



# MINISTRY REPORTS

## 2018



# CONFERENCE CHAIR REPORT

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul writes beautiful words of thanksgiving to Philemon, his "dear friend and fellow worker," that I want to appropriate for you, my fellow GLC brothers and sisters: I thank God as I remember you in my prayers for your love for all his holy people and your faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. And I pray that our work together, our 3-strand-strong partnership among the ECC, GLC, and our local churches, will be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Your love and support of our conference has given me great joy and encouragement, because you have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people, not only in your communities, but throughout the GLC, the ECC, and around the world. (Based on Philemon 1:1-7, NIV)



I am honored to be completing my term of service as your conference chair. I am blessed to have worked with such a caring and competent executive board, and our wonderful conference staff - Garth McGrath, Alan Tumpkin, Shelley Kurth, Jody Eidnes, Kari Griebel, Laura Garvey, and Kim Carlson. I would like to say a special thank you to our retired staff member, Mike Przybylski, and our retiring board members Mickey Tresh, Justin Bowers, and Ja'mel Armstrong. I am grateful for their service to the GLC, for their wisdom, insight, and graciousness, and for their partnership in ministry. They will be deeply missed.

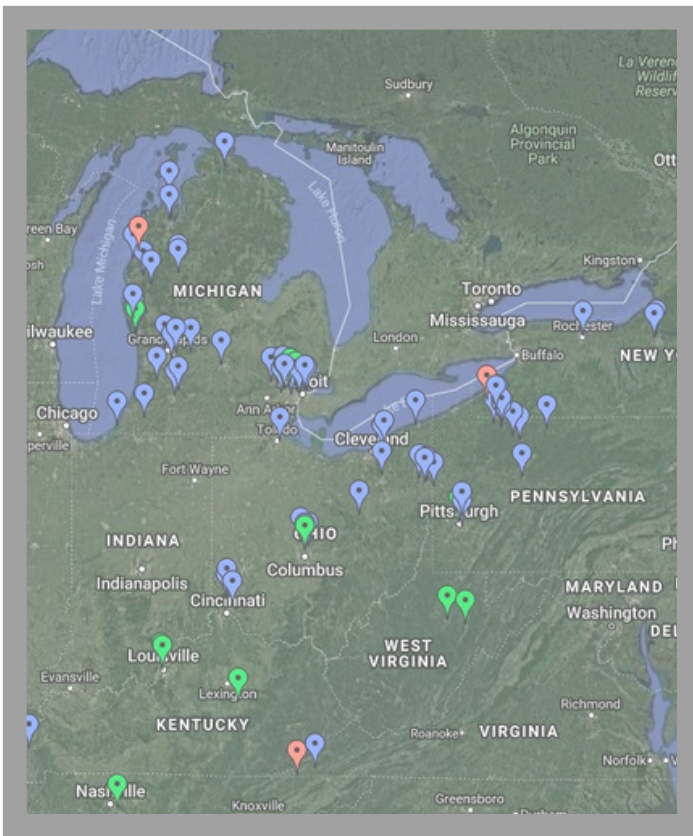
As you likely know, and have probably experienced in your home church, this has been a difficult fiscal year. Giving is down across the board. Thanks however, to our conference's healthy cash reserves and our staff's wise stewardship of resources, we have been able to continue our high level of service to our conference churches, entities, pastors, and parishioners. Unfortunately, if giving to the GLC does not increase, those reserves will disappear and difficult decisions will have to be made regarding mission and ministry. Therefore, my prayer and hope for our future together, for our partnership in mission and ministry, is that we would continue to seek and discern God's will and that we would have courage to follow where God leads and to trust in God's provision and timing.

May God continue to grow in us love for all his people and faith in our Lord Jesus so that our partnership in the faith might continue to be effective in deepening our understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ, and that we might have great joy and encouragement as we refresh the hearts of the Lord's people at home, throughout the GLC and ECC, and around the world. Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel through the mission and ministry of the Great Lakes Conference.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. J.T. Madison  
GLC Chair

# GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

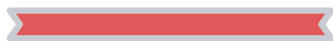
The Great Lakes Conference (GLC) is a mission region of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). It is comprised of approximately 80 churches in Lower Michigan, Ohio, western Pennsylvania, western New York, Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia. The GLC is committed to church planting, church vitality, church outreach, church leadership and Christian camping. We are a mosaic of urban, suburban, small city, small town, and rural churches made up of people with diverse spiritual backgrounds, ethnicities, and ages.



**Our Mission**  
Helping every congregation become a healthy missional church. Pursuing Christ. Pursuing Christ's priorities in our world.

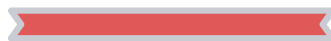
**Our Passion**  
To lift up Jesus Christ. We are a movement that emphasizes new life in Christ. We are continually open to the fresh movement of the Spirit that lifts people up to Jesus Christ and brings people to Him. (John 12:32)

## MISSION PRIORITIES



- Church Planting
- Church Vitality
- Church Leadership
- Church Outreach

## ASSOCIATIONS & INSTITUTIONS



- Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp
- Camp Mission Meadows
- Women Ministries
- Spiritual Directors Network

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

## STAFF



**Garth McGrath**  
*Superintendent*  
garth@greatlakes.cc  
248-821-6956



**Alan Tumpkin**  
*Director of Church Planting*  
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**Shelley Kurth**  
*Director of Congregational Vitality*  
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**Jody Eidnes**  
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**Kari Griebel**  
*Assistant to the Conference Administrator*  
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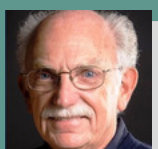
**Laura Garvey**  
*Office Assistant*  
laura@greatlakes.cc  
734-451-4670



**Kim Carlson**  
*Finance Officer*  
kimpamcarlson@att.net  
734-968-9165

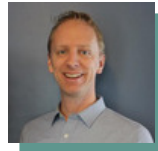


**Kevin Butcher**  
*Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Projects*  
kevin@greatlakes.cc  
313-920-9920



**Jack Nichols**  
*Consultant/Coach*  
Financial Accounting and Reporting Systems  
jacknichols66@yahoo.com  
248-417-7997

## Officers



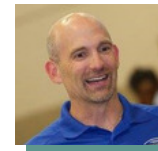
**Chair**  
**J.T. Madison**  
(2019 - 2nd)  
*Evangelical Covenant  
Port Allegany, PA*



**Vice Chair**  
**Nicole Laing**  
(2020 - 2nd)  
*Cityview Covenant  
Pittsburgh, PA*

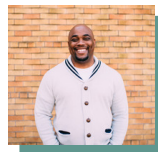


**Secretary**  
**Stephen Ormond**  
(2020 - 2nd)  
*Faith Covenant  
Farmington Hills, MI*

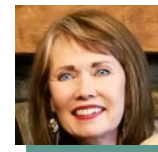


**Treasurer**  
**Mickey Tresh**  
(2019 - 2nd)  
*First Covenant  
Grand Rapids, MI*

## Trustees



**Ja'mel Armstrong**  
(2021 - 1st)  
*One Church  
Louisville, KY*



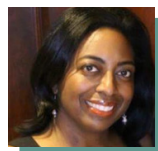
**Connie Berry**  
(2021 - 1st)  
*First Covenant  
Westerville, OH*



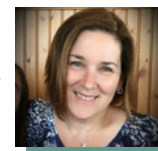
**Justin Bowers**  
(2019 - 1st)  
*New Community  
Buckhannon, WV*



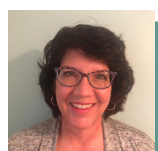
**Sarah Gordon**  
(2020 - 1st)  
*Sanctuary Columbus  
Columbus, OH*



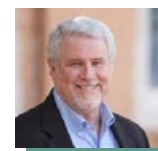
**Kathleen Jackson**  
(2020 - 1st)  
*Life Church Southfield  
Southfield, MI*



**Katherine Kayser**  
(2021 - 1st)  
*Hope Community  
Detroit, MI*



**Cheryl Schut**  
(2019 - 1st)  
*First Covenant  
Grand Rapids, MI*



**Tom Sharkey**  
(2019 - 1st)  
*First Covenant  
Youngstown, OH*

# THE MINISTRY OF THE GLC

*Through shared financial resources and  
our conference staff members*

## CHURCH PLANTING

*Starting New Churches*

### In Church Planting we:

- Aim to plant 2-3 new churches per year
- Recruit and train healthy missional churches to "parent" a daughter church
- Recruit, assess and train prospective church planters
- Coach the planter in all dimensions of planting for five years
- Guide churches through the process of acquiring their first facility

### Adoptions:

- We cultivate relationships with leaders of potential church adoptions
- We assess churches that wish to affiliate with the Covenant to ensure a good fit both theologically and missionally
- We guide church leaders through the process of adoption

## CHURCH OUTREACH

*Resourcing Churches to Serve  
Locally and Globally*

- Equip pastors and lay leaders to raise the temperature for evangelism in their church
- Provide churches both resources and equipping workshops focused on Evangelism, Outreach, and Compassion, Mercy and Justice
- Give financial support to Camp Mission Meadows, Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp and Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp
- Coach churches through the process of purchasing property or buildings in order to expand or improve their ministry capacity
- Serve Conference children's ministries with The Lego City
- Support the North American Japanese Outreach Ministry

## CHURCH VITALITY

*Strengthening Existing Churches*

### We help churches:

- Better understand their community demographics
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in ministry
- Develop a "vitality pathway" to regain missional traction
- Resolve conflict
- Revise organizational structures for more fruitful ministry
- Establish sound financial accounting and reporting systems
- Search for additional staff members

### In addition:

- We speak in conference churches almost every Sunday to encourage, inspire and invite churches to go deeper in Christ and further in mission
- We visit conference churches and offer constructive first impressions feedback upon request

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

*Developing Pastors, Staff and  
Lay Leaders*

- Organize conference-wide, practical church leadership training events two times a year
- Supply administrative and logistical support for the Fall Pastors' Retreat
- Mentor pastors serving in their "first call" as a lead pastor
- Provide care for our conference pastors
- Lend significant logistical support for pastors going through the credentialing process
- Guide Pastoral Search Committees through the process of searching for a new pastor or staff member
- Coach Church Chairs in the art of chairing a church

# CHURCHES IN THE GLC

As of 12/31/18

## KENTUCKY

Four Rivers Covenant, Calvert City  
Grace Community Covenant, Louisville  
One Church, Louisville  
Hope City Covenant, Richmond

