

A cord of three strands
is not quickly broken.

—ECCLESIASTES 4:12

2013-14 **ANNUAL REPORT**

 The Evangelical Covenant Church

2013-14 ANNUAL REPORT



Our Purpose

We join God in God's mission to seek more disciples, among more populations, in a more caring and just world.

This report is about **our** mission together, which means it is about **your** mission.

The word *covenant* means *partnership*. You are part of a partnership, a joint venture, which is comprised of your congregation, your regional conference, and the entire Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). Because of that, your direct impact extends to your local community, to your region, to the entire United States and Canada, and to all over the world.

On these pages you will gain a sense of the difference you are making as we pursue five priorities: start and strengthen churches; make and deepen disciples; develop leaders; love mercy and do justice; and serve globally.

You will see how every single day all around the world God is being worshiped, the lost are being found, believers are being disciplined, churches are being planted, congregations are being strengthened, leaders are being trained, the sick are being cared for, the hungry are being fed, children are learning to read, families are gaining micro-enterprise skills, women and girls are being freed from human trafficking, injustices are being addressed, and disasters are being responded to.

Yes, in this season of continued momentum, the ECC is touching millions of real lives in real places with the hope of Jesus...and it all emanates from your faithful connection.

A joint venture of 842 congregations has the critical mass to make a very real difference, yet it is small enough where the dedicated engagement of every single congregation really does matter.

And so, on behalf of those we serve, thank you for your faithful support as together we follow the heart of God into the world.

Gary B. Walter
President



The Evangelical Covenant Church is a rapidly growing multiethnic denomination in the United States and Canada with ministries on five continents of the world. Founded in 1885 by Swedish immigrants, the ECC values the Bible as the word of God, the gift of God's grace and ever-deepening spiritual life that comes through a faith with Jesus Christ, the importance of extending God's love and compassion to a hurting world, and the strength that comes from unity within diversity.



842

Total number of
Covenant churches.
(As of January 2014)

210,730

Number of worship
attendees each week.
(As of November 2013)

67

Number of church
plants in first three
years of development.
(As of May 2014)

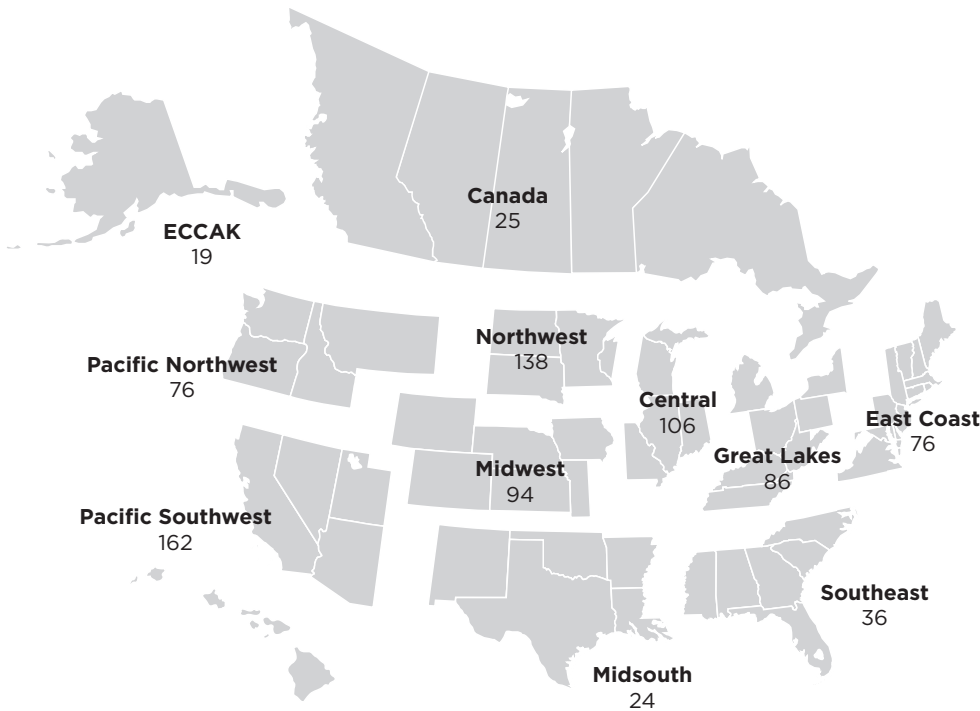
Our Affirmations

- Centrality of the word of God
- Necessity of the new birth
- Commitment to the whole mission of the church
- Church as a fellowship of believers.
- Conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Reality of freedom in Christ

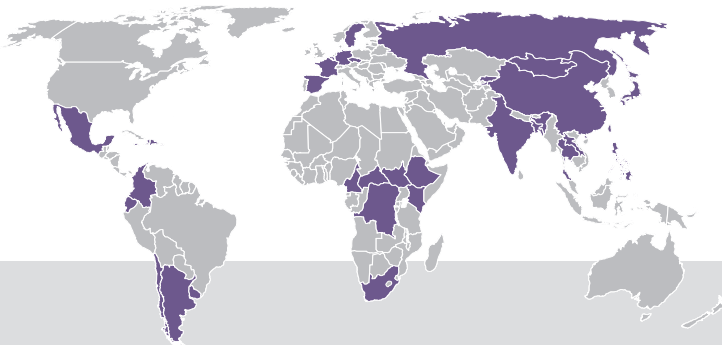
Our Mission Priorities

- Start and Strengthen Churches
- Make and Deepen Disciples
- Develop Leaders
- Love Mercy, Do Justice
- Serve Globally

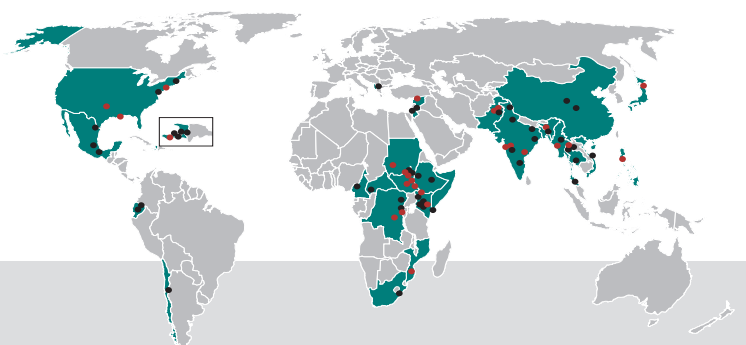
ECC Churches by Conference



ECC Mission Fields



CWR Projects



START AND STRENGTHEN CHURCHES

WE BELIEVE the local church is God's basic strategy to carry out mission in the world. Through planting new churches and providing resources to strengthen existing congregations, these ministries seek to reach more people with the hope of Christ.



