

JUNE 23-28 CHICAGO, IL

# DELEGATE SUMMARY

*Many of the items in this document contain hyperlinks to related stories or videos. For best viewing, please update to the most recent version Adobe Reader.*



## INTRODUCTION

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Gather '14 was a wonderful time for the Covenant family to celebrate God's goodness and reflect on how he's calling us to join him in service to the world. And the Annual Meeting portion of the week allowed us to participate in the important business of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

For those who were unable to join us in Chicago, this delegate summary provides an overview of the business meeting. As a delegate, you have the privilege of sharing this information with your congregation. Links in the document will direct you to related online news stories.

In years past, delegates have used these highlights to share during their weekend worship services. It also provides a handy format for delivering an official report to your congregation's board, council, or leadership team. Some even publish this information as part of their church newsletter. You're invited to use this summary in any way that will best serve your congregation.

## KEY FACTS

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### Membership in the Mission

1. There were 340 credentialed delegates representing 192 churches. Total registered conference attendance, including 163 general conferees, was 503, representing 209 churches.
2. 27 churches were received into membership, representing combined average attendance of 3,324.
3. 7 churches were removed from the membership roster.

### State of the Mission

4. The Report of the President ([www.covchurch.org/news/2014/06/27/walter-covenant-visibly-transforming-lives-together/](http://www.covchurch.org/news/2014/06/27/walter-covenant-visibly-transforming-lives-together/)) and the video recording of the presentation ([www.covchurch.tv/g14-presidents-report/](http://www.covchurch.tv/g14-presidents-report/)) will be found at CovChurch.org. All Annual Meeting videos will be found at CovChurch.tv.
5. An article covering the Annual Meeting and Gather '14 highlights will appear in the August issue of The Covenant Companion.
6. Written reports by mission and ministry leadership will be found at CovChurch.org.
7. The Evangelical Covenant Church finished 2013 with a \$49,000 surplus ([www.covchurch.org/news/2014/06/27/](http://www.covchurch.org/news/2014/06/27/)

[lundgrens-final-treasurers-report-highlights-positive-numbers/](#)). Revenue was up 2.3 percent with a .8 percent increase in church giving. Expenses were kept at 5.6 percent of what was budgeted. The changes amounted to a net improvement of \$329,000 over last year.

8. Growth statistics:
    - Average weekend worship attendance in 2013 increased more than 200,000, marking 22 consecutive years of growth.
    - During the past decade, the Covenant has grown in size by 40%. During the past 22 years of growth, the Covenant has more than doubled in size.
    - The number of ethnic and multicultural churches represent 27% of congregations, making the Covenant one of the most diverse denominations.
  9. The Covenant Pension Plan, which provides retirement benefits to 2,247 active and retired pastors, missionaries, and their surviving spouses, continues to reflect strong investment performance. The annual Actuarial Valuation report affirms the plan remains in strong financial position for both the short and long term. Retirement payments for 2013 were \$7.5 million, with more than \$95 million in retirement benefits paid over the last 20 years. As of May 31, 2014, the Covenant Pension Plan was 107% funded, one of a very few fully funded plans.
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## GATHER '14 | START AND STRENGTHEN CHURCHES

- Bethany Benefit Service provides medical, dental, prescription drug, vision, life and long-term disability benefits to pastors, missionaries, office staff, surviving spouses, and families. There was no rate increase in 2014 for the 1,208 enrollees and 3,400 total lives covered. Enrollment increased by 17, while claims and administrative expenses were less than the previous year.
- Covenant Retirement Communities (CRC) serves more than 5,000 residents on 13 campuses in nine states. Covenant Place of Lenexa (Kansas), CRC's first rental community, opened in June 2013 and is at full occupancy. Covenant Care at Home, providing home health, home care, and hospice care, served more than 2,000 individuals during 2013.
- Enrollment at North Park University last fall totaled more than 3,000 students in undergraduate, graduate, and seminary programs. The new Doctor of Ministry Degree in Urban Ministry Leadership launched in April with a cohort of 16 students. At a complete cost of \$45 million, 101,000-square-foot Johnson Center for Science and Community Life opens this fall and will provide facilities for an array of undergraduate, graduate, and seminary programs.
- The sale of Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock, California, to Tenet Healthcare is in its final stages, with a closing anticipated midsummer 2014.
- The Covenant Companion team began work toward a major redesign and re-launch of the magazine and website for early 2015.
- Across the Covenant's web network, there were 991,622 visits during the past year (June 2013 through May 2014), with nearly 3.7 million pages of stories, information and resources of all types viewed.
- Meagan Gillan was recognized for her leadership of Women Ministries as it transitions from an independent entity to a part of the ECC's Make and Deepen Disciples ministry group.
- On Friday evening, 19 missionaries were commissioned for service.
- During the Friday-evening service, delegates recognized the appointments of Rebecca Gonzalez as executive director of Operations and Paul Hawkinson as corporate treasurer and executive director of Finance.
- Paul Wilson was installed as superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference during the Friday evening worship service.
- A number of individuals were elected to denominational boards.
- During the ordination service, 65 individuals were ordained to Word and Sacrament; 8 individuals were ordained to Word and Service; 6 individuals transferred their ordinations; and 489 individuals received a first-time license as they begin the journey to permanent credentials. Ordered Ministry executive minister Mark Novak noted that it was the second largest group of ministers ever ordained at an Annual Meeting.

