

Highlights of the 2009 MWC Annual Meeting



- **46 pastors** gathered at First Covenant Church in Mason City, Iowa, on Friday, April 24, for the **Annual Meeting of the Ministerium**. Rev. David Kersten led a two-hour continuing education session speaking on the topic “How to Pursue Individual Spirituality.” David is the Executive Minister of the Ordered Ministry for The Evangelical Covenant Church.
- Sue Radosti spoke at the **Women Ministries Annual gathering**. Sue is a bi-vocational pastor with The Evangelical Covenant Church and owns her own business, Grace Corner, a bed and breakfast retreat house in Lawton, Iowa. She holds a master’s degree from North Park Theological Seminary where she studied health ministry and the art of spiritual direction.
- Rev. David Kersten also conducted the Friday afternoon **workshop**. He shared a message on “How to maintain corporate spirituality by understanding the power of our own baptism.”
- **Rev. Tammy Swanson-Draheim welcomed delegates** to First Covenant and began the meeting with devotion describing pursuing Christ’s priorities in the world: to love God is to love other people in the world.
- The meeting was led by Conference Chairperson Garr Hintz. Seated at the table with Chairman Hintz were acting secretary Jim Ressegieu and parliamentarian Brian Randall.
- There were 97 **voting delegates** at the meeting representing 43 churches (out of a possible 83 churches), along with camps, executive board, institutions and organizations for the Midwest Conference.
- **Superintendent Ken Carlson**—New Beginnings (Denver) became a “Living Legacy” church, closing and using the proceeds of its selling to promote church plants. There was good giving to conference this year. Ken encouraged “first fruits” giving by local churches to the conference. The conference has developed a partnership with Mountain Village Covenant Church in Alaska. Many of our conference churches are at a crossroads because those outside the church and some within are no longer pursuing Christ. Today 80% of Christians are non-white, non-western and from non-northern hemispheres. The number of people unaffiliated with any faith has doubled in the last few years. Only 20% of people in any community attend worship services each week. In the Covenant and in other American churches we need to: rekindle the passion for Christ, renew our vision, and remember to pursue Christ’s mission in the world. We need to be ‘the aroma of Christ’ in the world. The church is called to be the connectors of people with Christ. Ken invited Pastor Craig Vote to explain the ministry and vision of his church in Harcourt, Iowa, and that Passion + Vision + Mission = FRUIT!!
- **Associate Superintendent Rick Mylander**
The healthiest church plants are those planted by parent churches. Most recent church plants, however, have been ‘pioneer’ plants. The growth of churches in America is not keeping up with population growth. One hundred percent of parented churches survive; 80% of pioneer churches survive. Parent churches grow in spite of giving people to a church plant. The larger a church gets, the harder it is for it to parent a church. Church planting may be the sign of the health of the Church. There was a video presentation of a second site church plant by Hillcrest Covenant Church, Prairie Village, Kansas.
- **Associate Superintendent Dave Benedict**
Dave showed slides and shared brief stories regarding some of the Kansas churches. Congregational Vitality is one of Dave’s ministry emphases, that every church might become a healthy (pursuing Christ), missional (pursuing Christ’s priorities) church. There was also a video clip and two lay witnesses regarding relocation of Community Covenant Church, Osage City, Kansas.

