratefulness because their lives have been radically transformed by the love of God.** Freedom, with her "move into the neighborhood" presence, is bringing healing and support to places many people dare not tread. It was a most powerful example of God's incarnational love – and I was not only deeply moved by the presence of God in worship, but also by the work that is done throughout the week as this church moves into the neighborhood.

It is a joy to see the places where God is showing up through the work of churches in our conference; places where you are humbly entering someone else's neighborhood with gifts of truth and grace. **It's about showing up!** Thank you for bringing the light and life of Christ into your neighborhoods! May the joy of Christmas be yours!

Tammy Swanson-Draheim

Church Planting on the Move!

The newest church in the conference began meeting this fall, **Restoration Covenant in Denver**, under the leadership of church planting pastor Ryan Ashley. Ryan has been on staff for many years at two of our Denver-area churches, Colorado Ridge of Westminster and Centennial of Littleton. Find them at www.restorationcolorado.org, and pray for them as they establish important early foundations. And while we are at it, thank you so much for your church's mission partnership with the conference that helps make church planting possible!

2012 Events for Your Calendars

- Jan—**MWC books to close** January 20, all 2011 pledges due at that time
- Jan 28-30—**Connection** in Chicago IL
- Jan 30-Feb 3—**Covenant Midwinter Conference** in Chicago IL
- Feb 13—MWC Pledges due from church pastors and/or officers
- Apr 27-28—**MWC Annual Meetings**, Fort Collins CO (ECC)
- Jun 21-23—**Covenant Annual Meeting**, Irvine CA
- Jul 15-20—**CHIC** in Knoxville TN

December 2011

We've moved!

The Midwest Conference Office in Omaha, NE, has moved to a new location. We invite you to visit us at: 17310 Wright St, Suite 101, Omaha NE 68130. Please make sure your church chair and treasurer are aware of the address change. Thank you!

MWC Pastor/Staff changes

Tim Ek, Pastor, from Lee's Summit MO (Deerbrook Covenant)
Victor Guillen, Pastor, to Arvada CO (Iglesia Covenant Luz of Hope Fellowship)
Kelly Johnston, Interim Pastor, to Wakefield NE
Jerry Kosanovich, Interim Pastor, to Stanton IA
Reid Olson, Pastor, to Greeley CO
Gary Schmidt, Worship and Music Pastor, from Loveland CO (Lifespring Covenant)
Brent Thompson, Pastor, from Wichita KS (The Journey)
Paty Thompson, Assoc. Pastor, from Wichita KS (The Journey)
Naas Tredoux, Pastor, to Colorado Spgs CO (Faith)
Mike Zabel, Pastor, from Sioux City IA to Youngstown OH (Faith Community Covenant)

Resources!

Are you aware of the resources available to you and your church? Visit your denominational website:

www.covchurch.org

Check out "**The Mix**" and find creative ideas for ministries and resources. Offer your own ideas or get some of your own. Find whole curriculums!

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*Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth  
 peace, good will towards men—Luke 2:14*



*Merry Christmas from your conference staff  
 Reva, Dave, Tammy, Lori and Rick*

### Midwest Conference

17310 Wright St, Suite 101, Omaha NE 68130

Phone: 402-334-3020 or 1-888-871-3020

E-mail: [midcovcon@qwestoffice.net](mailto:midcovcon@qwestoffice.net)

Website: [www.midwestcovenant.org](http://www.midwestcovenant.org)

The Midwest Conference is a mission association of Covenant churches in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, Wyoming