CHURCH PLANTING

Key Outcomes:

- Three church planter assessment centers with a total of 31 participants
- Two church planting training events with a total of 26 participants
- 19 new Covenant agreements signed
- Setting a goal to plant 35 churches per year over the next three years

Partnering to Plant

"From assessment to training to the execution of planting a new church, the ECC has done its research and was critical in helping us launch a healthy, missional community. We have now participated in planting Roots Covenant Church in St. Paul and are excited about being a full parent church in the next 1-2 years."

Micah Witham, church planter, Awaken Covenant Community, Lilydale, MN



Chris Bannon (far left)

Saying "No" to Fear

"As a brand new Covenant church plant, God is teaching our launch team to *be the church* before we make the leap to *doing church*. We are thankful for those who have gone before us and serve as mentors and guides today. We choose faith and with God's power, we say no to fear."

Chris Bannon, church planter, Church of the Commons, Greater Boston Area, MA



John Perkins

Becoming a Diverse Church

"We are well on our way to increasing in souls as we press into our vision of becoming a diverse church in the West Jackson area. We deeply appreciate the role the Covenant has played in our work here. Children are being reached, families are being cared for and the gospel message of Jesus Christ is going forward."

John and Patrice Perkins, church planters, Common Ground Covenant Church, Jackson, MS



Brian and Jamie Nanninga

Starting with Full Support

"My church planting experience has been an incredible journey marked by hope, faith and growth in my understanding of what it looks like to reach a community for the sake of the gospel. I began with a 6-month residency at LifeChurch Canton. I arrived to start a church with the full support of an entire denomination."

Brian Nanninga, church planter, Life Church, Livonia, MI

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

Key Outcomes:

- More than 100 vitality workshops were held (at least one in each of the eleven regions).
- 21 churches from 8 different conferences attended the Navigate Conference and are seeking new life through following the vitality pathway.

Vitality Resources for Hispanic Churches

“Agradezco a Dios por el recurso de vitalidad congregacional del Pacto. Luego de haber enseñado el contenido de este tema, he visto de primera mano, el impacto en más de 800 pastores y líderes Latinos en EEUU, México, Honduras, Colombia y Ecuador. El resultado podría explicarse con una palabra: AVIVAMIENTO.”

“I thank God for the ECC congregational vitality resources. I have seen firsthand the impact of these resources on Latino pastors and leaders in USA, Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, and Ecuador. I taught this content to over 800 leaders. The results could be summarized in one word: REVIVAL.”

Allan Serrano, Covenant pastor and consultant, Houston, TX

Vitality Resources for Town and Country Churches

“The congregational vitality resources accelerated our journey toward becoming a healthy and missional church. The financial cost of these resources is minimal while the desired outcome is maximized. As a pastor, Navigate was particularly helpful in gaining leadership tools and a support network with other pastors on the same journey.”

Jodi Moore, lead pastor, Evangelical Community Church, Ceresco, NE

Vitality Resources for Suburban Churches

“Navigate opened our eyes as a large church to the honest conversation our church family needed to have. The Veritas retreat offered the context in which to begin the conversation with over 200 people in attendance. Thank you for inviting us to walk the congregational vitality path!”

Dave McCowan, lead pastor, Forest Park Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI



Navigate at First Covenant, Minneapolis, MN



Allan Serrano



Jodi Moore



Start and Strengthen Churches Team

From left: John Wenrich, Richard Lucco (team leader) Devin Poore, Fredrik Wall, and John Teter.

MAKE AND DEEPEN DISCIPLES

WE ARE COMMITTED to helping people experience new life in Christ, and then growing deeper in Christ in a lifelong journey of faith. The focus on evangelism and Christian formation helps congregations become vibrant communities that regularly see the transforming power of Jesus.



CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Key Outcomes:

- The Youth Ministry Network (11 facilitators and more than 40 area leaders) helped youth workers in their respective regions to be known, connected, and resourced. The Youth Speaker team led more than 25 retreats. The new youth ministry leader, Tim Ciccone, began service in April 2014.
- An informal group of young adult discipleship programs is developing, from three months to one year in length, with a Covenant distinctive, yet varied in content relevant to the context. Hechos29 (Acts29) and Alaska Christian College are partners. Solid Rock launches in Fall 2014 at Lake Beauty Bible Camp, MN.
- Ten Covenant churches experienced the new Journeying Together Prayer Retreat to nurture community life through the art of spiritual conversation. Eight facilitators are equipped to lead the retreat.
- 62 Covenant churches were resourced as they strive to balance peer-based ministry with intergenerational ministry.



Intergenerational Ministry

“We are thrilled that 275 people have signed up for intergenerational groups. There is excitement and a sense of welcome for this new way to engage across generations. Thanks again for providing language and inspiration to move forward in intergenerational connections.”

Sharon Anderson, pastor of adult Christian formation, Pine Lake Covenant Church, Sammamish, WA



Young Adult Discipleship

“The year I was at Alaska Christian College wasn’t easy, but well worth it. I was given opportunities to work through difficult life issues with counseling, be challenged spiritually through classes and the mentorship of the staff, and of course made significant friendships that will last a lifetime.”

Kim Kakakaway, Calgary, SK

Journeying Together Prayer Retreat

“As a church, we were able to apply the skills and exercises we learned at Journeying Together during the Lenten series called Conversations in Grace. It was so good to just listen with no agenda and respond in the moment.”

Dennis Dieball, Libertyville Covenant, Libertyville, IL

WOMEN MINISTRIES

Key Outcomes:

■ **Missional Moms, a new initiative, encourages women of all ages to rise and answer God's call on their lives. Missional Moms is web-based and available at CovChurch.org/missionalmoms.**

■ **850 women gathered in San Diego for Triennial in August 2013 for worship, learning, fellowship, and celebration of what God is doing through women in the Covenant.**

A First-Time Attendee's Reflection on Triennial

"After attending my first Triennial this year, I had only one regret: Why had I not attended earlier? I experienced such joy, inspiration, and encouragement from being a part of Triennial, and I am deeply grateful to Women Ministries for creating such a wonderful event, for us all to engage in deeper fellowship with our ECC church family."