## MICHIGAN

Christ Community, Allegan  
Evergreen Evangelical Covenant, Branch  
Redeemer Covenant, Caledonia  
Life Covenant Church, Canton  
Evangelical Covenant, Cheboygan  
Dearborn Evangelical Covenant, Dearborn  
The Bridge Covenant, Detroit  
Citadel of Faith Covenant, Detroit  
City Covenant, Detroit  
Detroit Bible Tabernacle, Detroit  
Hope Community, Detroit  
Love of Christ Christian Center, Detroit  
Messiah, Detroit  
Miracle of Faith Ministries, Detroit  
Federated Covenant, Dowagiac  
Faith Covenant, Farmington Hills  
Bachelor Evangelical Covenant, Fountain  
Esperanza Covenant, Grand Rapids  
First Evangelical Covenant, Grand Rapids  
Thornapple Evangelical Covenant, Grand Rapids  
Harbert Community, Harbert  
Kalamazoo Covenant, Kalamazoo  
Bretton Woods Covenant, Lansing  
Evangelical Covenant, LeRoy  
Life Church Livonia, Livonia  
Trinity, Livonia  
Faith Covenant, Manistee  
Forest Park Covenant, Muskegon  
Kingdom Embassy Covenant, Muskegon  
Evangelical Covenant, Northport  
New Hope, Richland  
Saranac Community, Saranac  
Crossroads Community, South Lyon  
Life Church Southfield, Southfield  
West Bay Covenant, Traverse City  
Covenant Presbyterian, Tustin  
Evangelical Covenant, Whitehall  
Fruitland Evangelical Covenant, Whitehall  
Christ Covenant, Wixom

## NEW YORK

Grace Evangelical Covenant, Clay  
First Covenant, Jamestown  
Nueva Vida Covenant, Jamestown  
Zion Covenant, Jamestown  
Redeemer Evangelical Covenant, Liverpool  
Artisan, Rochester

## OHIO

First Covenant, Ashtabula  
Austintown Community Ev. Cov., Austintown  
Trinity Community, Cincinnati  
Revival Cov. (Praise Chapel International), Columbus  
Sanctuary Columbus, Columbus  
Journey Covenant, Cuyahoga Falls  
Covenant Community, Fairfield  
Redeemer, Hamilton  
Bethany Covenant, Lyndhurst  
St. John's Evangelical Covenant, Millersburg  
Fireside Covenant, Oregon  
Gateway Community, Powell  
Faith Covenant, Westerville  
First Covenant, Willoughby Hills  
Faith Community Covenant, Youngstown  
First Covenant, Youngstown

## PENNSYLVANIA

Stoneridge Covenant, Allison Park  
First Covenant, Bessemer  
Bethany Covenant, DuBois  
Emmanuel Mission, Kane  
First Mission Covenant, Ludlow  
Cityview Covenant, Pittsburgh  
Keystone Church of Hazelwood, Pittsburgh  
Evangelical Covenant, Port Allegany  
Scandia Evangelical Covenant, Russell  
Mission Covenant, Sugar Grove  
Pleasant Community, Warren

## TENNESSEE

The Movement, Nashville

## VIRGINIA

Wallens Creek Covenant, Duffield

## WEST VIRGINIA

New Community Covenant, Buckhannon  
New Community Covenant: Elkins, Elkins

# PASTORAL CHANGES

NAME:	FROM:	TO:	POSITION:
Dawn Choate		Four Rivers, Calvert City, KY	Pastor
Oscar Cortez	Esperanza Covenant, Grand Rapids, MI	Oasis de Salvacion, Arvada, CO	Church Planter
Dale Dalman		Esperanza Covenant, Grand Rapids, MI	Pastor
Cathy Kaminski	Trinity Community, Cincinnati, OH	High Rock Acton, Acton, MA	Pastor-in-residence
Peg Kohring	Federated Covenant, Dowagiac, MI	Covenant Community, South Bend, IN	Co-Interim Pastor
Nathan McWherter		Life Covenant, Canton, MI	Pastor
Debbie Montzingo		Bethany Covenant, Lyndhurst, OH	Pastor
Craig Pinley	Redeemer Church, Hamilton, OH	Stromsburg Covenant, Stromsburg, NE	Pastor
Joe Poppino	Covenant Community, Fairfield, OH	Sanctuary Covenant, Sacramento, CA	Pastor
Janine Davis	The Bridge Covenant, Detroit, MI		
Mike Rice	Life Covenant, Canton, MI	Faith Covenant, Farmington Hills, MI	Pastor
Tim Anderson		St. John's Ev. Cov., Millersburg, OH	Interim Pastor
Nicole Thomas		Redeemer Church, Hamilton, OH	Interim Pastor
Jesse Slimak	Evangelical Covenant, LeRoy, MI	Bethany Covenant, DuBois, PA	Pastor
Don Johnson		Covenant Community, Fairfield, OH	Interim Pastor
Jan DeWitt	New Hope, Richland, MI	Forest Hills Covenant, Boston, MA	Pastor
Jeanette Brown		Journey Covenant, Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Pastor
Sara Charlton		St. John's Ev. Cov., Millersburg, OH	Pastor
Jon Myers	Scandia Covenant, Russell, PA		
David McCowan	Forest Park Covenant, Muskegon, MI	Osage Community Cov., Osage City, KS	Interim Pastor
Ken White	Trinity Church, Livonia, MI	Forest Park Covenant, Muskegon, MI	Interim Pastor
Stacey Shaffer	First Mission Covenant, Ludlow, PA		
Donearl Johnson		Life Church Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI	Church Planter

## OTHER GLC BOARDS

### CAMP MISSION MEADOWS

Stephen Zimmerly - Interim Chair

215 Washington Avenue  
DuBois, PA 15801

### GLC MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

Rev. Joe Muzzi - Chair

28900 Pontiac Trail  
South Lyon, MI 48178

### PORTAGE LAKE COVENANT BIBLE CAMP

Lars Anderson - Chair

2250 Fair Ridge Dr. NE  
Ada, MI 49301

### SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS NETWORK

Jennifer Andersson - Co-Chair

28287 Beck Road, Unit D  
Wixom, MI 48393

### WOMEN MINISTRIES OF THE GLC

Phyllis Van - President

96 Rosslyn Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43214

### SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS NETWORK

Patty Harrison - Co-Chair

2072 Portlock  
Commerce Township, MI 48382

# SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 1:3-6*

At the close of 2018, I join the Apostle Paul in giving thanks to God for the faithful partnership in the gospel shared by the churches of the Great Lakes Conference (GLC). Throughout the year, it was a great joy for me to hear pastors and lay leaders tell stories of people coming to faith in Jesus, give accounts of community needs being met in the name of Jesus, and share reports of churches striving to reflect the whole kingdom of God in their ministry and their life together. It was also a great joy for me to witness greater strength in our church planting efforts, growth in our vitality ministry, steadfastness in our leadership development ministry, and ongoing support of churches seeking to engage in meaningful outreach ministries in their community. It was a challenging and good year!



## CHURCH PLANTING

Under the direction of our half-time Director of Church Planting, Alan Tumpkin (who also serves as Lead Pastor of Life Church Southfield), the GLC provided ongoing support, coaching, and encouragement to the pastors and leaders of our four most recent church plants: Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church in Muskegon, MI (2016); New Community Covenant Church in Elkins, WV (2017); The Movement Covenant Church in Nashville, TN (2017); and Hope City Covenant Church in Richmond, KY (2017). Alan and his team were also able to provide coaching to churches in years 1-5 and consultations to pastors of “older” church plants to encourage and equip them for their ministry. Meanwhile, our three Life Churches in the Detroit area (Canton, Southfield, and Livonia) combined resources and efforts to provide a Church Planting Residency for Donearl Johnson in anticipation of planting the fourth Life Church in the Detroit area, Life Church Auburn Hills, which is expected to begin weekly services in April, 2019.

As we move forward with church planting initiatives in the years ahead, we continue to envision that our primary model for planting will be the “parenting” model in which the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) and the GLC partner with an existing church (or churches) to give birth to a new church plant. Research and our own experiences continue to show that this model tends to produce the strongest church plants. Other models for planting will also be utilized and/or considered as appropriate, including the “partnership” model in which multiple churches contribute to the birth of a new church, the bi-vocational model, and the “parachute” model in which a church is started in a community that is not near any other Covenant churches.

In 2017, the GLC Executive Board adopted the policy of requiring that prior to the approval of a given church plant, all GLC costs for that plant must be secured in cash or pledges. On average, it costs the GLC \$75,000 over three years to fund each new plant. In past years, these funds were acquired through the sale of property when churches closed. In 2017, the costs of our three new church plants were covered by proceeds from the sale of Covenant Manor (in Jamestown, NY). Authorization to plant Life Church Auburn Hills was approved based on the availability of some remaining Covenant Manor proceeds designated for church plants and donations from individuals. Moving forward, we will be looking for individual donors (Mission Friends for Church Planting) and local churches to meet the GLC costs of planting a new church. Please visit the GLC web site at [www.greatlakes.cc](http://www.greatlakes.cc) to become a Mission Friend for Church Planting.

## CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

During 2018, nine GLC churches were formally engaged in Congregational Vitality work. This relatively large number of churches was made possible by the first-of-its-kind-in-the-ECC, cost-effective model (Part-time Director, multiple trained “contract” Vitality Associates and Vitality Facilitators) we use to deliver vitality services to our churches. The strength of the model was evident in the seamless delivery of those vitality services to churches despite the transition in the Director’s position in 2018. (After serving as Director of Congregational Vitality from early 2015 through October 2018, Mike Przybylski stepped down from the position and handed the baton to Shelley Kurth.) Services to our nine churches were uninterrupted and momentum continued to build. Churches across the GLC that put to use one or more of the many vitality resources available to our churches (<https://covchurch.org/vitality/>) continue to benefit from thoughtful investment in their vitality. We urge every church in the GLC to do the same.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To help churches equip and develop leaders, we provided three significant training events in 2018 at the following venues: Camp Mission Meadows near Jamestown, NY in April (in conjunction with the GLC Annual Celebration); Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills, MI in September; Life Church Canton, in Canton, MI in November. Topics included Ministry to Emerging Generations; Developing Your Church’s Vision, Mission, and Values; Ministry to LGBT Persons (including an all-day training workshop by Preston Sprinkle, a leading voice for such ministry across the nation); Maximizing the Impact of Your Facility on Your Ministry; Reaching Out to Families; Building a Strong Church; Recruiting Volunteers; Ministry to People with Disabilities; Preventing Suicide Among Teens; Church Financial Management; and Empowering the Boomer Generation for Ministry. The feedback we continually receive is that the workshops we offer are excellent and timely.