### Honoring Faithful Service in the Mission

- The Irving C. Lambert Award recognizing outstanding urban ministry was presented to Craig E. Anderson, a retired ordained Covenant minister living in Punta Gorda, Florida.
- The T. W. Anderson Award recognizing outstanding laypeople was presented to Lou Setter, a member of First Covenant Church in Rockford, Illinois.
- Thirteen individuals received Clergy Lifetime Service recognitions.
- Retiring Executive Minister Doreen L. Olson (Christian Formation) was honored with the status of Executive Minister Emeritus in recognition of her 16 years of service at Covenant Offices.
- Retiring Executive Minister Dean A. Lundgren (Finance) was honored with the status of Executive Minister Emeritus in recognition of his 22 years of service at Covenant Offices.
- Retiring missionaries Jay and Ellen Haworth were recognized for their more than 30 years of service in Japan.

### Organizing for the Mission

- Delegates were given a report on the Mission Priority Alignment and proposed Bylaw Amendments.

### Servant Leadership in the Mission

- On Friday morning, special guests Simon Kamau, moderator of Evangelical Covenant Church of Kenya, and John Njaramba Kiruga, head of that denomination's Department of Church Planting, were introduced to delegates by World Mission executive minister Curt Peterson.

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## GATHER '14 | START AND STRENGTHEN CHURCHES

30. Six departing members of the Covenant Executive Board were recognized, including Rosmarie Anabalón, Sally Carlson, Samuel Chang, Gilbert Friesen, Safy Jacob, and Brian K. Woodson, Sr.

### Funding the Mission

31. The Covenant Annual Meeting approved a 2015 Mission and Ministry budget of \$24.7 million. Covenant Executive Board and Covenant Office staff are committed to achieving break-even financial results for both 2014 and 2015. The total budget essentially remains the same as the previous fiscal year.
32. During 2013, National Covenant Properties disbursed nearly \$30 million to fund projects involving 50 local Covenant churches. Total assets exceed \$385 million, with loans currently totaling more than \$270 million. Since the introduction of Investment Demand Accounts in 2009, more than 260 Covenant churches have invested \$40 million in these accounts, which currently yield 1.5%.
33. In 2013, over \$4.4 million was distributed to Covenant causes through the estate plans of generous clients. Covenant Trust Company currently has \$635 million in assets under management.
34. During 2013, Covenant churches and individuals donated \$1.58 million to Covenant World Relief. These funds were used to support 64 community development and disaster relief projects in 23 countries.

### Living Faithfully in the Mission

35. Delegates approved a Resolution on Immigration ([www.covchurch.org/resolutions/2013-immigration/](http://www.covchurch.org/resolutions/2013-immigration/)) that “invites the ECC, a historically immigrant church, to learn about and respond to current immigration issues with compassion and justice so that we may potentially shape

the current conversation on immigration for the good of all.” A copy will be found on [CovChurch.org](http://CovChurch.org).

36. Delegates approved the 2014 Constitution and Bylaw Amendments.
37. One amendment to the Constitution was read into the minutes of the 129th Annual Meeting for consideration during the 130th Annual meeting related to the term “Annual Meeting.” Details are on [CovChurch.org](http://CovChurch.org).
38. Lord of the Harvest prayer lists (formerly Bringing My World to Christ) were gathered and presented for prayer.
39. Dozens of Covenanters participated in the three-day Experience Chicagoland ministry event that immediately preceded the Annual Meeting.
40. More than 7,000 Congolese children have been sponsored by Covenanters representing 300 churches through Covenant Kids Congo powered by World Vision. These sponsorship dollars are invested in an in-depth multifaceted community development program that includes projects in health, water, agriculture, education, economic development and advocacy in the Equateur Province of Congo. This year’s goal is to find sponsors for 3,000 more children. Churches are encouraged to sponsor a Hope Sunday event—details are on [CovChurch.org/covenantkidscongo](http://CovChurch.org/covenantkidscongo).

### The 2015 Annual Meeting

41. The 2015 Annual Meeting will take place June 25–28 in Kansas City, Missouri. The Midwinter Clergy Conference is January 26–30 in Denver, Colorado. Covenant high-schoolers are also encouraged to participate in the upcoming CHIC 2015 event July 12–17 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Check [CovChurch.org](http://CovChurch.org) for more details on all of these events.

### Produced by the Department of Communication.

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For more information, visit [CovChurch.org](http://CovChurch.org), or contact us at (773) 784-3000, or by email to [communication@covchurch.org](mailto:communication@covchurch.org).

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