Helen Lee, author, editor, Parkwood Community Church, Carol Stream, IL

A Pastor's Reflection on Triennial

"I was so struck by the overwhelming sense of energy and passion that our women were infused with as a result of their participation at Triennial XIV."

Brian King, pastor, Community Covenant Church, El Cajon, CA

EVANGELISM

Key Outcome:

■ **"Ask the Lord of the Harvest" materials were distributed to every Covenant church to encourage praying to the Lord to send more workers into the harvest.**

For more than 20 years, Covenanters have made an annual commitment to pray for the salvation of those who need Jesus. through "Bringing My World to Christ" and "What's Your One Step?" The new evangelism emphasis, "Ask the Lord of the Harvest" builds on that foundation.



Missional Moms team member Denise Anderson, Naperville, IL, in DR Congo, following her call to serve



Helen Lee



Triennial 2013



Make and Deepen Disciples Team

From left: Tim Ciccone, Millie Lungren, Steve Burger, Doreen Olson (team leader), Aune Carlson, and Tanya Constanza, Geoff Twigg, Wilson Herrera. **Above:** Meagan Gillan, Heidi Morrow, Yvonne DeVaughn, Christi Pease

DEVELOP LEADERS

WE ARE COMMITTED to developing and strengthening leaders, both clergy and lay, through multiple avenues. We serve our clergy by investing in their ongoing personal and professional growth and engage in development of lay leaders through focused leadership training.



ORDERED MINISTRY

Key Outcomes:

- Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) offered two new opportunities in 2013: the Living Forward Cohort which addresses the third stage of the pastoral life cycle and offered an opportunity for pastors over 50 to revision their call; and the Deeper in Christ retreat, which was offered for the first time in Spanish.
- Covenant Orientation continues to familiarize the increasing number of ministers who are new or who are transferring their credentials into the denomination with the ethos and culture of the Covenant.
- 83 people are seeking a permanent credential at the 2014 Covenant Annual Meeting.

Ordered Ministry supports and advocates for all those holding Covenant credentials, including those who are licensed, commissioned, consecrated, and ordained.

Together with other ECC ministry areas and institutions, Ordered Ministry engages in both clergy and lay leader formation. Along with other ministries, it maintains active social media connections and/or blogs to stimulate peer resourcing and maintain relevancy in resourcing. Current listings of these connections are available at CovChurch.org.

The Covenant Ministerium at a Glance

- 1,301 people attended the 75th Midwinter Conference in January 2014. The event is designed for Covenant clergy, and includes multiple specialized programs such as Youth Workers Connection, Covenant Orientation, SPE Cohorts, NPTS intensive class, and various association meetings.
- 160 members of the Covenant Ministerium are engaged in fulltime, part-time or volunteer chaplaincy, and 22 of those clergy are board certified chaplains.
- As of April 2014, there are 2,431 total credentialed ministers (active and inactive in all categories).
- The number of female credentialed clergy has increased from 273 in 2004 to 479 in 2014.
- 493 persons are enrolled in Covenant Orientation as of April 2014.

SPE's Venid a Mi Retiro Pastoral



“Lo mas valioso fue el reencuentro con el silencio y la naturaleza y enseñanza de los 5 sentidos. Allí pude ver la grandeza de Jesús y su gran amor. La manera de someter mi vida a la dirección de Dios y no a mi propia dirección. Otra enseñanza muy valiosa para mi vida fue el examinarme y reflexionar. Recibí nuevo enfoque en el ministerio.”

“The most valuable thing was finding silence and nature again. My five senses taught me where I could see the greatness of Jesus and his great love—the way I should give my life to God’s direction and not my own. Another valuable teaching was that I must examine myself and reflect. I received new focus in ministry.”

Margarita Monsalve, church planter, Navegando Covenant Church, Torrance, CA

SPE's Living Forward

“The big take-away for me from this cohort is the necessity of taking others along with me, investing in new leaders and sharing power. Living Forward has given my wife and me the permission to start naming dates and locations in which to dream. While I love being a pastor and I will always be a devoted follower of Jesus, my identity is much more than my role and so I look forward to a day when I am not so tied to the everyday operations of a local church and can risk doing ministry in new and creative ways.”

Don Johnson, lead pastor, Montecito Covenant Church, Santa Barbara, CA



Don Johnson

Ministers' Crisis Care

“Without the assistance of the Ministers' Crisis Fund, I really don't know where my family and I would be today. Bronx County statistics state that it takes 2-3 years, in most cases, for a family of 6 to become stable and re-established after losing everything in a tragedy such as our fire. Through the support of the Covenant church, our family was stabilized, and moved into a new home in less than six months. The Covenant means it when they say 'We are in this together.'”

Michael Carrion, senior pastor, Promised Land Covenant Church, Bronx, NY



Michael Carrion (far right)



Develop Leaders Team

From left: Mark Novak (team leader), Danielle Ng, Carol Lawson, Christine Olfelt, Theresa Marks, and Tyler Uhl.

...UNTIL JUSTICE
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

LOVE MERCY AND DO JUSTICE

LOVING MERCY AND DOING JUSTICE is simply joining God in making things right in the world. From a biblically rooted framework, the ECC provides tangible ways of extending the love of Jesus in deed as well as word, advocating for the marginalized, the powerless, and the oppressed, and calling out injustices in our society.



COMPASSION, MERCY, & JUSTICE

Key Outcomes:

- 120 families, 225 adults, 285 at-risk youth are being served through the new CMJ ministry initiatives in partnership with local Covenant churches.
- More than 470 people participated in local, regional, and denominational training events.
- 78 participated in two Sankofa cross-racial, interactive journeys
- 49 missionaries participated in Invitation to Racial Righteousness (I2RR).
- 99 persons participated in conference-led Journey to Mosaic trips.
- In collaboration with Covenant Initiatives for Care, a Health and Wellness Task Force began its work to equip, support, and resource churches in serving the healthcare needs of their communities.



Community Development Roundtable (CDR)

“The CDR gathered leaders from local congregations in the Pacific Northwest involved in community outreach ministry for networking, resourcing, and exploration of next steps. This was an excellent opportunity for people to connect with others from around the conference, and to connect with resources of the conference and the denomination. Similar events are planned for next year.”