Our GLC staff assisted ten churches in pastoral transition, guided 58 individuals in the credentialing process with the Evangelical Covenant Church, provided specialized care to five pastors in crisis, and once again worked closely with the GLC Ministerial Association to offer a “top shelf” Fall Retreat experience for our pastors and their spouses. This year’s retreat at the Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center in Oregon, OH, featured Kevin Butcher, author of *Choose and Choose Again*, founder of “Rooted Ministries,” and Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Projects for the GLC.

## CHURCH OUTREACH

When churches investigate the 10 Healthy Missional Markers they consistently find that “intentional evangelism” is their weakest marker. They may be good at providing outreach services of compassion and care to people in need, but they are not seeing people come to faith in Jesus as Savior, commit to following Him as Lord of their life and begin the work of sharing their faith and making new disciples. GLC staff members consistently urge our churches to use the BLESS initiative of the ECC (<https://covchurch.org/evangelism/>) to foster intentional evangelism in their congregation, and they coach GLC pastors to raise the temperature for personal evangelism in their church by telling stories of life change taking place in the people she/he engages with in her/his daily life and asking Leadership Team/Council Members to do the same. At our Annual Celebration in April 2018, we celebrated 792 new followers of Jesus, and in the “Offering of Names” for the BLESS initiative in 2018, 18 GLC Churches reported that they would be praying for a total of 5,660 people in their respective spheres of influence in 2018. In support of this effort, and to encourage contextual evangelism, the GLC provided a subscription for every church to use the services of MissionInsite, a Christian organization that provides census information that is extremely helpful for understanding a church’s community context. In addition, our GLC staff served as a networking hub to connect leaders of churches that wanted to implement new outreach initiatives in their community with leaders of successful outreach ministries in other parts of the GLC or the Covenant. Along with the “networking,” the GLC continued to coach a sister church in Germany on outreach ministry, and continued organizational counsel to the North American Japanese (Covenant) Outreach Ministry in Metro Detroit. We also gave \$15,000 in budgeted funds (and an additional \$2,600 in special offerings) to Camp Mission Meadows, and \$10,000 to Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp (owned by Wallens Creek Covenant Church in Virginia) to help them serve GLC churches and people in their respective regions.

## CHURCH CLOSURES

With heavy hearts we acknowledge that the following churches voted to close in 2018: The Bridge Covenant Church (planted in 2010); Trinity Church of Livonia, MI (adopted 2006); Trinity Community Church of Cincinnati (adopted 2007). We give thanks for the faithful ministry of the pastors and lay leaders who served these churches. We give thanks for the people who came to faith and began to follow Jesus. We grieve the closing of the churches and pray that God will continue to reveal himself in the respective communities.

## HEADWINDS

During 2018, a number of our GLC churches experienced substantial unexpected financial challenges in their local ministries (for a variety of reasons) which resulted in lower than anticipated contributions to the GLC. Total contributions from GLC churches in 2018 amounted to approximately \$50,000 less than the prior year. Because our (already frugal, mostly part-time) staff was made aware of the challenges as they occurred we were able to implement cost-saving steps to minimize our draw on cash reserves while striving to provide continued excellent service to our churches.

We anticipate local church financial headwinds to continue in 2019 and are preparing a conservative budget accordingly. However, we ask all of our churches to strongly consider contributing a minimum of 6.5% of local income to the ECC and 3.5% of local income to the GLC. In that way together we can start new churches, strengthen existing churches, develop and train leaders, and resource our churches for greater fruit in evangelism and outreach - all for the Glory of God and the good of our neighbors throughout the Great Lakes Conference region.

## GENEROSITY AND HOPE

While a number of our churches experienced significant financial headwinds in 2018, a number of our churches found themselves in position to donate generously to help other churches with particular needs. These donations included: contributions to churches serving in financially challenged communities; donations to help a largely first-generation African-immigrant church to relocate and purchase a much-needed new building (Revival, Columbus); gifts to several churches hit with unexpected building repair expenses; and direct support to recent church plants in rural communities. Furthermore, in response to the sudden drop in giving to the GLC during the year several of our smaller churches who typically are not able to contribute to the conference gave gifts to help make up the difference. These acts of generosity are indicative of the heart of our churches to be partners in the important Kingdom work to which we have been called in the Great Lakes Conference.

It is my hope and my prayer that all of our GLC churches will continue to be - or become - healthy, missional, fruitful and multiplying churches so that by the year 2020 every GLC church has participated in some way to help give birth to a new Covenant Church in the GLC while supporting the larger mission of the GLC and the Covenant. The journey to “healthy, missional, fruitful and multiplying” as a conference, begins with being “healthy, missional, fruitful and multiplying” as local churches. May God bless us and empower us as we seek to do our part to help our own local church reach that worthy goal.

Respectfully,  
Garth McGrath

# CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY REPORT

SHELLEY KURTH

*Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV) Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*



The dreams of churches must be God-sized. This is the work of Vitality, the work of bringing a clear sense of what the Holy Spirit is doing and a better healthy and missional approach to the local church context, so that she might be more fruitful and multiplying. Every church, no matter its age, has a level of vitality; and staying strong in this area of living takes intentional leadership and vision. 2018 has been a year of change towards a healthy, missional GLC Congregational Vitality ministry.

In July of 2017, we restructured the ministry of Congregational Vitality in the Great Lakes Conference and the season of evaluating and transition began in November of 2017. With Mike Pryblyski's retirement this past fall and my hiring in November of 2018, the end of the year was one of connecting with the Vitality Team who provide workshops, seminars, coaching and other input into the GLC churches.

The success of the plan to reduce the role of Director to one-quarter time and adding other contracted staff to the Vitality Team, allowed for nine GLC churches to enter into and engage the Congregational Vitality Pathway (a series of workshops) successfully during the 18 months since the revised structure launched. The increased number of trained pastors serving the Vitality churches significantly impacted the number of churches moving forward with a healthy and missional mindset. Additionally, several churches furthered conversations through stand-alone seminars, touchpoints to Vitality if you will, offered in the areas of church leadership, organizational structures, worship, conflict management, and others focused on the areas of the Healthy Missional Markers and the Seven Systems of a Healthy Church. All of these seminars helped to identify common success factors of healthy churches. The overlap of the ECC Mission Priority of Make and Deepen Disciples allowed markers such as Intentional Evangelism to be enhanced through their BLESS initiative and Immerse/Community Bible Experience which fostered markers such as Life Transforming Walk with Jesus and Compelling Christian Communities. These discipleship movements build into the needed revitalization of the people and churches of our conference. The supplementary touchpoints of Vitality move leadership and pastors toward healthy missional churches, as it takes an emotionally healthy pastor and lay leadership to lead a strong, healthy missional church. At present, over 45 GLC churches have experienced some aspect of the Congregational Vitality opportunities since 2010.

The team approach to supporting our GLC churches, created in the new structure, has been met with a positive evaluation by the GLC Vitality Team. While we aim to increase training and resources to help the team best serve our pastors and lay leaders, we are also creating and fostering the expectation of another Healthy Missional Marker - a Culture of Godly Leadership.

Can you see the three-strand-strong concept? So much of where GLC Congregational Vitality, ECC Mission Priorities, and you, the local church come together is based on the way we commit to developing stronger churches together.

It is my hope that every church in our conference will have a touch point with Vitality by the end of 2020. What will that look like? It may be accessing a workshop that helps further engage one of the 10 Healthy Missional Markers, sharing a story of their healthy missional journey in order to encourage others, or a stand-alone workshop. Perhaps it will be taking part of an upcoming ECC Conference called STRONG (formerly Navigate) in November of 2019. The GLC Vitality Team also maintains ongoing ministry with churches who have walked the Pathway and are in the ongoing work of moving forward in congregational vitality by “living into” the vision they have discovered from God.

As I begin in this part time role, I am excited for what God has for our GLC Churches and the opportunity to see the Holy Spirit at work. I wish you could sit in on a workshop where, as the day develops and the participants interact with the material presented, there is a clear stirring of the Holy Spirit doing “something” in the vision, direction, conversation, and hearts of those in the shared experience. Vitality resources provide a conduit for individuals and churches to process the dreams, and the “immeasurably more” that is promised (Ephesians 3).

Vitality itself is stimulating and hard work, and no two churches have the same background or experience. Some see incremental changes, others experience monumental shifts. Some struggle with accepting the ever-changing seasons of church life, just as we adjust to changes in our personal lives. Change is a given in all aspects of life and ministry. How we respond and allow God to use us and His church through these times is the work of Vitality.

I would ask for your prayers for the vitality of our churches and our conference, and clarity as each addresses its own reality. I would challenge all of you to look at your present circumstances and ask, “Are we healthy and are we missional? Are we seeing fruit in our ministry? Are we making disciples through multiplication by encouraging individuals to follow Jesus and/or planting new churches? Are these attributes a strength in our congregation?”

I’d like to hear your story and lean into the great things happening. Give me a call. If perhaps this is an area where you might feel a need to “hit the gym” and build some ministry muscle, please connect with me. I would be happy to talk more about congregational vitality in the life of your church.

Partnering with you toward a more healthy and more missional future, so that we can be fruitful and multiply,

Reverend Shelley Kurth  
Director of Congregational Vitality

# CHURCH PLANTING REPORT

*“Go and make disciples of all nations...” Matthew 28:19-20*

## Why Plant Churches?

1. **We reach people who are far from God.** Research shows that new churches have a higher conversion rate than any other evangelistic activity. [1] Additionally, new churches have also proven to be the best method of reaching new generations, new residents, and new people groups.

2. **We follow Jesus’ mandate to make disciples.** Planting new churches helps us to obey Jesus’ command to make disciples of every person that we can. However, the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20) is not just a call to ‘make disciples’ but to ‘baptize’. In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporating somebody into a local worshipping community (Acts 2:41-47). A new church not only helps reach new people, but to bring them into the family of God and help them grow as disciples.

3. **The planting church experiences increased health and benefit.** Despite what some may think, the typical church that starts a new church tends to do better itself. One reason is because churches committed to starting new churches focus on developing and deploying leaders while engaging people with the gospel. These efforts help the mother church grow in its own ministry muscle and impact while planting new churches. One study demonstrated that churches which started other churches experienced a 22% increase in their own worship attendance over the next five years, while financial giving increased 48%. [2]

4. **It allows us to have greater influence for Christ throughout our region.** For any movement to thrive, it has to plant churches. According to Ed Stetzer, “Statistically speaking, if a population just wants to ‘break even’, it has to plant at least at a three percent level—a denomination of 100 churches has to plant three to stay even considering attrition. A five percent increase is needed to grow. Ten percent is needed to thrive.” [3] If we honestly believe the Evangelical Covenant Church is a great place for people to find Christ, then we need to expand our kingdom influence by planting churches.

