

Minutes of the 124th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Conference

Evangelical Covenant Church
Lindsborg, Kansas
April 24, 2010

8:15 a.m.

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS AND COMMUNION

Host Pastor Jeff Waugh gave Al Eklund, the oldest member of the Lindsborg Covenant Church, the opportunity to share a greeting: "Valkomen." He gave us insights as to how his family came to this area from Sweden.

Isaiah 63:7 reminds us of what God has done for us in the past in order for us to press forward. "And what are our benefits? They are to praise Him more." John 5:24 "He that heareth and believeth...hath everlasting life..." a favorite verse shared, that "comes to the top of the pickle barrel!"

Dave Benedict and Rick Mylander led us all in Holy Communion. The Board offered the elements to those in attendance.

2. WELCOME AND INVITATION

Chairman Garr Hintz, Conference Executive Board, Hebrews 12:1-4

Call to Order at 9:05. He then opened the meeting with prayer.

- Action on the Proposed Agenda and Standing Rules, **moved, seconded, approved.**
- Approval of Minutes of the 124th Annual Meeting, **moved, seconded, approved.**
- Introduction of board, staff, parliamentarian Jeff Houston, tellers Chris Nelson and Jason Smith and sergeants at arms Julie Anderson, Cheryl Meakins, Larry Linsenmaier, Dan Springer
- Recognition of Special Guests, Mary Miller from NPU, Millie Lungren from Covenant Resource Center and Doreen Olson, Executive Minister of Christian Formation
- Constitution Amendment on MWC Board terms – transition to 3 – 2-year terms, delegates vote by show of hands. **Amendment passes.** Those incumbent members under this newly voted on transition are Brent Thompson, Taryn Vetter, Doug Ferguson, Bill Croasmun
- Ballot Presentation, Elections for Administrative and Institutional Board, **moved, seconded, approved.**
- Doug Ferguson closed this session with prayer, to "see Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly."

3. CONFERENCE MINISTRY UPDATE FROM SUPERINTENDENT KEN CARLSON

"We are here today because of those who have blazed the way. These 'conference missionaries' are among us still. We are better together than we are alone." Ken went through the history of the Midwest Conference, from 1868 to the present. He celebrated the increase in church planting: 23 churches, 7 affiliations and 4 fellowship groups, today with 92 churches and fellowship groups in the Midwest Conferences. Those before us have "run the race and finished strong." He concluded his update by using the illustration of the changed lives at Hope Covenant Church, El Dorado, KS. Ken thanked the congregations, his partner superintendents and especially his wife, Nancy. We prayed together for Ken, Nancy and their family.

4. DENOMINATIONAL MINISTRY UPDATE FROM DOREEN OLSON, EXECUTIVE MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN FORMATION

"Those who God calls, he equips!" Regarding Covenant World Relief, over 1 million dollars has been given to the earthquake victims. Are we creating environments of grace..to develop disciples? We are, yet there is still room for improvement! Keep on persevering to transform the world.

5. WHAT'S YOUR ONE STEP?

Rick Mylander presented this new tool (formerly "Bringing my World to Christ.") Pray for one another, care for one another and share: Help others take one step closer to God. What percentage of the world's population has heard of Coca Cola? Tried a coke? Advertising, successful marketing, passion have made it happen. Those who try it, like it! 96% of the world has access to the truth of Christ, but 1/3 of the world has heard it. Has passion gone flat? Rick used this coke analogy to illustrate the unchanging need for us as Christians to reach out and share the Gospel's Truth. We dispersed names and gathered together and prayed.