Krisann Jarvis Foss, director of conference ministries, Pacific Northwest Conference.

Information & Engagement

The Covenant encourages dialogue seeking to reflect Isaiah’s words in 1:18, “Come now, and let us reason together.”

- **Mass Incarceration.** Using the Resolution on Criminal Justice approved by the Annual Meeting in 2010 as a basic foundation
- **Immigration.** Joining with the Commission on Christian Action in resourcing dialogues related to the Resolution on Immigration
- **Race.** Assisting in resetting the Five-Fold Test developed in 2003 to guide the Covenant in becoming an authentic multiethnic community

Sankofa: Looking Backward to Move Forward



“For me, Sankofa was raw truth. The raw truth experienced in the often disturbing new information learned; represented in the places we visited; the lived truth of my African American sisters and brothers who graciously and patiently, but also candidly, shared life from their perspective; and the truth that is found in Jesus Christ, who said, ‘I am the Truth.’ Jesus was with us and needs to

go with us in the ongoing journey of racial reconciliation. That will take more than three days, but three days was absolutely a good start!”

Dennis Carlson, associate pastor, Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, MI.

I2RR with ECC Missionaries

“One of the points of calling the day an ‘Invitation’ is that it is just that, an invitation to start on a journey towards more righteous living and more righteous relations between races. What is next for me? At a minimum I have to continue to converse with friends of my own and other races. I need to ask questions, listen to their stories, speak up for more righteous relations when possible, and read to become informed. I need to see what I have not been seeing and I need to allow myself to feel the injustices.”

Peter Ekstrand, Covenant missionary

Advocates for Victims of Abuse (AVA) sponsored by Women Ministries

More than 300 people were trained last year in AVA and Mending the Soul, AVA’s healing component. Partnerships have emerged with the Pacific Northwest Conference to support pastors and churches and with the Great Lakes Conference to provide multiple trainings in churches, reaching women who are at risk or dealing with violent spouses.

“A woman from a Detroit-area church asked about forgiveness. It was important for us to explain that for the health of the congregation, the leadership needs to hold the abuser accountable for the abuse. Forgiveness is a letting go of the anger, resentment toward the abuser and giving that to God, but it does not mean reconciliation unless those involved agree to reconcile.”

Sue Costello, Detroit, MI (AVA Regional Coordinator)



Twenty-two women took AVA training at Triennial XIV; pictured above is a group of Spanish-speaking women being commissioned as regional coordinators during a ceremony at Triennial.



Love Mercy, Do Justice Team

From left: Dave Husby, Debbie Blue (team leader), Cecilia Williams, and Chrissy Palmerlee.

SERVE GLOBALLY

THE ECC IS COMMITTED to a global gospel—extending the whole gospel to the world and living that out through the international implementation of the other stated priorities: to start and strengthen churches, to make and deepen disciples, to develop leaders, and to love mercy and do justice.



COVENANT WORLD MISSION

Key Outcomes:

- 127 missionaries (long-term, project, and short-term) serving in 21 different countries around the world
- 378 visits and connections by Covenant missionaries and CWM staff to ECC camps and congregations.
- 1,033 people participated in Merge Ministries mission trips impacting 12,894 lives through community outreach, health care, sports programs, kids clubs, home visits, and more.
- Friends of World Mission (FOWM) provided \$248,365 to fund six mission projects requested by our missionaries and partner churches.
- Children in Covenant churches raised \$16,275 through the VBS project to help at-risk children at the Tutorial Learning Center (TLC) in Baw Klua, Thailand.
- 459 churches and 3,858 individuals supported missionaries and mission work in 2013.

Covenant World Mission (CWM) serves the ECC by connecting with international church partners and ministries, supporting local ECC congregations in their pursuit of global engagement and sending missionaries to join God's work in his world.

Connecting with the Fulani

"The Fulani are considered an unreached people group (1 percent believers). It was so cool to see a gathering of 50 or so Fulani that follow Jesus meeting and worshiping together. These Christ followers will be shining examples to their communities of how to respect women and how to care for their children."

Josh and Lori Shinar, missionaries to Cameroon



Merge Trip

"One of the most exciting moments on my Merge trip was when we attended a church service in a building that was not in existence on our first visit. Even though I didn't understand the language in which the pastor preached, I understood that God was in that building, and was speaking through my Mayan friend."

Wayne Lund, Merge participant

PAUL CARLSON PARTNERSHIP (PCP)

Key Outcomes:

- **Multiplied medical impact.** PCP premiered a new Johns Hopkins-Laerdal program, “Helping Mothers Survive,” equipping Congolese nurses to prevent maternal mortality during childbirth. Through the “Training the Trainers” method, each PCP Medical Ambassador trains 12 Congolese nurses, who then train 12 others, to total 48 trained Congolese professionals.
- **Expanded and restructured the Medical Ambassadors Program,** created 10 Focus Groups by medical specialization, and added 8 new ways for medical professionals to participate. An increase in medical volunteerism accelerated our schedule to send medical teams every 6 months.
- **Sustainable investing in local ownership.** The Farmers to Markets program impacts more than 20,000 people; 83 farmers associations connect 2,500 farmers, wholesalers, and bicycle entrepreneurs, equipping them to seek better livelihoods.
- **Partnering with Congolese leadership.** New PCP Working Groups come alongside local leadership for strategic planning and implementation of critical infrastructure projects including sustainable clean water and electricity.

With 50 years of legacy experience, PCP serves medical and economic development in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We partner with the CEUM (Covenant Church in Congo) medical system of 5 hospitals and 108 clinics, providing generous medical, pharmaceutical, and operational support. Support of microfinance, agri-business and infrastructure programs stimulate local business ownership and decrease dependency on the West.

Reflections of a Short-term Missionary

“I am really excited about all of the projects that are currently being developed for the Equateur region by PCP and through this trip we have the potential of partnering with other groups in some new projects, too. Many times in Congo the people can be heard saying: Asanzolama! I echo that sentiment: May he be praised!”

Marta Klein, short-term missionary to DR Congo 2011-13



Marta Klein (right)



Serve Globally Team

Back row, from left: Baxter Swenson, Lana Henrich, Dave Husby, Sara Buki, Byron Amundsen, Nicole Weldon, Chrissy Palmerlee, Judy Amundsen. **Front row, from left:** Barbara Fisk, Margie Swenson, Curt Peterson (team leader), Eileen Thorpe, Ronna Husby, Kim Crawford. **Not pictured:** Meritt Sawyer, Gretchen DeNui.