Healthy missional churches are God’s plan for reaching lost people, making disciples, revitalizing his church and expanding kingdom influence in our world! This is why the GLC is committed to planting an increasing number of churches in an increasing number of communities.

## What have we done this past year?

**Our first goal was to support and strengthen our current church plants.** In 2018, our goal was to strengthen our current church plants through growth strategy trainings that took place during our 2018 Annual Celebration, our annual Fall Pastors’ Retreat, and through on-site trainings with the launch teams of first year church plants. These half-day trainings were very catalytic, as many immediately applied principles from the workshops to enhance their respective ministries.

Another way we strengthened church plants was through coaching. We have trained and utilized coaches to serve and be readily available to church plants throughout our conference. The goal of coaching is to help newer church plants become healthy and missional, and in many cases we have witnessed fruit.



[1] Stafford, Tim (2007, September). Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples, Christianity Today.

Article discusses why crusades and personal witnessing are no longer the cutting edge of evangelism.

[2] Data from Dr. Jeffrey Farmer’s PhD dissertation, “Church Planting Sponsorship,” New Orleans Seminary, 2007.

[3] Stetzer, Ed (2014, June) 5 Reasons Established Churches Should Plant Churches, Christianity Today

**Our second goal was to launch new churches.** The GLC has a goal to launch fruitful churches, and one way we accomplish that goal is through church plant residencies. In 2018, we identified the co-planting team of Donearl Johnson and Cameron Underdown, and oversaw a nine-month residency through the Life Church Network. At the conclusion of their residency, this team launched Life Church Auburn Hills in January of 2019. Many people have committed or re-committed their lives to Christ as a result of their very fruitful ministry.

**Our third goal was to identify and train prospective church planters.** In 2018, we identified and trained eight prospective church planters from: Detroit, MI; Akron, OH; Columbus, OH; and Nashville, TN. Two of them are serving in the Life Church Network, one is serving with Harvey Carey at Citadel of Faith Covenant Church in Detroit, MI, and the others are regularly getting coaching as they work towards planting. The prospective planters are:

- Phillip Carr (Life Church Southfield, Southfield, MI residency)
- Vincent Tinch (Life Church Southfield, Southfield, MI residency)
- Stanley Turner (Citadel of Faith Covenant Church, Detroit, MI)
- Nancy Dumford (Sanctuary Columbus, Columbus, OH)
- Travis and Kendra Chavis (Nashville, TN)
- Justin Doyle (Akron, OH)
- Georgia Hill (Detroit, MI)

#### **Where do we hope to go in 2019?**

- Raise \$150,000 for church planting
- Plant one church by December 2019
- Provide intense coaching for prospective church plant leaders
- Develop new church plant networks (will elaborate below)
- Help every church plant move toward becoming healthy and missional
- Help every church plant move toward a place where they give birth to other churches

#### **How will we achieve our goals?**

**First, fund-raising.** We are asking that each GLC church designate a percentage of its budget for church planting. It can be through monthly or annual gifts. If we consistently give to the church planting movement, we will plant 2-3 churches a year, which means hundreds of people will experience the life-changing power of the living Christ.

**Second, networking.** Church planting in the GLC is a 3-way partnership consisting of a parent church (or a group of partnering churches), the GLC, and the Evangelical Covenant Church. Parenting or partnering churches provide the “seed” to begin a new church. These churches provide prayer, people, a portion of the financial support, and short-term hands-on ministry support (hospitality, worship help, children’s ministry, etc.). The ideal funding is 1/3 of the support comes from parents/partners, 1/3 from the ECC, and 1/3 from the GLC.

**Third, training and assessment.** The GLC provides support for the new church through assessment services, coaching, training, and supporting each new church and church planter.

**Fourth, coaching.** In 2019, we will increase our coaching team and provide ongoing training. Coaching is extremely important to ensure that our church plants are healthy and missional.

**Though we are so grateful for your ongoing support toward the GLC, we cannot fulfill our 2019 goals without you. Will you consider being a parent or partner church in our church planting efforts this year?**

There are so many more who need to find real life as disciples of Christ. If there are no healthy missional churches, how can they find “new life?” Let’s strive to be those churches and plant those churches!

Your Brother in Christ,  
Alan Tumpkin

# LIFE CHURCH LIVONIA

## LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

### Brian Nanninga - Pastor

Life Church Livonia began its Covenant Agreement on January 1, 2014 and has an average weekly attendance of 230. Life Church Livonia is part of the GLC Life Church Network.

#### Highlights for the Year

- **New life in Christ:** A young woman who had come to Christ in college began to attend our church. She longed for her family to find Christ as well, but they had never attended church before. After months of invitation, her father finally began to come. After only a few weeks of attending he gave his life to Christ. As we talked, he said over and over again that he had no idea church could be like this and no idea that God's grace was this big.
- **Growth in Christ:** Brian came to us a little over a year ago a broken young man. He came from an abusive home that was defined by addiction and co-dependency. Since finding Christ, his life has changed dramatically. He has left behind his own addictions, moved on from sinful relationships and has begun the discipleship process. He is learning for the first time what it looks like to have healthy relationships.
- **Service:** We continue to partner with numerous local ministries to serve others in need, including orphans at the Methodist Children's Home, the homeless through Elios Ministries, and immigrants through a backyard Bible club in Hamtramck.



#### Goals for 2019

Joy. This might not seem like a good goal, but it is everything for us in 2019. We have had a very difficult year as a church and what is missing from our space is joy. If we can find that again every other metric will be hit.

#### Prayer Requests and Needs

We ask for prayer to regain the joy that was lost during a difficult year.

As a note: Much energy and focus were given in 2018 by Life Church Livonia to cultivating and strengthening the church's relationship with another local church. That church was in the process of closing and was looking to gift their building and resources to another ministry. Ultimately, they decided to gift their assets to a ministry outside of the ECC.

# ONE CHURCH LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

## Ja'mel Armstrong and Matt Ness - Co-Pastors

One Church was birthed out of two church plants, uniting to reflect God's Kingdom on Earth. The Avenue and The Soul Center (a GLC church plant that began in April 2013) began partnering together in ministry projects in 2013. After several combined outreach projects, the churches began to question whether or not they could serve the city of Louisville and the surrounding community as one church. "One Church" launched January 31, 2016. They have an average weekly attendance of 100.



### Highlights for the Year

- **New life and growth in Christ:** Bern has been attending One Church for a little less than a year. Although he has been in church for most of his life, Bern never felt like he could truly be a part of the Body of Christ. Since he has been with us, Bern has shared that for the first time he feels like he belongs and can truly consider himself in his words, "One of the whosoever." (John 3:16) We baptized Bern in October. Another example of new life in Christ came from a Sunday we had baby dedications. While we had one baptism scheduled, another young man decided that he too wanted to make his commitment. A week prior he had been part of a class that learned about baptism's significance. This energized the entire congregation.
- **Connection:** Our connection efforts have been relatively fruitful. We have one simple philosophy - to know our neighbors, so we create ways to do just that. Since we have been in our new location, we have not had one week without new people we've met joining us.
- **Praise:** We are in our new building! This has been a physically and emotionally draining venture; most new buildings/building projects are.

### Goals for 2019

- For more people to come to Christ (evangelism)
- To grow new leaders and form new small groups (discipleship)
- Financial stability (stewardship)
- To have good connecting events with the neighborhood. We are looking to piggyback on natural area events- like the holiday home tours (taking hot chocolate to the volunteers or offering them a get together). There are 5-6 events a year.

### Prayer Requests and Needs

- Pray that we may move into a more positive financial situation
- Pray for new small groups that are forming
- Pray for transitions that are taking place in our children's ministry
- Pray for continued energy and courage

# KINGDOM EMBASSY COVENANT CHURCH

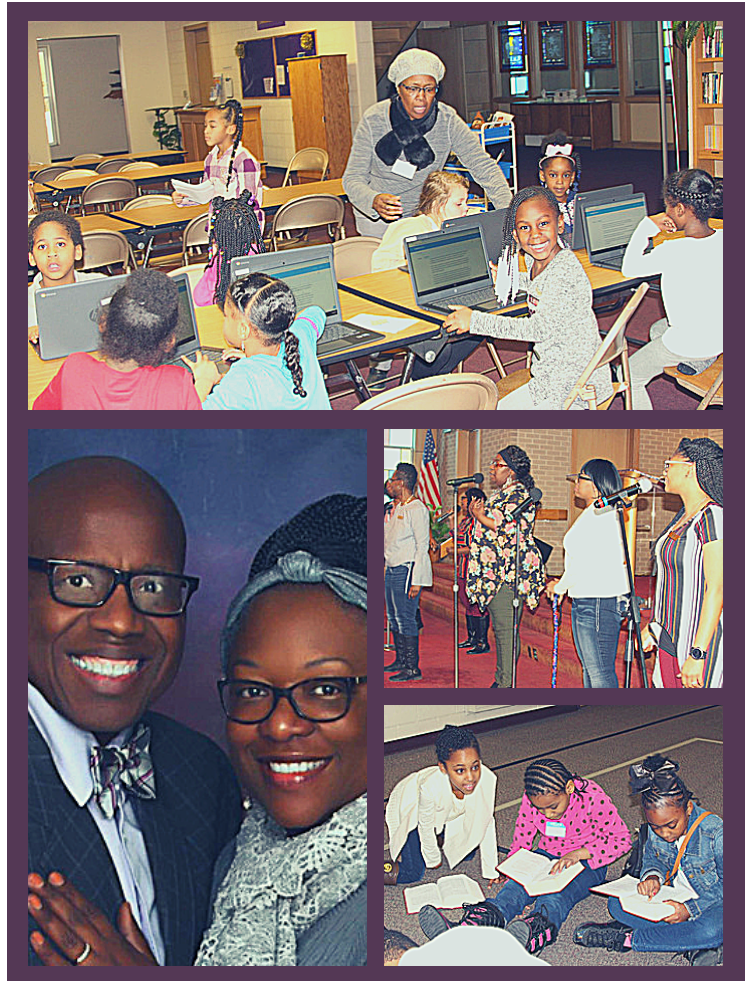
## MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN

Arthur Duren - Pastor

Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church began their Covenant Agreement on December 1, 2016. Kingdom Embassy is predominately African American with an average of over 230 in attendance. Kingdom Embassy is a caring and kind church that is inviting, compassionate, genuine, wholesome and safe.