- **Rev. David Kersten**, Executive Minister of the Dept. of the Ordered Ministry for The Evangelical Covenant Church and **Rev. Mary Miller**, Director of the Lilly Grant, gave greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church and North Park Theological Seminary, and Bonnie Sparrman, Midwest Conference Representative to Covenant Board of Nominations spoke to delegates about: Attendance and conversion rates were up; giving was down. 16 new church plants last year; 69 churches in process of entering the Covenant. The Covenant is represented in 26 countries. Sparrman spoke of the need for people with a variety of skills and interests to be nominated for denomination boards.
- **Delegates were presented with an amendment to the conference bylaws** to be acted upon at the 124th MWC annual meeting in 2010. The proposed amendment would change the term of office for MWC executive board members to two year terms with the potential of serving up to three terms.
- **Delegates recognized 3 ordinands** who will be ordained at the Covenant Annual Meeting in June: *Terri Jo King* (Littleton CO), *Mary Belle Rowlands* (Prairie Village KS), and *Greg Coates* (Arvada CO).
- **Scott Larsen**, Executive Director at Twin Lakes Christian Center; **Dan Buhr**, Executive Director of Covenant Cedars Bible Camp; and **Tom Cousineau**, Executive Director, Covenant Heights Camp and Retreat Center gave updates about activities and ministry at their camps.
- **A special offering** was received for the Mountain Village, Alaska Project.
- *Carl Elwood*, pastor of Mountain Village Covenant Church of Mountain Village, Alaska, gave a **personal testimony** of their 'peanut butter and jelly cracker' ministry to children after school and the challenge to take up the cross and risk suffering for other people. This summer two mission teams from our conference will go to Mountain Village to erect a building "to be used for the glory of God—somehow." Conference churches are challenged to give toward the \$38,000 needed for this effort at a suggestion of at least \$400 per church. This is part of an ongoing relationship with that church and community.
- Conference Chair *Garry Hintz* gave the treasurer's **financial report**.
- **Delegates approved a budget of \$813,793 for 2010.**
- **Delegates approved the closing of the New Beginnings Covenant Church in Denver, Colorado.** Delegates remembered with gratitude to God the ministry of this congregation (formerly First Covenant Church), acknowledging now the completion of its organized work, and commending to God the fruit of its effective spiritual labor over the years 1898-2008.
- *Lavern Holdeman* reported on the **Churches Planting Ministries**. The denomination and conference provides grants to local churches that start or expand ministries of mercy, compassion and justice. We saw a video presentation of a woman from McPherson, KS (Countryside Covenant) whose life has been transformed through a Celebrate Recovery ministry subsidized by a grant from the conference and the Covenant.
- Lavern is also the financial representative for **Covenant Trust Company**. It provides its services free-of-cost to people willing to leave part of their estate to conference or denominational ministries or their local Covenant church. Covenant Trust currently manages over \$500 million.
- Nancy Carlson spoke on behalf of Women Ministries AVA (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse) with a video witness presentation by Pastor Mike Cogan, Kearney, MO. He told of the experience their church had after hosting an AVA workshop.
- *Christopher Young*, administrator at the **Midwest Covenant Home** shared about their ministry to seniors.
- Peter Milbourn shared about the **Covenant Village of Colorado**.

- Host Pastor Tammy Swanson-Draheim shared a personal witness regarding “Ministry Advantage – Coaching” which coaches pastors on leadership development.
- The delegates approved a recommendation expressing its most fervent blessing upon *Morse Covenant Church* as the church became **self-supporting** at the close of 2008 and a recommendation expressing thanks to the Lord for its ministry, and praying that our “God shall supply all (its) needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
- Two people were elected to new terms on our **Conference Executive Board**: *David Scherrer from Christ Community Covenant Church in Arvada, CO* and *Diane Borden from The Evangelical Covenant Church in Fort Collins, CO*. Superintendent Ken Carlson recognized those retiring from the Midwest Conference Executive Board, *Carl Nuss from Heritage Community Bible Church in Arvada, CO*, and *Beth Seversen from Hillcrest Covenant Church in Prairie Village, KS*. Thanks be to God for these willing servants.
- Ministerial Association Chair John Peterson encouraged churches to send their pastoral staff to one of the **two Fall Retreats**.
- Larry and Kathy Lindgren, Lindsborg, Kansas, extended **an invitation** to attend their church in 2010 for the **124th annual meeting of the Midwest Conference**. Delegates now look forward to gathering in Lindsborg next year, **April 23-24, 2010**.