COVENANT WORLD RELIEF (CWR)

Key Outcomes:

- 64 community development and disaster relief projects in 23 countries
- More than \$1.5 million donated to CWR in 2013
- 312 church partners across North America
- 90% of every gift went directly to projects
- Gathering of Asia partners in India, 29 people representing 7 countries
- Projects include clean water, peacemaking, education, women's empowerment, agriculture, microfinance and justice

CWR serves as the international ministry for loving mercy and doing justice. Transformational community development and disaster response are being done powerfully through indigenous organizations as CWR partners in transformation.



COVENANT KIDS CONGO (CKC) Powered by World Vision

Two Continents. One Vision. An Unprecedented Partnership.

Key Outcomes:

- Building 3 new schools serving 1,500 students
- Providing clean water for more than 36,000 people (with a goal of serving 300,000)
- Building 2 maternity wards in existing health clinics
- Training hundreds of community members in nutrition, health, agriculture, micro business and savings
- Building capacity and collaboration among Congolese leaders and churches

Join us on this journey to transformation.

Sponsor a child today at CovenantKidsCongo.com to help us reach our goal of 10,000 kids. Schedule a Hope Sunday. Pray for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Follow us at CovChurch.org/covenantkidscongo

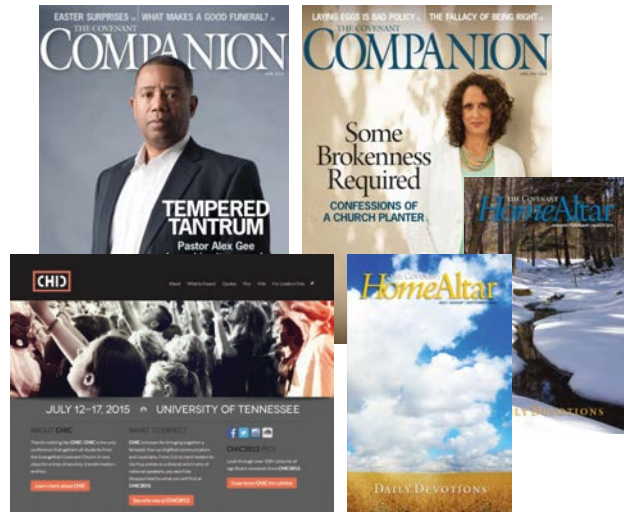


COMMUNICATIONS

The ministry of Communications is rich and multifaceted, as it encompasses print and digital media and provides services to both the internal ministries at Covenant Offices as well as the ECC's regional conferences and local churches.

Key Outcomes:

- **Transition in leadership with Ed Gilbreath beginning July 2013**
- **Renewed commitment to the ministry of the *Covenant Companion*, including a major redesign and re-launch of the publication for 2015.**
- **CovChurch.tv hosted more than 3,000 unique page views per month. Videos at CovChurch.tv were played more than 35,000 times. More than 3,500 unique viewers watched the live-stream or taped videos of major Covenant events.**
- **Interactive Services rebranded the CovLink mobile app and launched new websites for Covenant Initiatives for Care, Paul Carlson Partnership, and CHIC 2015.**
- **The Leader Update, an e-newsletter for Covenant pastors and lay leaders produced by the Design Center with the President's Office, has more than 3,000 readers and an open rate of better than 50 percent.**
- **Covenant Newswire, one of the most read Covenant communication pieces, continued its commitment to telling everyone's story in the ECC mosaic.**
- **The Fulfillment Center increased quality and capacity of printed materials through the addition of a production-level press, with plans to increase our Print-on-Demand catalog of resources for distribution through CovBooks.com.**



From readers and viewers:

"This was such an encouraging word, and I needed it today. Thank you."

Jo Anne, a Covenant Companion reader

"I was blessed to worship from afar. Thanks, guys! It was special to be a part of this [worship service] even though I couldn't be there in person."

Beth, viewer of the Annual Meeting 2013 webcast

"Best presentation of our mission I have ever seen!"

Paul Larsen, regarding the 2014 Mission & Ministry video

"Powerful and creative! Beautiful, compelling word pictures of the Kingdom unleashed!"

Craig Pinley about the Covenant World Relief spoken-word video



Communications Team

Back row, from left: Charles Johnson, James Perkins, Eric Dixon, Ed Gilbreath (team leader), Stan Friedman, Kevin Kempe, Jane Swanson-Nystrom, Dave Westerfield; **Front row, from left:** Joshua Havens, Luke Johnson, Evy Lennard, Steve Luce, Cathy Norman Peterson. **On computer, from left:** Tony Liu, Ben Eash. **Not pictured:** Sarah Johnson.

FINANCE AND BENEFITS

The Office of Finance and Benefits is responsible for management of the day-to-day financial operations of all ministries which come under the Covenant Mission and Ministry budget, special projects, and events, Covenant Pension Plan, ECC Lay Pension Plan, and Bethany Benefit Service. Other responsibilities include risk management, property/liability insurance programs, and investment programs.

Key Outcomes:

- **Base operating budget balanced, with a surplus of \$49,000. Expenses were 5.6% below plan, and the net improved by \$329,000 over last year.**
- **There was no rate increase in 2014 for the 1,208 enrollees (and 3,400 lives covered) in Bethany Benefit Service. Enrollment increased by 17, while claims and administrative expenses were less than last year.**
- **The Pension Plan is fully funded, and the ratio of assets to actuarial liabilities is at 107%. The total asset value in 2013 increased \$29 million. Investment performance was at or above target benchmarks for 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 years, and asset recovery from 2008-2009 financial crisis was up \$111 million.**

Business and Building Services Team

Back row, from left: Marcia Friedman, Michele Harbeck Haley, Dean Lundgren, (team leader), Donna Montgomery, Karl Anderson, Randall Jordan, Elliott Johnson, Scott Nyman, Mark De La Paz, William Yarbrough. **Front row, from left:** Gabby Archibald, Daisy Echevarria, Everly Ban, Christina Kempe, Luz Pagan, Joyce Viken. **Not pictured:** Phil Gonzalez.

Expressions of gratitude

"I am so grateful for the monthly pension that has allowed me to stay in my home. Without it, I would have had to move when (my husband) died."