### Highlights for the Year

- **New life in Christ:** We had 7 people get baptized in the month of November.
- **Service and outreach:** We serve once a month at a local soup kitchen/pantry. Our after-school program is growing in youth participation. We continue to keep our building available to community residents that are in need of places for funerals and memorials. We have taken on a monthly financial obligation to two new ministries (Jail Ministry & Forgotten Men Ministry). We held a friends and family dinner that over 350 was in attendance. We invited the community to Trunk or Treat.
- **Growing in Christ:** One member, beautiful physically and in appearance, but so broken on the inside, said how renewing her relationship with Christ is helping piece together that brokenness. Another member has been so excited about how her life is changing since she's grasped Kingdom Living. She is (in her own words) "No longer the borrower but now the giver." She expressed how she's never felt like she feels right now in life and how this ministry has been such a blessing to her.
- **Praise:** We were gifted the Westwood Reformed building from the Christian Reformed Church.
- **Connecting:** Series on "Knocking at the Heart" which focused on intentional evangelism which got the entire church involved with inviting others to church.
- **Growth:** Attendance has increased.



### Goals for 2019

- To become a church for the unchurched.
- Beautification of the building and needed updates: new flooring, central air, newer model van.

### Prayer Requests and Needs

- We would love help with developing a better and more user friendly website.



# NEW COMMUNITY ELKINS

## ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA

### Bobby Benavides - Pastor

New Community Covenant Church: Elkins, along with New Community Covenant Church in Buckhannon, are a network of Covenant churches that share a common mission, vision and values, and a heart for WV and Appalachia. Though they work together and are similar in many ways, they are unique in their context and their ability to reach the folks in their unique ministry settings New Community Elkins began their Covenant Agreement on October 1, 2017. In 2018 they had an average weekly attendance of 43.



#### Highlights for the Year

- **Growth in Christ:** We have a woman who was hurt by another church in the past. She was hesitant to get involved and participate with us. She came one Sunday and heard a message about walking in freedom with Jesus. She returned to hear another message on releasing anger. She found herself being challenged to dig into her own faith and work through her issues. She has been coming regularly and growing in her journey. She said we were her last try. If she couldn't find something here, she would stay home. Praise God she found a place with us.
- **Outreach:** We had an outdoor movie night event that drew in almost 200 people. We had popcorn, face painting, hot dogs, a bounce house, and a fun craft for children. The children were able to make cars out of cardboard boxes and decorate them with stickers and markers. They were then able to sit and watch *Cars 3* on an inflatable screen, sitting in their "cars." It was a great opportunity to serve families.
- **Service:** We had our "Come as You Are Meal", which is an annual event the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We were able to serve a little over 100 people a nice Thanksgiving meal. We

had turkeys, hams, and all the sides for people to enjoy. Several people in the church helped make the food. It was a great experience.

#### Goals for 2019

- Increasing by 30 regular attendees
- Regular Student Ministry gatherings
- Development of 3-5 community groups
- 3 community service projects
- Partnering with food pantries to serve the hungry
- Develop a stronger presence in the community by participating in more events as a church

#### Prayer Requests and Needs

- We have limited access on D&E's campus (Davis and Elkins College) due to their policies. We are praying for new doors to open soon.
- We could use some good fundraising ideas.

# THE MOVEMENT CHURCH

## NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

### Joey Maldonado- Pastor

The Movement Covenant Church began its Covenant Agreement on October 1, 2017. In 2018, they averaged 42 in weekly attendance. The Movement Church is a community of real people, embracing and loving each other and all who come into the church. A people who welcome others into a true connection with an alive and active God!

#### Highlights for the Year

- **Growth in Christ:** Ross drove by our old location and thought about coming in - but didn't. Going back to church was problematic as Ross and his wife had left a church where they had been bitterly hurt. Later, a move and a divorce (Ross has 2 children) made his life even more difficult. Finally, in September, Ross walked into our service, which was the first time he had been to church in a couple of years. He arrived alone, but he left knowing that God was, is, and would be with him. Ross has since become a part of our community. He drives about 40 mins to come, but weekly tells me that God continues to confirm that he is where he needs to be! He has brought his kids to church, even though he first said that he didn't think he was ready to bring them into a church. Recently, Ross partook in communion for the first time in 7 years! God is doing something so beautiful in a heart that has been broken on so many levels! Ross has come home! PRAISE GOD!!!
- **Commitment:** Travis and his family began attending a few months ago, although they have been connected with our church since the preview services. When Travis first came, he stated he felt seen and that he was able to connect with us. However, they live about 45-50 mins from our church. So, through the end of the summer and most of the fall, Travis and his family attended only sporadically. Recently, Travis shared some challenges he was facing with the distance, but he also shared he had set some specific 2019 goals. One goal he set was to make God the absolute main focus of his life. Part of that commitment included fully dedicating himself to a church community. The Movement Church is that community! Travis began to express his desire to not only commit to staying at the church, but to commit to being a part of our core team to help move things forward. In his words "I want to fight for our church"! Through the work of God in our community, God is igniting purpose and identity in people!
- **Connection:** We are currently a part of the core team for a city wide prayer movement called Awaken Nashville (<https://awakennashville.com>). Through this partnership we have seen over 350 churches, an estimated 30,000 intercessors, commit to pray for every resident in Nashville!



#### Goals for 2019

- Increase effectiveness of our Sunday Gathering!
- Move to new location in our target neighborhood
- GROW!
- Focus on evangelism (events, community engagement, social media, sermon series, etc)
- Small groups

#### Prayer Requests and Needs

We have been praying for several months about a particular neighborhood, and the possibility of moving there. We had a very positive conversation with the owner of a prospective location, which led to several amazing follow up meetings. We have now entered into the final steps of planning our move to this new location and it is one of a kind!!! The model of this location is being recognized by our city, and beyond, for being revolutionary and a new expression of community and cultural engagement. The neighborhood it is in has the highest level of Hispanics, and it also happens to be the most diverse community in Nashville. This neighborhood has the highest rate of unchurched and unsaved people, including the highest Muslim population in Nashville. This is our mission field!

PLEASE PRAY!! Although this opportunity is exactly what we have been praying for, we know we have to make this move and launch in this location with a bang! We are going to need to raise some funds in order to start and reach this community strongly!

# HOPE CITY COVENANT CHURCH

## RICHMOND, KENTUCKY

### Harvey Cozart - Pastor

Hope City Covenant Church began their Covenant Agreement December 1, 2017. They have an average weekly attendance of 38. Hope City is a place where community is formed and no one is a stranger.



#### Highlights for the Year

- **New life in Christ:** A new believer came to faith during one of our services. We had over thirty people present - supporting him and welcoming him into the community of faith. It was really great to see all the words of encouragement and hugs he received.
- **Helping people through tough times:** There was a lady in our church who found out she had cancer. Our church prayed for her and through prayer and surgery they were able to remove the cancer and she is cancer free. She has been so thankful for the cards and prayers and visits by the church.
- **Outreach:** We did an outreach to the youth in the community through our Give n Go outreach ministry. This was a powerful time of gathering youth in our community through sport clinics and events for the day. We had an opportunity to share the Gospel and build relationships with the kids and parents. This has given us some great rapport with the community.
- **The power of children:** We had a powerful come to Jesus moment when a seven year old child lead our morning prayer during service. It was one of the most sincere, powerful prayers we've heard in a long time.
- **Connecting:** Early in the summer we were going out and canvassing the neighborhoods with information about our church. We were able to develop some connection with folks through it. Our event at the park was a great time of connecting with the neighborhood and people in the community. We reached over 200 people with the Gospel and prayed over a number of people.

#### Goals for 2019

- Have a permanent worship leader in place
- Grow the size of our congregation
- Develop strong thriving small groups
- Increase the size of our Children's Ministry and staff
- Hold our worship services in the auditorium
- Develop an Evangelism/Outreach Team

#### Prayer Requests and Needs

- We are in need of additional Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry resources; books, curriculum, paper, crayons, blankets, cds, dvds, puppets, toys.
- To blossom in our new space- we have recently moved from the cafeteria to the auditorium of the school in which we are meeting.
- The Children's Ministry is growing and we need more space; please pray that the people overseeing the building will grant us more space.

# SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS NETWORK REPORT

## SUBMITTED BY PATTI HARRISON

2018 marks the fourth year the Spiritual Directors Network of the Great Lakes Conference has operated as an Association within the Conference and the ninth year of existence. We continue to be grateful for the generosity and support of the Conference as we seek to provide a space for others to grow in their understanding and acceptance of the presence of God in their lives.

The Spiritual Directors Network offers one retreat per year to its members, which provides an opportunity for personal renewal, collaboration, encouragement and resourcing for those who attend. We invite guest speakers to teach on various topics related to spiritual direction that are relevant to our individual practices. There are times when we provide resources such as books and other materials to our members and pay the first year's membership fee to the denomination's Association of Covenant Spiritual Directors. During the application process to the Association, individuals are required to provide referrals from home churches and the GLC Spiritual Directors Network and undergo a background check. These activities performed by the Association enhance the credibility and safety of the Network within the Conference and, in our opinion, worth offering reimbursement to the Network members.

Our network is comprised of 30 active spiritual directors and we look for opportunities to call out the gifts in others. All 30 are eligible to attend the retreats and are seeing 60-70 directees on a regular basis. Of the individuals being seen regularly, less than 10% are Covenant pastors.

Many of our directors conduct retreats and classes in their congregations and elsewhere, some also have ministries in prisons, on inner healing and on miscellaneous other topics. Over 300 people are reached each year through these various ministries. Sharing our experiences with each other is part of the resourcing and networking advantages we receive when we gather at our annual retreat.

To continue supporting this ministry, funding is requested for 2019 in the same amount equal as received in 2018, \$1,500. As available, these funds will provide the annual retreat, first year memberships to the denominational Association and will allow us to assist those spiritual directors who travel to engage in ministries at various venues throughout the year. We have submitted our annual financial summary as part of this process and it is with deep gratitude, for the ongoing support of the Great Lakes Conference, we submit this annual report for 2018.

# WOMEN MINISTRIES REPORT

## SUBMITTED BY PHYLLIS VAN

It was an energizing year for Womens Ministries of the GLC - seeing fruit after 'tilling the soil' for several years. We had record attendance at both of the fall retreats; women were carrying new learnings back to their home churches and new people expressed interest in getting involved with the satellite ministries of AVA and MTS (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse and Mending the Soul).

Pastor Sharon Garlough Brown was our speaker at both retreats with a theme of "Linger" - to "Linger" with God to fully get to know Him. We had approximately 200 women at the retreat at Portage Lake (Sept 21-22) - we had to close the registration because all we had open were top bunks! At the retreat at Mission Meadows the weekend before, we had around 109 attendees, up from the previous year. We have been fortunate the past few years in that the weather has cooperated with us and we have been able to take advantage of all the camps have to offer. While retreats can always be improved, it appeared that everyone had a great time and were excited to share what they had learned. Sharon got rave reviews and we would highly recommend her for any type of retreat.

