
THE 124th COVENANT ANNUAL MEETING



Living Our Affirmations THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

Delegate Summary

Your work as a delegate to this Annual Meeting does not end with adjournment. As a representative of your congregation, you play an important role in sharing what you have learned with others back home.

Ask your pastor or other leaders for opportunities to share what you have learned. Some suggestions:

- Sunday worship, a “ministry moment”
- Small group, tailor information to specific areas of interest
- Church board, council, or leadership team update
- Church business meeting report (written or oral)
- Brief report in your church newsletter (or as a bulletin insert)
- Brief recap for inclusion in your church’s email distribution

To assist you in preparing your report to your church family, we have provided the following distillation of important highlights of this year’s gathering. You will also find helpful information posted in the Annual Meeting area of the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org, including key PowerPoint slides and other material used in various presentations.

Please mention that stories, photos, and video/audio recordings of worship services and key addresses will be found on the Covenant website for those desiring more detail. An article on meeting highlights also will appear in the August issue of *The Covenant Companion*.

Key Facts

1. There were 453 credentialed delegates, representing 192 churches, 11 regional conferences, and 9 mission regions. Total registered conference attendance, including general conferees, was 663.
 2. Complete news coverage of the 2009 Annual Meeting will be found on the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org. Stories will remain archived on the site, suitable for downloading and printing.
 3. Growth statistics:
 - Attendance in 2008 increased 6% to 178,997, an increase of 10,073 individuals.
 - During the past decade, the Covenant has grown in size by 53%. During the past 17 growth years, the Covenant has increased 90% in size.
 - From 1996 to 2008, the number of ethnic churches grew from 81 to 186, representing 23% of all congregations and making the Covenant one of the most diverse denominations.
 4. The Covenant Annual Meeting approved a 2010 Mission and Ministry Budget, which will support the following ministries:
 - World Mission \$8,712,000
 - Church Growth and Evangelism \$3,876,000
 - Compassion, Mercy & Justice \$3,717,000
 - Ordered Ministry \$1,621,000
 - Christian Formation \$1,119,000
 - North Park University & Seminary \$1,140,000
 5. David Kersten was re-elected to a four-year term as executive minister of the Department of the Ordered Ministry.
 6. David Olson was elected executive minister of the Department of Church Growth and Evangelism. John C. Notehelfer was recognized for his service this past year as interim executive minister.
 7. Paul H. De Neui was approved as associate professor of Missiology and Intercultural Studies and as director of the Center for World Christian Studies at North Park Theological Seminary.
 8. Twelve new churches were received into membership, representing cumulative attendance of 1,643.
 9. Five churches were removed from the membership roster.
 10. During the ordination service, 43 individuals were ordained to Word and Sacrament; 11 individuals were ordained to Specialized Ministry; 7 individuals transferred their ordinations; 3 individuals were commissioned for staff ministry; and 8 long-term missionaries were consecrated. During Thursday’s opening service, 16 short-term missionaries were commissioned.
 11. Four retiring members of the Covenant Executive Board were recognized, including Alynne MacLean, Carla Thelander, Lisa Hutcherson, and James Nelson.
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12. Retiring missionary Karen Benson was recognized for her service.
 13. Retiring Covenant World Relief Director James Sundholm was recognized.
 14. The T.W. Anderson Award recognizing outstanding laypeople was presented to Robert and Oreta Bentz of Alexandria Covenant Church in Alexandria, Minnesota.
 15. The Irving R. Lambert Award recognizing outstanding urban ministry was presented to Judith McCullough of Cape Cod Covenant Church in Brewster, Massachusetts.
 16. Sixty-seven individuals received Clergy Lifetime Service recognitions.
 17. The Covenant Pension Plan remains in a financially strong position to pay benefits, both short and long-term. Over the last 13 years, payment minimums for retirees and surviving spouses are up 106% and 126% respectively. Total 2008 benefit payments to retirees and surviving spouses were \$6.2 million. Total pension benefit payments over the last 10 years total \$44.6 million.
 18. Delegates participated in a Covenant Life roundtable, addressing the question: What are the most important and helpful ways the ECC and regional conferences can minister to, with, and on behalf of the local congregations?
 19. Delegates approved one amendment to the constitution concerning the frequency of joint meetings of the Council of Superintendents and the Executive Board. Details are on the Covenant website.
 20. A proposed Resolution on Criminal Justice from the Commission on Christian Action was presented for discussion, with a vote scheduled for next year's Annual Meeting. A copy of the proposed resolution will be found on the Covenant website.
 21. The Commission on Christian Action and the Commission on Worship each were extended for five-year terms.
 22. A Resolution of Sympathy was adopted praising God for the lives and ministries of dedicated Covenanters who have gone to be with the Lord, including 18 pastors, 13 spouses, and 4 missionaries.
 23. Next year is the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Evangelical Covenant Church. The 2010 Annual Meeting will take place June 24-27 in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Did you know?

- Undesignated donations to Covenant World Relief totaled \$1.6 million.
- Of all Covenant churches that have loans, 90% have them with National Covenant Properties. In 2008, National Covenant Properties disbursed \$46 million to fund 71 projects with at least one in each conference or region. National Covenant Properties recently exceeded \$300 million in assets for the first time.
- During 2008, Covenant Trust Company disbursed \$8 million to Covenant causes at the local church, regional conference, and denominational levels.
- A total of 3,285 individuals were enrolled at North Park University last fall in undergraduate, graduate, seminary and exchange programs.
- *The Covenant Companion* has been named by Associated Church Press as one of the top three denominational magazines in North America along with U.S. Catholic and DisciplesWorld. It received five additional awards for its opinion pieces and columns, feature articles and cover art.
- The Covenant website currently averages more than 73,500 unique visitors each month, with more than 227,500 pages of news, information and resources accessed each month.