"Many thanks for holding 2014 rates same as 2013. That is great news for our little church. Doors are open and Christ shows up—we are blessed!"



OPERATIONS

Operations has multiple dimensions including management of Governance, Human Resources, Events, Information Services and general administrative functions of the denomination. These ministry support services are provided for Covenant Office employees, missionaries, volunteers serving in elected and appointed roles, and the general Covenant constituency.

Key Outcomes:

- **New leaders: Marti Burger, director of Covenant Events; Rebecca Gonzalez, executive director of operations; Renata Chorzempa, director of information services**
- **Human Resources and Information Services supported 94 employees at Covenant Offices and 127 missionaries serving around the world.**
- **Approximately 480 Covenanters engaged in over 116 hours of governance-related meetings.**
- **Covenant Offices hosted more than 1,083 meetings and engagements for ministry areas, Covenant affiliates and ministry partners.**

- **More than 3,000 guests attended major Covenant events in the last year supported by the Covenant Events Office**



Operations Team

Back row, from left: Evelyn Johnson, Brandon Cabera, Troy Caldwell, Jorden Meyers, Ron Cravens, Sarah Gonzales, Hilary Honnette. **Front row, front left:** Rebecca Gonzalez (team leader), Marti Burger, Renata Chorzempa, Chris Hagberg. **Not pictured:** Jon McFadyen, Nilwona Nowlin

MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Facilitating generosity and funding mission is the priority of the Office of Mission Advancement. Through its work, the team connects Covenant members and congregations to God's mission and ministry through the ECC, and encourages members—individually and collectively—to engage in and financially support the work of the church and all of its ministry expressions. Through the ministries of the ECC, you can give with confidence, knowing your gifts are wise investments in God's mission throughout the world.

Key Outcomes:

- 118 President's Circle members gave \$470,000 in undesignated support for ministry through the ECC.
- Gifts through the Covenant Cares Gift Registry increased by 42% to \$161,600.
- A new Legacy awareness initiative encouraged Covenant members to remember the ministries of the church in their will or estate plan.



Mission Advancement Team

From left: Donn Engebretson, Carol Erickson, Christine Buettgen, and Cynthia Halverson (team leader).

NATIONAL COVENANT PROPERTIES

National Covenant Properties (NCP) is the loan source for Covenant churches. Covenanters partner by investing funds with NCP into Individual Retirement Accounts, Health Savings Accounts, Five-Year Fixed-Rate Certificates, Variable Rate Demand Certificates and Demand Investment Accounts. NCP also provides real estate consulting services to Covenant churches.

Key Outcomes:

- \$26,000,000 in new loans was distributed to Covenant congregations.
- There were 300 loans totaling \$267,000,000 as of December 31, 2013.
- \$83,000,000 in new investments were made in 2013 and \$76,000,000 was redeemed.



"Exciting to consider next steps for our growing property needs."

Fountain of Life Church staff, Long Beach, CA



"The NCP team has helped us with site acquisition, a phase one building, and now an expansion. They guided us through the difficult years of the recession. Most importantly we felt their concern for ministry, not just money."

Joe Muzzi, pastor, Crossroads Community Church, South Lyons, MI

"We were in need of a miracle for our church plant and five years later the miracle continues. We have made two separate land purchases and the NCP team were great for both of them."

Craig Sweeney, pastor, Bayside Church, Citrus Heights, CA

National Covenant Properties Team

Back row, from left: Steve Dawson (president), Kathryn Lucht, Heidi Havens, Rollie Persson, Rob Hall. Front row, from left: Rachel Einfeldt, Teressa Grannum, Maren Spaulding, Jill Hall.

COVENANT TRUST COMPANY

Covenant Trust Company® (CTC) is the Covenant-owned trust company providing asset management, trustee and estate planning services to the members, friends, and institutions of the ECC. Our mission is to faithfully empower generosity through excellent money management.

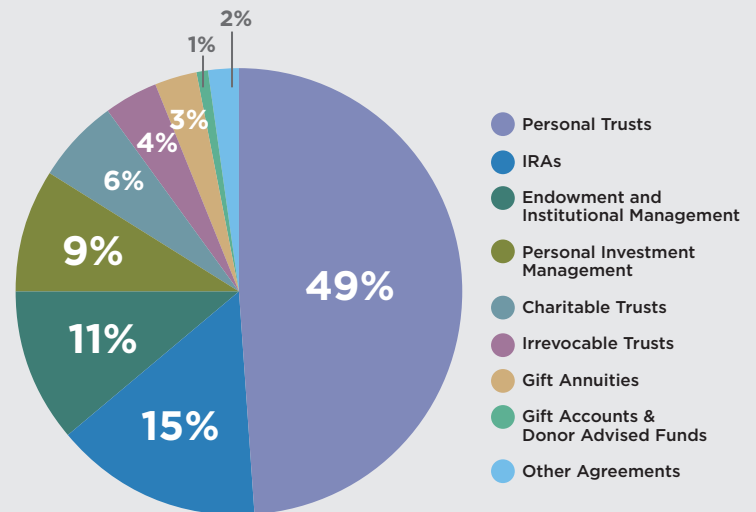
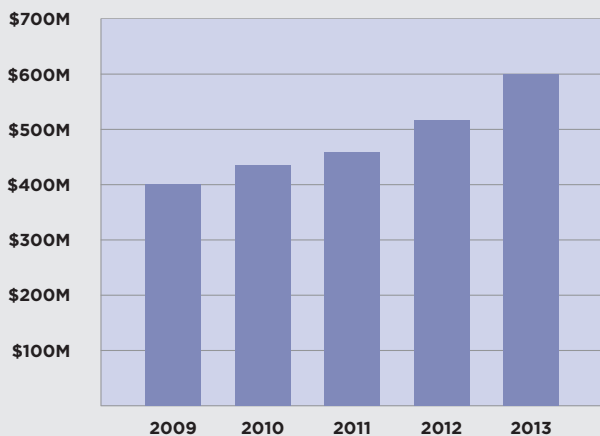
Key Outcomes:

- Closed the year in a strong financial position, and positive momentum continues
- Grew to more than \$600 million in assets under management
- Opened nearly 400 new accounts
- Distributed more than \$4.4 million from trusts and estates to Covenant ministries (local, regional, and denominational).