Here is the information for our 2019 Fall Retreats:

- Camp Mission Meadows - September 20-22, 2019  
Speakers - The mother/daughter team of Ruth Hill and Becca Worl presenting 'Enter the Story'. They will treat the story of the Bible as an epic story and invite us to 'Enter God's Story'.
- Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp - October 4-6, 2019  
Speaker - Professor Kelli Worrall, Professor of Communications at Moody Bible and the author of *Twenty Things I Would Tell My Twenty Something Self*. She will be speaking from her newest book, *Pierced and Embraced* - four stories of God's love.

There are many changes related to Women Ministries at the denominational level. Ministries that women have faithfully supported are being moved to different departments that can more appropriately support these ministries. For example, the AVA ministry (Advocates for Victims of Abuse) has been moved to Love Mercy, Do Justice, where they are adding more resources to this important ministry to the marginalized. We don't have all the details of other changes yet, but rest assured that we will continue to serve the women of the GLC and provide links to those missions/projects that touch their hearts.

# MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION REPORT



*“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*

*Matthew 11:28-30*

“The yoke of ministry” is both a gift and a challenge. The Ministerial Association is one tool to keep the challenge from becoming overwhelming. The highlight of the Association’s work is the Fall Pastors’ Retreat and this year was no different as we were led by one of our own,

GLC Pastor Kevin Butcher, author of *Choose and Choose Again*. Kevin spoke to us about the personal challenges of ministry and accepting God’s grace for ourselves, as we are right now. To many of us his message was comforting, as he helped normalize and name some of the difficulties we all face in ministry and in life.

The 2019 Fall Pastors’ Retreat will be October 28-30. Shaun Marshall will be the speaker, and the location in Ohio will be set soon. We look forward to another opportunity to come together to worship and be encouraged in the tasks God has for all of us.

Another major function of the Ministerial Association is to support the credentialing process for clergy through the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). The COMS team is currently chaired by the Rev. Dr. Linnea Carnes, who oversees the team and the interview process for pastoral credentials. As we continue to grow as a conference and denomination, the work of credentialing becomes increasingly important. If you have been ordained by the Covenant,

please consider helping our colleagues who are in the licensing and ordination process by serving on COMS. If you are interested in serving, please contact myself at [joe@ecrossroads.net](mailto:joe@ecrossroads.net) or Jody Eidnes at [jody@greatlakes.cc](mailto:jody@greatlakes.cc). Thanks.



*Kevin Butcher speaking at the 2018 Fall Pastor's Retreat*



*GLC Ordinand's at Gather '18 Minneapolis, Minnesota*

One of the keys to staying healthy and keeping “the burden light” is connecting with colleagues and taking the steps to continue to grow. Let me encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities available to us as pastors to stay healthy. All of us can receive Spiritual Direction through the Great Lakes Conference Spiritual Directors Network. At the national level, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence sponsors both the Leadership Cohort and The Living Forward Retreat Series. The Leadership Cohort is a wonderful opportunity for all pastors to reflect and strengthen your leadership. The Living Forward retreats are for pastors 55 and over and focus on the dynamics of the call later in our vocational lives.

Many of us in the conference have also participated in the Evangelism Cohorts that are now continuing across the ECC. I know I’ve been blessed and encouraged by participating in the retreats and the cohorts and encourage you to take advantage of these great opportunities. Check out current opportunities at [covchurch.org/vocational-ministry/spe/](http://covchurch.org/vocational-ministry/spe/)

Peace In Christ,  
Joe Muzzi  
Ministerial Association Chair

# NAJO MINISTRY REPORT

## North American Japanese Outreach



### Conversational English Classes (CEC) Ministry

Our Conversational English Class is a basic entry level English class that focuses on welcoming the beginner. For the expat wives who attend, the first month after arriving in Michigan is the hardest. It's a very difficult time and they experience a strong sense of isolation. They have no friends, no help, they're not used to driving or shopping and they don't feel comfortable yet with the culture. They come to the class at Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan and feel a sense of relief as they meet friends. You can see them light up.

CEC is not just about teaching English, it's a labor of love that offers hope with a lot of impact. The participants also learn the basics about life in Michigan. Most of all, they feel the love of the volunteers and they really enjoy coming.

We return to Japan once every year to meet some of the CEC members who became Christians at FCC, they are encouraged and grateful. We were surprised to see many of them still reading the "Our Daily Bread" devotional we showed them at CEC. We see their hearts have been touched and God is working even more than we thought. Many are connected to churches and living the Christian life. For example, a convert from the first year of ministry, Etsuko Sasaki, has been going to a church in Hiroshima with her children. She really looks forward to meeting us again every year.



### CEC Winter/Spring 2018

Daniel Bradish and his family, who were missionaries in Sendai, Japan, returned to Michigan. They assisted with CEC, joined the NAJO Board and became partners in ministry. We're thankful they were led here. Two young adults came from Akita Christian Church in Japan to help with the dessert auction fundraiser and experience the ministry. Also, a group from Hongodai Christian Church in Yokohama, Japan also joined us for a mission trip. (see Visitors from Japan)

### CEC Summer 2018

Due to a large remodeling project at the church, CEC met in parks and in houses during the summer.

### CEC Fall 2018

Over 150 people gathered at the church for Thanksgiving, where they enjoyed a meal, music, and a message. There were many who heard the Bible message for the first time and listened closely. We also had a potluck and presented another message at Christmas.



### Visitors from Japan

This past spring a group of Christian college students from Japan came to Faith Covenant Church and did a home stay with some local families. They shared worship music, testimonies, and performed a skit at the CEC event. The CEC students were deeply impacted, and some were even in tears as they shared their gratitude.

We also took the group to First Covenant Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Japanese group participated in worship and shared testimonies in the service and it was a blessed time. Members of the church hosted the attendees. First Covenant is always so welcoming and accepting of us. We really appreciate their willingness to share in our ministry.

We visited Hope College in Holland, Michigan where the group had a chance to see an American college experience and to help teach in one of the Japanese classes. The highlight was participating in the afternoon chapel where they were joined by 2,000 other Christian students for worship. They were so encouraged, it turned into a revival of faith for some in the group.

## Internship student from Japan

During the summer term, David, a student from Tokyo Christian University (TCU) in Japan, came to stay in our home, along with his wife and baby, for an internship. TCU is a prominent university for raising up pastors and missionaries. David and his family participated in CEC, the ladies Bible Study in Grand Rapids, the Japanese worship service in Battle Creek and they enjoyed fellowship as they shared their testimony. Their stay was a great chance to share about the experiences we've had and to help prepare them for a life of Japanese ministry. Through this, we strongly felt the importance of sowing into the next generation of pastors and missionaries.

## Mission trip to Japan (mid-May through July)



In Japan, there are four sister denominations with a strong sense of unity: Japan Covenant, Swedish Covenant, Free Church and the German Free Church. We primarily focused on these four denominations for our 2018 trip to Japan. Many denominations in Japan are struggling with declining birth rates and an aging population. It is causing the church numbers to dwindle and is also creating economic problems. Thus, we came to serve by encouraging and preaching messages of evangelism.

Another important element of our time in Japan was meeting with CEC returnees. We came to encourage the returnees and

help them connect with local churches. However, it has proven difficult to find an appropriate church we can connect them to. Many of the returnees are seeking an international church, but the numbers are small – especially in certain areas.

## Bible Studies and Japanese Worship

A. We host a basic Bible study after CEC and the majority of CEC attendees stay for it.

B. Personal Bible Study - A woman named Satomi recently became a Christian and her family of 5 have been attending church. We are meeting with her regularly.

C. Skype Bible Study - We meet with various returnees and out-of-state believers through Skype. This is especially important for people like Takeshi. His wife and kids became Christians here in the US, but he was saved after they moved back to Japan last year. One of the most difficult challenges in evangelism is reaching Japanese men. There are many who even hate the idea of their wives going to church.

They usually work well into the night and Sunday is the only day they have to spend at home with their family. Takeshi was a special case because he saw how happy his wife and kids were after becoming Christians, so he started looking into Christianity. He converted as well

and has been passionately going to church and engaging in Skype Bible studies with us. And thanks to everyone's prayers, he's now decided to be baptized. Hallelujah!

D. Grand Rapids Bible Study - We meet with about 10 Japanese permanent residents in Grand Rapids monthly.

We study the Bible and share a meal. We also meet in Battle Creek every month, where 20-30 people are gathering. Many attendees are younger college students and it's an enthusiastic meeting.



## Out-of-State Worship

We travel as far as Chicago, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Toronto, Canada, where Shunichi preaches sermons and stirs up the believers.

## Financials

In March, we held our annual dessert auction. The 'monster garage sale' we held in the past has gone away, so we held a smaller garage sale at our house. Losing a large event like that had a negative impact on our financial situation in 2018. The financial shortage is an ongoing area of concern. However, we have seen God work, experienced many blessings, and are very grateful to the various people who have supported us.

# PORTAGE LAKE BIBLE CAMP



Portage Lake invites campers to step out of their daily routines and into a Christ-like community built around Real Fun and Real Faith in an unforgettable setting.



**Vision:** To impact every life for Jesus Christ through our service, witness and programs.

**We Believe:** Parents want to see their child know and experience the joy of a life that is following Jesus. Families and adults seek to know God in a deeper way and experience the peace and joy of faith by sharing retreat in an inspiring and beautiful setting.

**Camp Responds By:** Understanding parent's concerns for their kids and seeking to come alongside them. We use our 70+ years of experience to help them introduce their children to Jesus and the beauty of who they

were created to be. Camp provides an inspiring setting and extraordinary programs to serve, teach and inspire campers of all ages.

**Greetings:** Greetings to our family and friends in the Great Lakes Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. It is our pleasure and privilege to serve you and to call you partners and friends. We are still in the midst of an epic winter up here, but the warmth of camp and its ministry is melting hearts and softening hurts for both adults and youth campers.

We were blessed with one of our busiest years in 2018 with over 915 youth campers and 640 family campers crammed into our 10-week summer season. 91 campers dedicated their lives to Christ for the first time last summer and hundreds more decided to live more fully for Christ. We saw a robust retreat season as well, with over 3,600 campers in our programmed retreats and rental groups.

Many of you have been at camp this year and we have served more Covenant churches from the GLC than ever before. Word is getting out that camp is an amazing tool for Kingdom work. We are already preparing for our upcoming summer camps and our outstanding retreats. We look forward to serving more campers this year and helping to make the fabric of our conference stronger and more diverse.

