

The 125th ANNUAL MEETING 2010

JUNE 24-27 • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

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 groups—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 as well. An article on meeting highlights also will appear in the August issue of *The Covenant Companion*.

Special Note: Delegates are asked to read the Covenant Resource Paper on Compassion, Mercy and Justice, share the document with their congregations for discussion, and go online at www.covchurch.org/am/2010/resource-paper to provide feedback to the writing team.

Key Facts

1. There were 597 credentialed delegates representing 282 churches, 11 regional conferences, and 15 mission representatives. Total registered conference attendance, including general conferees, was 926.
2. Twenty-six International guests were introduced in honor of the 125th anniversary year.
3. Complete news coverage of the 2010 Annual Meeting will be found on the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org. Stories will remain archived on the site, suitable for downloading
4. The Covenant Annual Meeting approved a 2011 Mission and Ministry Budget, which will support the following ministries:
 - World Mission:..... \$9,055,000
 - Compassion, Mercy & Justice: \$4,099,000
 - Church Growth and Evangelism:..... \$3,612,000
 - Ordered Ministry:..... \$1,642,000
 - Christian Formation: \$1,246,000
 - North Park University & Seminary:..... \$1,140,000
5. Growth statistics:
 - Average weekend worship attendance in 2009 increased to 176,005, marking 18 consecutive years of growth.
 - During the past decade, the Covenant has grown in size by 37%. During the past 18 growth years, the Covenant has increased 87% in size.
 - From 1996 to 2009, the number of ethnic churches grew from 81 to 201, representing 25% of all congregations and making the Covenant one of the most diverse denominations.
6. Twenty-one churches were received into membership, representing cumulative attendance of 2,717.
7. Ten churches were removed from the membership roster.
8. The Covenant Pension Plan remains in a financially strong position to pay benefits, both short and long-term. During 2009, assets increased by \$31.2 million, or 26.7%. Over the last 14 years, payment minimums for retirees and surviving spouses are up 106% and 126% respectively. Total 2009 benefit payments to retirees and surviving spouses were \$6.3 million. Total pension benefit payments over the last 10 years total \$49.4 million.
9. Delegates approved four amendments to the bylaws clarifying language on commission advisors and eliminating the position of Annual Meeting vice secretary. Details are on the Covenant website.

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10. During the ordination service, 57 individuals were ordained to Word and Sacrament; 10 individuals were ordained to Specialized Ministry; 14 individuals transferred their ordinations; one individual was commissioned for staff ministry; and three long-term missionaries were consecrated. During Thursday's opening service, 19 short-term missionaries, one project missionary and four long-term missionaries were commissioned.
 11. The Commission on Ethnic Ministries and the Commission on Town & Country Ministries were extended for five-year terms.
 12. Linda Cannell was approved as academic dean at North Park Theological Seminary.
 13. Doreen Olson was re-elected to a four-year term as executive minister of the Department of Christian Formation.
 14. Efrem Smith was installed as superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference. Evelyn M.R. Johnson, who retired from that position, was recognized for her service.
 15. John E. (Jay) Phelan was recognized for his service as president and dean of North Park Theological Seminary.
 16. Charles Walles was recognized for his service as president of Covenant Trust Company.
 17. Five retiring members of the Covenant Executive Board were recognized, including Joel Davidsen, D. Darrell Griffin, Jane Matheson, Rebecca Slomiany, and Dan Wickman.
 18. Eighteen individuals received Clergy Lifetime Service recognitions.
 19. The T.W. Anderson Award recognizing outstanding laypeople was presented to Samuel Alvarado of Dearborn Covenant Church in Dearborn, Michigan.
 20. The Irving R. Lambert Award recognizing outstanding urban ministry was presented to Bob Hoey of Messiah Church in Detroit, Michigan.
 21. Delegates participated in a Covenant Life roundtable, discussing the proposed Covenant Resource Paper: The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice. The paper will be presented for final action during the 2011 Annual Meeting.
 22. A proposed Resolution on Criminal Justice from the Commission on Christian Action was approved by delegates. A copy of the proposed resolution can be found on the Covenant website.
 23. 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 16 pastors, 12 spouses, and six missionaries.
 24. The 2011 Annual Meeting will take place June 28-30 at YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. The Feast will precede the Annual Meeting at the same location, June 25-28.

Did you know?

- Undesignated donations to Covenant World Relief totaled \$1,016,000. In addition, a total of \$1,049,000 was contributed to the Covenant's Haiti earthquake relief effort.
- Of all Covenant churches that have loans, 80% have them with National Covenant Properties. In 2009, National Covenant Properties disbursed \$21 million to fund 50 projects. National Covenant Properties recently exceeded \$325 million in assets.
- During 2009, Covenant Trust Company disbursed in excess of \$11.6 million to Covenant causes at the local church, regional conference, and denominational levels. Assets under management currently total \$410 million.
- A total of 3,201 individuals were enrolled at North Park University last fall in undergraduate, graduate, seminary and exchange programs.
- The Covenant Companion received seven top awards during this year's Associated Church Press conference, including a first-place recognition for its in-depth coverage of immigration in the March 2009 issue.
- The Covenant website currently averages more than 70,000 unique visitors each month, with more than 2.5 million pages of news, information and resources accessed during the year.
- Triennial XIII will be held July 22-25 in Washington, D.C.
- The Break the Chains anti-human trafficking initiative has surpassed \$476,000 in contributions. The Department of Women Ministries through its various projects has raised more than \$9 million since 1925.
- Covenant Retirement Communities serves more than 5,000 residents in 14 campuses in eight states. A more recent service, Covenant Care at Home, now operates in four locations. Hospice care is being added and will expand to two locations in 2010-2011.
- Covenant Ministries of Benevolence has created a fourth affiliate, Covenant Initiatives for Care, replacing and expanding the former Outreach Ministries initiative. The new board will oversee work directed towards adults with developmental disabilities, at-risk children and families, victims of domestic violence and health care initiatives such as free or affordable health care clinics.