CTC kicked off a year-long celebration of 25 years of service with a BBQ for Covenant Offices, CTC staff, and its Board of Directors. Ann Wiesbrock, president, is shown far left serving at the BBQ.

Assets Under Management, Dec 31



Covenant Trust Company Team

Back row, from left: Carole Harrif, Ruser Saldaña, John Lindahl, Michael Magnusson, Michael Jozefiak, Gary Johnson, Eric Johnson, Bradley Dahlstrom. **Middle row, from left:** Jennifer Anderson, Beth Lindahl, Teresa Harvey, Joanna Sjoblom, Vanessa Magaña, Gloria Rankin, Christine Peterson, Ann Wiesbrock (president). **Front row, from left:** William Moucka, Paul Lindman, Barbara Wood, Samuel Vetter. **Not pictured:** Sharon D'Alessandro; Joshua Myers.

The mission of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB) which is governed by the Board of Benevolence, has taken many forms over the years but at its core, our affiliates serve on behalf of the ECC. Together we minister in hospitals, retirement communities, children and family ministries, homes for adults with developmental disabilities, services to victims of domestic violence and other health and human services.

Key Outcomes:

- **The sale of Emanuel Medical Center, Turlock, California, to Tenet Healthcare is in its final stages, with closing anticipated midsummer 2014.**
- **Covenant Place, a CRC rental community in Lenexa, Kansas, opened in June 2013 and is at full occupancy. Covenant residents make up 55% of the campus population.**
- **Two new Covenant Enabling Residences, each housing 6 women, opened: Hope House in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in August 2013 and Harmony House, Oak Forest, Illinois, in April 2014.**
- **\$2.4 million raised toward a \$5 million goal for the construction of the Mayora Rosenberg Women's Health Center and Resource Center at Swedish Covenant Hospital in Chicago. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2014.**

"Our family has enjoyed the services of Covenant Place while our parents have been residents of the long-term care unit. I commend you for hiring wonderful people to care for the residents. These staff have represented your facility very well and increased our confidence in leaving our parents in your care."

Sandie Anderson, daughter of Glenn and Maynette Lindell

"Our daughter has lived at Bjorklund House, Independence Place, and now is moving into Harmony House. She is happy, healthy, and has some wonderful friendships. The care she receives is absolutely the best and the dedication of the staff is above and beyond. Such a wonderful group of people!"

Jack McNicholas, parent.



CHET

Centro Hispano de Estudios Teologicos (CHET) in Compton, California, is the Spanish language Christian leadership development school of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Its mission is equipping under-resourced, under-served and un-served Hispanic-Latinos/as for pastoral and lay ministry. Graduates of the Ministerial Program have a pathway for full ordination within the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Key Outcomes:

- **Paid off its mortgage on the Compton location purchased in 2010**
- **128 students graduated from three of four CHET programs. Ceremonies took place in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Bell Gardens, California**
- **Subsidized 500+ students per quarter at an average of 70% with income and donations from individuals, churches, conference and denomination support, and endowment income.**



CHET Team

Back row, from left: Edward Delgado (president), Manuel Valencia, Ovidio Esteban.
Front row, from left: Karen Figueroa, Angelita Viera, Flor Graterol, Chabelita Molina.

NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

With an enrollment of more than 3,000 undergraduates, graduate students, and seminarians, North Park University provides an education through which faith, learning, and service meet. Formed in faith and driven by Christian mission, the University adopts Chicago as classroom to prepare a new generation of global leaders, committed through personal faith and professional expertise to advancing the health and vitality of the world's people and their cities.

Key Outcomes:

■ In the past year the University has improved the face of the campus along Foster Avenue. New signage and improved landscaping introduces the campus to visitors and those who drive by, and identifies the University as an anchor in the North Park and Albany Park neighborhoods. The University joined the Chicago Park District in building a new boathouse and rowing center along the North Branch of the Chicago River, and brought major improvements to the athletic facilities in nearby River Park.

■ A comprehensive revision is nearly complete for the M.Div. seminary curriculum. The refocused program provides a solid preparation for ministry while encouraging increased purpose and direction for life-long learning while in ministry. The revised curriculum has been prepared in collaboration with ECC ministerial leadership and reflects advances in seminary-based curricula nationwide.

■ With the completion of Campaign North Park (reaching a total of \$63 million) the University is constructing the Johnson Center for Science and Community Life. At a complete cost of \$45 million this new 101,000 square foot building will be completed in summer 2014 and will provide facilities for an array of undergraduate, graduate, and seminary programs.



Architectural rendering of new the Johnson Center for Science and Community Life



New Undergraduate Degrees

Sports Management; Health Sciences; Medical Studies; Engineering (B.A.); Engineering (B.S., in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Chicago); Nonprofit Management

New Graduate Degrees

MS in Counseling; DM in Urban Ministry (in partnership with Fuller Theological Seminary).

North Park Theological Seminary Award for Distinguished Service

A new award was created this year to recognize Seminary alumni who have made significant contributions in their field while living a life reflective of the core values and mission of North Park Theological Seminary. The inaugural honoree is Rev. Dr. Robert L. Owens, superintendent of the Southeast Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. The award was presented at a reception hosted by North Park during the Midwinter Conference. In response to the award, Owens cited the Seminary leaders and professors as excellent academics, with a “priestly caring spirit that created a different kind of learning environment. It helped us all to live out the call of Jesus—to be inclusive, kingdom-minded, caring, and shepherding.”



COMMISSIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

The ECC Constitution and Bylaws provide for the Annual Meeting to establish commissions and associations. Commissions have members appointed by the Executive Board. They make recommendations on matters according to their purpose. Official associations approved by the Annual Meeting are voluntary groups of individuals, congregations, and ministries united for the purpose of fellowship, encouragement, and the advancement of a specific mission. During the past year, there have been 7 standing commissions and 7 official associations.



COMMISSIONS

Commission for Biblical Gender Equality

The Commission for Biblical Gender Equality works to promote dialogue that strongly advocates our affirmation of women in ministry. During the past year, steps were taken to reset the overall vision and tasks. A blog was maintained to highlight ministry equality. Covenant camp directors were encouraged to offer chaplaincy opportunities to qualified women candidates with funding assistance offered.

Commission on Town and Country Ministries

The Commission on Town and Country Ministries seeks to develop healthy missional churches in the town and country setting. During the past year the Commission awarded two Dusty Larson Summer internships for NPTS students, made a NPTS campus visit to promote town and country ministry, visited town and country churches in South Texas, and developed a vision for impact and relevancy of town and country pastors.