**Teaching the Word:** We have been blessed to gather the best young leaders, pastors and speakers at camp each year. Kids hear the word together in exciting ways. The JOY of the Lord is a key component of camp where we focus on God's love, and not daily politics. Campers experience the love of Christ in very personal and profound ways. They also experience God through His creation and beauty. Campers of all ages are learning about God again in dynamic ways.

**Mentoring:** We take our mentoring responsibilities to heart as we train up the pastors and spiritual leaders of the future. Our SWIM Team (Students Working in Ministry) program teaches servant leadership skills in the summer. Our year-long internship programs help young leaders learn how to serve and minister within a Christian community. We play a vital role in our denominational ministry as a training ground for Kingdom work.

**Demonstrating Community:** Camp is a place that really drives home the value of Christian community. There is something profoundly special about the temporary community that forms around cabin groups, bonfires and dining hall tables. Lifelong friendships are formed, people find their future spouses, and support groups are formed during camp retreats and summer programs. Last year a relationship was built in a summer camp cabin which became the lifeline that saved a young girl from suicide later in the year. The girl reached out to the only person she felt she could trust—a friend from camp—and that call for help resulted in the mobilization of parents and local churches to intervene and save a young life. Camp really matters and teaches community. It is a valuable place from which to build our growing and diverse church.



**Promoting Diversity:** We have become a more welcoming environment than ever before. Camp is a wonderful place for creating and enhancing our diverse Covenant Community through shared retreat. A place to experience diversity, not as a cultural or racial class, but as an individual. Camp is an amazing tool that helps us get to know each other and to appreciate our similarities and differences. Our summer camps and men's and women's retreats have seen campers from the most remote parts of the state and from inner cities. These sessions don't need to have mixers – the campers do life together, eat together, play together and develop deep bonds and friendships. Camp is for everyone and we are adapting and growing in our desire to reflect the Kingdom diversity.



**Community Outreach and Service:** We continue to serve our community in various ways. Every student in Manistee County comes to camp for Adventure Learning programs. We hold school dances and functions here on the shores of Portage Lake and hold the annual senior's lock-in here at camp. It is our pleasure to hold our annual Baccalaureate services for local schools with Dave Nesburg speaking into the lives of hundreds of students who are graduating. The community counts on us in many ways. The gym is used almost daily, local groups meet in our Welcome Center, and camp is used by ice fisherman to access the lake in the winter months. Camp is an integral part of Onekama and our surrounding area.



**Serving our Covenant Churches:**

- We added 50% more camp promotions this year.
- Dave was blessed to do more pulpit supply than ever before – II!
- We have served as Sunday take-over team in three churches this year.
- We met with youth pastors and pastors EVERY month.
- We had our first local youth workers conference this year – exciting!
- We continued to reach out to diverse churches with opportunities and scholarships.

- We have served church leadership with team building and communication retreats. This dynamic helped grow church leaders and trust within churches.
- We were active in connecting campers who needed churches with good Covenant youth groups and congregations.
- Our scholarship program distributed over \$40,000 to needy youth in our churches.

**Allowing Kids to Explore Nature:** We realize how God speaks through the natural world that He created. Campers-young and old-spend time in some of the most beautiful spots in the world. The shores of the lake, the dunes of Lake Michigan, and the big woods of our out-camp area provide memories to fill a lifetime. Camp is a place where God speaks through His creation. Come on up and let's share our faith around a bonfire!

**Providing Financial Support for Campers:** We have been blessed by many churches providing through "Every Kid a Camper" programs and by the generosity of donors to our golf outing and annual gala. Thousands of dollars have been raised and distributed to serve needs and at-risk campers. There is never a financial reason for a person not to come to camp.

**Camp's Priorities Remain To:**

- Serve everyone beyond the expected in Christ-like service.
- Reach out to our community – be a light.
- Be a refuge for our pastors and ministry workers.
- Listen to needs and provide support.
- Be a tool for churches to grow and strengthen.
- Provide a safe and caring environment where campers can:
  1. Encounter God
  2. Be loved for who they are
  3. Laugh and have fun
  4. Find their place in a Christian community
  5. Be mentored and taught
- Provide a safe place for staff to:
  1. Grow spiritually
  2. Explore their gifts
  3. Be real and genuine about life
  4. Be protected and loved
  5. Hear real and honest feedback
- Be Positive – no critical or complaining spirit.
- Commit to growth and change.
- Provide clean and comfortable surroundings that are well-maintained and cared for.
- Know each camper personally.

**Thank you for supporting camp and allowing me to serve you.**

**What a blessing!**

**Dave Nesburg  
Executive Director**



**Portage Lake Covenant  
Bible Camp  
4158 Camp Delight Rd,  
Onekama, MI 49675  
[www.portagelake.org](http://www.portagelake.org)**

# CAMP MISSION MEADOWS



## Mission Meadows – A place to encounter Christ!

**OUR VISION:** A relational approach to a Christ centered experience.

**OUR MISSION:** Camp Mission Meadows' aim is to RAISE up the next generation of Jesus followers through Relational-Accepting-Intentional-Safe & Encouraging summer camps, weekend retreats & community programming.



To the delegates of the GLC Annual Celebration,

On behalf of the staff and board at Mission Meadows, we hope and pray that you are inspired by the ministry stories you hear at the Annual Celebration. We hope and pray that you encounter the living, breathing God of the universe as you worship together with sisters and brothers from the broader Covenant family. And, we hope and pray that this time away is a retreat for you. That, as you leave here and go back to your own church family, you are full of the Holy Spirit and shine like a light to all who will see and hear.

May your time be blessed as you celebrate all that God has done and continues to do.

Out at Mission Meadows we saw a year of significant growth in 2018 and we are celebrating! Our staff and board are excited about the results of our work in developing both program and facility. God has blessed us with a core group of year round staff that has the gift of service and hospitality. These gifts provide an opportunity to partner with a wide variety of Christian ministries in our region.

### Retreat Ministry:

Many new groups have come to Mission Meadows in the past year and they are thrilled with what our staff, and our facility can offer them. We often hear stories of how groups go on retreat to a camp facility and are met with a lack of enthusiasm and excitement by the camp staff. Requests are met with a begrudging attitude or a sense of inconvenience toward the guest group leaders.

At Mission Meadows, we pride ourselves in coming alongside our guest groups to help them accomplish their needs. We offer planning support services to help guest group leaders plan their weekends. We provide a dedicated host to each group to make sure the group leaders know who to turn to if they have needs. This may sound like basic retreat hosting 101, but you would be surprised to hear how many of our groups have gone to a facility to have the camp staff hand them a set of keys for the weekend and wish them luck. No support. No help. Just access to a facility.

It is the opposite at Mission Meadows. We listen to our guests in the planning process. We ask questions to understand the mission of the ministry and the goals of the retreat weekend. We work hard to make sure any unnecessary distractions are eliminated so the group leaders can focus on the needs of their group. Mission Meadows has become known from Columbus to Cleveland to Pittsburgh to Erie to Buffalo to Rochester and to Syracuse, as the camp you need to bring your group to. Here is what people are saying...

*We wanted to thank you all so much for an incredible weekend! Our leaders and students had so much fun at Mission Meadows, and cannot thank you all enough for your service. We especially loved The (Activity) Center, there was so much to do, and our students loved it. Again, thank you for your service and all that you did to make our retreat a BLAST!*

-Cuyahoga Valley Church (OH) youth staff

*I have been involved with youth ministry and camping (Young Life) all my life and this is one of the nicest facilities. Your hospitality is just great!*

-Cody, youth leader, Browncroft Community Church,  
Rochester, NY



### **Program Ministry:**

Another very important effort we are excited for is the formation of a retreat task force. This group will be made up of youth pastors from around our region who are interested in assisting the Mission Meadows staff in planning retreat weekends and our summer ministry.

Lead Pastor Jeff Kahl, of Stoneridge Covenant Church in Allison Park, PA, will be spearheading the task force. Jeff has many years of experience in youth ministry and working with a task force. That experience coupled with his passion for camp ministry will make this a great addition to our ministry planning.



Priorities for the next phase include paying down existing debt from the pool construction, new path & driveway paving, lighting and signage, new mattresses, finishing off the basement of the chapel, a high ropes course and zip line, new staff housing, a new infirmary and new guest lodging. We are finding that people love our facility and with a few additions of updated lodging and the other improvements listed above, we can serve people even better!



### **Long Range Plan:**

The Mission Meadows staff and board are launching a feasibility study this spring to determine the scope of the next capital campaign to be launched later in 2019. The feasibility study will allow us to set appropriate fundraising goals.

### **One final note:**

The Mission Meadows board is planning more events to bring the camp community together. The formation of a fundraising committee, along with a 75th Anniversary

Committee, will provide leadership for fundraising events and the 75th Anniversary celebration coming in 2022-23.

If you would like to become involved in these efforts, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number or email listed below.

Thank you to all who have supported Mission Meadows in the past year with your time and treasure. We are grateful for your continued support as we create space where people can encounter Christ. Until we see each other again, be well!

**Grace & peace,**

**Bryan T. Muecke  
Executive Director**

**Camp Mission Meadows**



**5201 East Lake Rd., Rte 430  
Dewittville, NY 14728**

**716-386-5932**

**bryan@missionmeadows.org**

**www.missionmeadows.org**

# COVENANT MOUNTAIN MISSION BIBLE CAMP

The CMMBC camp theme for the summer of 2018 was "Breathe," based on Ezekiel 37:9b. ("This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.")



*To worship God  
To enjoy Christian fellowship and discipleship  
in the midst of His beautiful creation  
To present the gospel of Jesus Christ to youth,  
adults, and families through the  
camp's outreach and community involvement.*



*Junior Camp Staff and campers  
in the Chapel*

Understanding how CMMBC operates is pivotal to the ongoing ministry in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. We rely upon mission teams to staff our Bible Camps and to maintain/make improvements in the camp's facilities. We thank God for the support that allows us to offer free and low cost Bible camps!

### Here is a short summary of 2018:

- 28 churches sent mission teams and/or financial support to CMMBC. (A little over half of these churches are members of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Seven of the churches are from the GLC.)
- 44% of CMMBC's financial support was provided by individual contributors.
- 84% of CMMBC's campers attended camp for free.
- One third of CMMBC's high school campers exchanged a week of service to pay for their week of camp.
- The GLC gift of \$10,000 was >10% of CMMBC's budget.