6. PERSONAL WITNESS

The Prayers of God's People, by Calvin and Shelly Carlson, members of ECC, Lindsborg, KS. Shelly shared about the tumultuous challenges they've experienced with Calvin's health in the past couple of years. "The stakes of faith that go down into the ground are deep, and we have been lifted up in prayer by the faithful people of God." The stakes are there, and can be held onto in times of crisis. Prayers of the faith are real. Romans 8:26. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, when we don't have words, He knows. Calvin's favorite hymn prevailed, "When peace like a river attends my way, when sorrows like sea billows role, whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul!" Hebrews 4:16. God will not leave us, He continues to take away fear and met them at a very vulnerable time. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Their story will be in a future issue of the Covenant Companion.

7. TOUCHING OUR HEARTS WITH CAMP MINISTRY

- Dan Buhr, Executive Director, Covenant Cedars Bible Camp, Hordville, NE: "60 Years Together!"
- Scott Larsen, Executive Director, Twin Lakes Bible Camp, Manson, IA: where "tender growing hearts look and want to learn more. May His wisdom reign and rule in your lives."
- Tom Cousineau, Executive Director, Covenant Heights Camp and Retreat Center, Estes Park, CO: We talked with Tom via skype. He is doing well, as he is home in Colorado recuperating. He misses us and we miss him! Pray for the camp as a few things are now delayed. Greeting from Thailand missionaries. Prayer offered by Steve Jones for each camp director.

8. CHURCH PLANTING UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Rick Mylander shared: 2009 showed a lull in new church planting. Groundwork is picking up again, percolating activity is happening in Kansas City, Kansas, Iowa, Denver, Wyoming. We have a renewed commitment in praying for new church plants.

- Acceptance of churches into full Covenant membership
 - Ecclesia of Denver, Colorado. Pastor Chad Wible and wife, Allison shared, "The Covenant has helped them along the way, currently seeing 40-50 in attendance. They are a people who have disconnected, wanting change in their lives."
 - Crossroads Community Church, Halstead, Kansas. Lay Leader Tom Wells found the Covenant through Brent and Patty Thompson. "We are blessed to be a part of the Covenant who wants healthy churches planted. We started at 20 and are currently averaging 150! We are lay lead, teaching via DVD, we're gifted with space on Main Street."
 - La Miel Covenant Church, Salina, Kansas. "This is an historic day for us. We are the result of a missionary heart of First Covenant in Salina. Attendance is at 70, and growing. May God bless our denomination!"
 - Recommendation of the following action: in joyful anticipation of the welcoming of these churches into the denomination is due to be acted upon at the Annual Meeting in St. Paul, MN, in June, 2010.
 - Prayer offered by Diane Borden for Rick Mylander, in his church planting endeavors.

9. PERSONAL WITNESS

Witness of Melvin and Marie Cole, Freedom Covenant Church, Kansas City, Missouri: working in the government housing projects reaching families. Women, men, small groups, youth groups are growing.

11:00 Lunch Break

10. THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES IN THE RECOGNITION OF MINISTRY MILESTONES

- Ordinands
 - Robert W. Johnson, OWS, City Church, Kansas City, MO
 - Mark Nelson, OWS, First Covenant Church, Salina, KS
 - Joyce Norman, OSM, Countryside Covenant Church, McPherson, KS
 - Wuifor Portillo, OWS, Alfa y Omega Covenant Church, Carthage, MO
 - Garr offered prayer for each of these ordinands.
- Retiring Pastor Mike Weyeneth from Waverly, NE. They will be relocating to Jacksonville, FL
- Recognition of Reva Neal's 20 years of service

11. STEWARDING GOD'S BLESSINGS

Brent Thompson, Conference Executive Board Treasurer shared:

- 2009 Financial Report, praise God for two years now in the black. We have been able to put back into the reserve over \$50,000.00.
- 2011 Budget: It will include added expenses for the search process for the new Superintendent.
Motion to accept the budget approved, carried.

12. CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Dave Benedict shared:

- Video Toolbox – Behavioral Covenants: A packet will be coming to our churches in the near future. Dave shared a video presenting Behavioral Covenants.
- This has been the year of “harvest.” It has been the year of gaining traction with Veritas: 1st step: developing a culture of candor. 2nd step: understand behavioral covenants. 3rd step: use Veritas Vocabulary. 4th step: having the VIM factor: vision, intention, means. Are people willing to do the work? This all leads to kingdom effectiveness.
- Getting Traction with Veritas:
 - Establish a Veritas Team
 - Visioning workshop
 - EPIC workshop, learning how to change
 - Pulse – an assessment tool

13. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS

Chairman Garr Hintz informed delegates about the search process on the retirement of Superintendent Ken Carlson in 2011. Garr shared conversations that he has had with President of the Covenant, Gary Walter. The MWC will be meeting with President Walter in June. Garr asked for questions. There were none.

14. UPDATE ON OUTREACH MINISTRIES AND MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS

- The Alaskan Partnership, Gary Carlson, Clyde, KS: Gary shared the story of the Alaskan Partnership via video.
- Club 182 - LifeSpring Church, Loveland, CO: This church has built a partnership with an elementary school, working with kids each week (Kids Hope USA). Approximately 1/3 of the elementary kids go to this Covenant church. This began as a barbecue. It is now a “hobby group” that meets after school for a 6-week period of time. It is a relationship building, loving time and its name is a reflection of Psalm 18:2.
- Midwest Covenant Home, Chris Young, administrator: Sharing his appreciation for the conference’s commitment to them and giving thanks to the Lord for his blessings.
- Sustaining Pastoral Excellence – David McCowan: Speaking toward the significant pastoral attrition rate on around 5-8 years of service, on through year 20, as they feel inadequate in their duties, edging toward retirement years. The Center for Spiritual Direction is a valuable ministry. He shared about the availability of revisioning retreats and the importance of learning self-care as well as churches learning to care for their pastor families, conference-wide.

15. UPDATE ON NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

Mary Miller, Director of Making Connections Initiative for North Park Theological Seminary shared on behalf of North Park University: The Midwest Conference is looked at by the Covenant as very significant. We have embraced diversity and women pastors in a remarkable way.

- North Park: lay people can receive training in Spiritual Direction.
- Priority: Urban, Christian, Multi-cultural emphasis
- Urban certificate
- Grant: Seminary professors to teach in the churches
- Youth nexus
- Covenant affirmations

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- From Executive Board regarding Delegates to Covenant Annual Meeting in June
- Ministerial Association Chair John Peterson encouraged churches to send their pastoral staff to one of the two Fall Retreats.

17. INSTALLATION OF 2010 BOARD MEMBERS, KEN CARLSON

Four people were elected to new terms on our Conference Executive Board: Bill Croasmun, Hillcrest Blue Valley, Blue Valley, KS; Doug Ferguson, Celebration Covenant, Omaha, NE; Brent Thompson, The Journey Covenant, Wichita, KS; Taryn Vetter, Countryside Covenant, McPherson, KS. The Midwest Covenant Home Board also had two elected to their board: David Norlen, First Covenant Church, Omaha, NE, and Lyle Person, Community Covenant Church, Omaha, NE. Former board member and pastor at Lindsborg, Steve Johnson, prayed for these members. Thanks be to God for these willing servants.

18. APPRECIATION TO HOST CHURCH, CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER, TARYN VETTER

19. INVITATION TO 2011 MINISTRY CELEBRATION

Members Don and Kass Anderson of First Covenant Church in Omaha, NE, extended an invitation to attend their church in 2011 for the 125th annual meeting of the Midwest Conference. Delegates now look forward to gathering in Omaha next year, April 29-30, 2011.

20. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to be brought before the delegates, Chairman Garr Hintz adjourned the meeting.

Prepared by



Taryn Vetter, secretary

IMPORTANT NOTE!! The dates of the 2011 MWC Annual Meeting have been changed due to a conflict in the Omaha area which would cause all lodging and airline flights to greatly increase in price. The dates for the meeting are now schedule for APRIL 15-16, 2011.