Commission on Worship

The Commission on Worship seeks to connect worship leaders, develop and share resources, offer training, and participate in worship design for major Covenant events. During the past year, an interactive worship blog was hosted and the Better Together Facebook Group, connecting more than 350 ECC participants for support and resourcing. A document, "What Is Covenant Worship? Characteristics to Be Encouraged" was drafted to guide future dialogue and development of new tools, trainings, and event worship design. Workshops and worship planning and evaluation tools were provided.

Commission on Covenant History

The Commission on Covenant History seeks to collect, preserve, maintain, and interpret the historical record of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Highlights during the past year included: distributing the *Guide to Archives for Local Covenant Churches* and *Guide to Collecting Oral History for Local Covenant Churches* to every local Covenant church as a resource, creating an updated and more user-friendly web page, and creating Friends of Covenant History, a renewed society of people interested in supporting Covenant History.

Commission on Christian Action

The Commission on Christian Action encourages and equips local congregations with biblical, theological, and practical tools to live out thoughtful, holistic discipleship. During the past year, the proposed final Resolution on Immigration was completed with recommended resources. Dialogue, education, and prayer sessions were led. Stories and resources were featured on CovChurch.org, and a panel discussion on CovChurch.tv helped the whole church engage with immigration issues.

Commission on Stewardship

The Commission on Stewardship has not met since Annual Meeting 2013, but has continued to make available resources produced by the Commission.

Commission on Pastoral Relations

The Commission on Pastoral Relations has met periodically with the superintendents to assist in the process of referrals for open pastoral positions.

ASSOCIATIONS

African American Ministers Association (AAMA)

The AAMA seeks to coach, equip, mentor, advocate and encourage African American pastors (current and potential) and leaders in the Evangelical Covenant Church. During the past year, key outcomes included:

- Supporting 2 Covenant Kids Congo (CKC) sponsorships and short-term African American missionaries in Cameroon and Congo
- Providing books for 8 North Park Theological Seminary and University students using Willie Jemison Scholarship
- Participating in annual African American peer mentoring retreat



Covenant Asian Pastor's Association (CAPA)

CAPA offers ongoing mutual support in leadership mentoring, fellowship opportunities, ministry collaboration, and financial resources for Asian North American pastors. During the past year, key outcomes included:

- Creating a Covenant Orientation Scholarship Fund for CAPA members
- Creating a \$3000 Scholarship Fund for NPTS Urban Ministries Certificate students
- Establishing and supporting Rev. Peter Ahn's pastoral mentoring program



Ministerio Hispano de la Iglesia del Pacto Evangelico (MHIPE)

MHIPE promotes the unity and development of Hispanic ministry within the Evangelical Covenant Church. During the past year, key outcomes included:

- Restructuring MHIPE to focus on a broader and more practical mission
- Participation in CIPE meeting in Colombia
- Stating 10 initiatives for Hispanic ministry
- Planning a MHIPE leadership retreat in summer 2014, to begin stating goals and objectives for each of the 10 initiatives



Advocates for Covenant Clergy Women (ACCW)

The mission of ACCW is to equip men and women to advocate for Covenant clergy women at local, regional and denominational levels by giving voice to their struggles; celebrating their call, appointments, and elections, honoring their faithfulness in ministry, and standing in solidarity for systemic change. During the last year, key outcomes included:

- Awarded the 2013 ACCW Priscilla Pastorate Grant to Carolyn Rose, the ACCW Anderson/Nordlund Missionary Scholarship to Katherine Isaza and the ACCW Mordecai Award for Outstanding Partnership to Ted Law
- Facilitated connections of 88 male and female clergy at a Midwinter 2014 lunch to discuss actual case studies and advocacy steps
- Sponsored clergy partner gatherings at conference annual meetings



Other Pastors Associations

The Korean Pastors Association, Native Alaskan pastors, and Sudanese pastors meet as separate groups periodically for connections and peer resourcing.



Covenant Chaplains' Association

The Covenant Chaplains' Association provides opportunities for Covenant clergy serving as institutional and military chaplains to gather and know one another; participate in fellowship centered around a mutual interest; have continuing education; and speak with one voice to the Covenant Ministerium regarding chaplaincy concerns. During the last year, key outcomes included:



- a \$400 scholarship to a chaplain in a year-long residency of Clinical Pastoral Education
- a *Covenant Quarterly* issue in 2015 focused on chaplaincy areas of expertise
- discussion with various Covenant structures regarding chaplains' unique institutional obligations in tandem with 21st century ministry questions

Association of Covenant Camps and Conference Centers (ACCCC)

The purpose of ACCCC is to support, equip, and advocate for its members and their partnerships. During the last year, key outcomes included:

- \$59,975 in summer camp offerings for Covenant Kids Congo project of developing water resources
- Christian camping version of the vitality pathway resources (adapted from Congregational Vitality resources)
- A theological resource, "Celebrating Conversion" to train seasonal camp staff in the Covenant's theology of conversion
- Connections—Fall Fellowship, in conjunction with the national conference of the Christian Camp and Conference Association; and Midwinter Renewal, in conjunction with the Covenant's Midwinter Conference



Five-Fold Test

All ethnic associations and groups were represented at the Five-Fold Retreat in fall 2013 for initiating a "resetting" of the five-fold test for the future.



The Evangelical Covenant Church

8303 W HIGGINS RD
CHICAGO, IL 60631

UPCOMING EVENTS

See CovChurch.org for details.

■ **MIDWINTER CONFERENCE 2015**

Denver, CO | Jan 26-30

■ **YOUTH WORKER CONNECTION 2015**

Denver, CO | Jan 24-26

■ **GATHER 2015** (Including Annual Business Meeting)

Kansas City, MO | Jun 25-27

■ **CHIC 2015**

Knoxville, TN | Jul 12-17

■ **MIDWINTER CONFERENCE 2016**

Rosemont, IL | Jan 25-29

■ **YOUTH WORKER CONNECTION 2016**

Rosemont, IL | Jan 23-25

■ **GATHER 2016** (Including Annual Business Meeting)

Location TBD | June 23-25

■ **TRIENNIAL 2016**

Kansas City, MO | July 28-31

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

CovChurch.org | CovChurch.tv

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