### Bible Camp Report

CMMBC hosted 78 summer camp mission team members and 252 campers! While our onsite summer camp attendance remained similar to 2017, we saw a 67% increase in the community soccer camps, serving 102 children in grades K-12! This free sports camp was held at an area middle school in partnership with the summer soccer league in Lee County and Salem Covenant (New Brighton, MN). In addition to teaching young people about soccer, we led the campers in a daily devotional time, built relationships, and provided meals and snacks for the campers. We are excited about engaging our community. The following churches sent support to CMMBC to provide staff and/or funding for summer Bible Camps:

- Salem Troy Baptist Association (AL)
- Christ Community Fellowship (Sarver, PA)
- Salem Covenant (New Brighton, MN)
- Church of the Good Shepherd (Joliet, IL)
- Winnetka Covenant Church (IL)
- Christian Life Fellowship (Jonesville, VA)
- West Bay Covenant Church (Traverse City, MI)



*CMMBC partners with Lee County Soccer League and a mission team to sponsor Community Soccer Camps. We still need a team for 2019. Call if you can help!*

We also continue to focus on leadership development of our high school campers. Through a partnership with First Covenant (Grand Rapids, MI), CMMBC was also able to offer a service camp for high school students during the 2018 spring break. First Covenant provided the leadership staffing and funding for meals and projects. Seven local high school students worked on hanging drywall and painting in the Chapel Basement, as well as a variety of other projects. Additionally, our junior staff program, which is supported through our scholarship fund, provided for the cost of meals for eight high school students who served at camp in exchange for their camp fees for Senior Camp. West Bay Covenant (Traverse City, MI) is a major supporter of the CMMBC scholarship program. CHIC also provided a great opportunity for five students to further explore their lives with Christ and a GLC scholarship allowed a recent high school graduate, who had never been out of the area, to attend the GLC Women's Ministry Fall Retreat at Mission Meadows.



*Spring Break Leadership Development Team: Lee High students were sponsored and led by members of First Covenant (Grand Rapids, MI)*

### Facilities Improvement Report

CMMBC was blessed this year to finish the Chapel Basement. Other improvements included: replacing a shower and renovating downstairs bathroom in the dining hall, including a new shower; replacing gutters on the staff house; creating a separate laundry room with access from the dining hall; getting water (craft sink and hand washing sink) to the recreation hall; adding trash/dirty dish station in the dining hall; updating the plumbing in the parsonage; and adding sliding door access to attic space in the dining hall.

We also received a 10 foot box trailer and assorted camping gear from Redeemer Covenant Church to help begin a long-dreamed about Bicycle Camp.

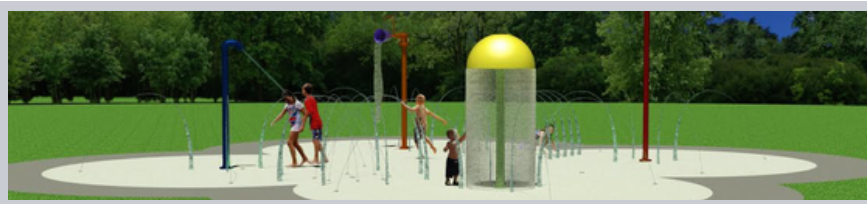
We thank God for the following churches who financially supported work project mission teams and sent workers:



*Pathfinders - Who knew that the volley ball court would make such a great sand box?*

- Central Park Baptist Church (Decatur, AL)
- Christ Church Presbyterian (Dalton, GA)
- Christian Life Fellowship (Jonesville, VA)
- Elko Baptist Church (Williston, SC)
- Evangelical Covenant Church (Lafayette, IN)
- First Baptist Church (Jonesville, VA)
- First Covenant (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Redeemer Covenant Church (Hamilton, OH)
- Salem Covenant Church (New Brighton, MN)
- St. John's Church (Millersburg, OH)

CMMBC was selected to receive the camp offerings from the 20 Covenant Camps across the US and Canada for the summer of 2018. After a significant amount of prayer and many discussions, the CMMBC board of directors approved adding a splash pad to our recreational facilities. The project is named, "Just Add Water at CMMBC," as we seek to have a water feature at camp. Our own campers raised \$1591.58 for the project, and we recently received a check for \$34,400 from the Association of Covenant Camps and Conference Centers. Additional gifts bring our fundraising total at \$42,000 of our \$50,000 goal. The work has begun! The old basketball court has been removed and the rough dirt work finished with many thanks to GLASS Machinery (Jonesville, VA) and Boring Construction (Abingdon, VA), who allowed Gary Collingsworth and Paul Orr to borrow equipment. Their work has more than doubled the level area behind the chapel.



As the financial report shows, the ministry at CMMBC has been blessed. We are grateful for churches that have stepped up to provide for our needs, as well as those who have provided support for Joe Faulkinbury to pursue commissioning. These churches financially supported the ministry of CMMBC in 2018:

- Advance Ravenswood Covenant Church (Chicago, IL)
- Redeemer Covenant (Hamilton, OH)
- Salem Covenant (New Brighton, MN)
- Trailer Estates Covenant (Bradenton, FL)
- Wallens Creek Covenant (Duffield, VA)
- Westhigh Evangelical Covenant Church (Cary, NC)
- Winnetka Covenant Church (IL)
- Community Christian Church (IN)
- Church of the Good Shepherd (Joliet, IL)
- Covenant Community Church (Fairfield, OH)
- Faith Covenant Church (St. Petersburg, FL)
- First Christian Church (Pennington Gap, VA)
- Mission Covenant Church (Foster City, MI)
- Mount Carmel Baptist Church (Woodway, VA)

### Current Needs at CMMBC

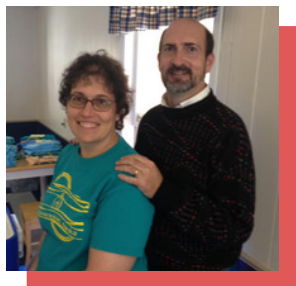
Reviewing what God has done in 2018 brings excitement to our hearts. The ministry at CMMBC continues to be affirmed through God's provision! We have some pressing needs that we wish to share:

- Individuals and/or churches to staff Soccer Camp (June 10-14, 2019). Please contact us if you are interested.
- Applicants for paid summer staff (at least 1 year beyond high school graduation)
- Funding the balance of the splash pad project, *Just Add Water at CMMBC!*
- Discernment for managing the workload as we explore separating the roles and responsibilities of property manager and executive director.



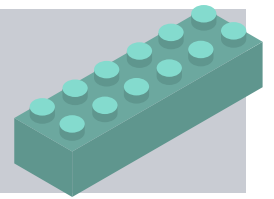
*Trailblazers  
Prayer before evening Chapel Service*

**Joe & Tammy Faulkinbury**  
Camp Directors  
Covenant Mountain Mission  
Bible Camp



**2390 Horse Hollow Road**  
**Jonesville, VA 24263**  
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**cmmbc1950@gmail.com**  
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# GLC LEGO CITY



## LEGO AND GOD'S WORD: A POWERFUL COMBINATION



What is it about Lego that is so engaging? Put a few Legos in anyone's hands and they will snap the bricks together. Give them a few more bricks and next thing you know they have built something. It is almost irresistible. It's like the Lego calls to us and says, "Come on, you can do it, build something- create something." God's word also has a lot to say about creation and building. The Bible

tells us we have been wonderfully made and that we are to build our lives upon the foundation of Christ's words. It also says that we are holy buildings - temples in which God's Holy Spirit resides and together we are living stones that are being built into a dwelling place for our God.

The Great Lakes Conference office has created a VBS/after school/school holiday program that combines the awesome engaging power of Lego with the awesome life changing power of God's Word. This program has been designed for children ages 5-12 (older kids make great helpers). The children will assemble a large Lego City while exploring what God's word has to say about



creation (what God did and what we were created for), the foundations upon which our lives are built, and how we fit together (like Lego) with purpose and reason, and are being built together into the entity known as the Church.



The GLC Lego City may be reserved/checked out for a few days or several weeks. If your church is interested in using the Lego City, please contact the conference office (734-4514670; [jody@greatlakes.cc](mailto:jody@greatlakes.cc)). There may be a small fee to use the City and a deposit fee that will be returned to the church if the City is in good shape. If your church wishes to donate toward the Lego City, we

could always use bricks. The Lego doesn't need to be new, just whatever your folks have hanging about.

In the past year the Lego City has been utilized at: One Church, Louisville, KY; Covenant Presbyterian Church, Tustin, MI; Thornapple Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, MI; Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, MI; and Evangelical Covenant Church, Cheboygan, MI.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ECC GATHER '19

Hilton Omaha, Omaha, NE

**The Annual Meeting is the highest legislative session in the Evangelical Covenant Church.**

Every congregation is entitled to representation as we worship God and celebrate what God has done throughout the year. We gather to discern future direction, select leaders, consecrate missionaries, credential and ordain clergy and encourage one another to greater discipleship. We make determinations around funding the mission, and we hear about the challenges and opportunities in front of us. In it all, we get to meet new friends and strengthen old relationships.



## ECC TRIENNIAL 2019

Minneapolis Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**A triennial gathering for women by women! In the Evangelical Covenant Church, we believe that women are called to be disciples and disciple makers.**

Our purpose is to:

- (Re)Discover who we are—as individuals uniquely made in God’s image
- Listen to each others’ voices and advocate for women to be heard
- Build a community of women of the Covenant, because we are stronger together



## GLC FALL PASTORS' RETREAT

Ohio: Location TBD

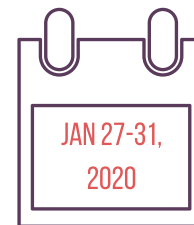
This retreat is designed for all pastoral staff members, credentialed Covenant pastors and chaplains who are serving institutions other than a local church. Please encourage your pastor and your pastoral staff to attend this retreat. This is a time for pastors to be both challenged and refreshed. This year’s speaker will be Shaun Marshall.



## ECC MIDWINTER 2020

Chicago Regency O'Hare - Chicago, IL

Midwinter Conference is our opportunity to connect with our colleagues in Covenant ministry, to share interests and ideas, to encourage and be encouraged, to reflect and be inspired, to laugh and have fun. We invite you to be restored and re-energized, and to reaffirm God’s call on your life. If you have never been to a Midwinter, this will be a time to meet colleagues and develop those all-important relationships in ministry.



## GLC ANNUAL CELEBRATION 2020

Faith Covenant Church, Westerville, OH

The GLC Annual Celebration is designed to incorporate the business of the Annual Meeting and a celebration of the ministry of all that God has done in and through the churches of the Great Lakes Conference. While only church-elected delegates receive delegate materials and the right to vote at the Annual Business meeting there are many opportunities for participation for you church members, including the workshops, banquet and awards, and the worship service.





# GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

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