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SEEING CLEARLY

TO FOLLOW IN OUR MASTER'S FOOTSTEPS
 GLC ANNUAL CELEBRATION

ANNUAL REPORT



JOHN S. WENRICH

President - The Evangelical Covenant Church

To:
GLC Regional Conference Annual Meeting
Rev. Garth McGrath, Superintendent
Rev. Tom Sharkey, Conference Chair

Greetings on behalf of the Evangelical Covenant Church! I'm grateful for the ways that we partner together in God's mission. I am also aware of the challenges that many across the ECC are having with ongoing developments regarding COVID-19. We stand in solidarity and prayer with your conference and churches in this season of crisis.

Even in the midst of uncertainty, there is much to celebrate. As Covenanters, we join God in his mission to make more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. This year saw the launch of our Blazing Center resource suite to equip and empower all of us to participate in that mission. The Holy Spirit lives at our ECC mission center, and we hope that this collection of resources will ignite a passion to see the Spirit moving through our congregations and into our communities. Through the Spirit we both proclaim and demonstrate the whole gospel.

Specifically, we look forward to a Spirit-empowered multiethnic mosaic of churches that are planting more churches; implementing the Six-Fold Test; helping release those captive in sex trafficking through the FREE initiative; inspiring deeper faith commitments in thousands of students at Unite 2021; and launching the Covenant Leadership Training Institute to develop both clergy and lay leaders.

Together we celebrate that God has worked through our 3StrandStrong partnership – congregation, conference and Covenant – to transform lives, equip leaders, extend love and compassion to marginalized people, make disciples and restore communities with hope around the world.

I am grateful to be serving in partnership with you. May the Holy Spirit fill you with joy, peace and hope that overflows in your churches and communities. My prayer for the Evangelical Covenant Church is found in Ephesians 3:20-21:

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.

In Christ's love,

John S. Wenrich
President – Evangelical Covenant Church

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REV. TOM SHARKEY

GLC Conference Chair

"I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things." [Ephesians 3:7-9]

This is the task that faces each Christian, each church, and each Conference within the Covenant Church. We are bearers of the mystery that was hidden for ages, but now revealed in Jesus Christ. And our task is to share that mystery, that message, with the world into which we are placed. That task is becoming more and more difficult given the cultural realities that surround us. But those same realities also provide us with an unprecedented opportunity. The question facing each of us is, "What will we do with that opportunity?" How will we take advantage of the challenge that lies before us?

We live in a world of apprehension and struggle with loneliness. We live in a world that is sitting on the edge of fear and sorrow. Particularly now with the concern around the Coronavirus. And we can offer Jesus words. "Do not be afraid!" We can invite them into a community that embraces them in their loneliness, sits with them in their sorrow, addresses their apprehensions, and offers them hope.

This is what the churches of the Great Lakes Conference are charged with doing. We are doing so individually as we reach out to our communities, corporately as we plant new churches, broadly as we support world mission, and personally as we seek to develop disciples who make disciples. The task is great, but we have a great God who guides and empowers our mission together.

I have been enormously blessed to be a part of guiding that work that we do as a Conference, but in the process, I have learned to lean on our amazing staff. Our Superintendent, Garth McGrath, has been supportive and encouraging, and I know he is deeply appreciative of the help of Kevin Butcher who steps in to help when Garth is overwhelmed. Our Conference office staff is amazing and helpful, Jody Eidnes leads a great team consisting of, Peg Wolter and Dani Van Voorst, along with Kim Carlson as our Finance Officer. Alan Tumpkin has taken on a tremendous challenge in Church Planting, and is pursuing it well. Shelley Kurth has been working in Church Vitality.

This has also been a year of transition. We've seen the retirement of Dave Nesburg from Portage Lake after many years of service, and the calling of Marc Eix to fill that position. Welcome back to the GLC, Marc! Bryan Muecke continues to lead the work at Mission Meadows. The work down in Appalachia at Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp continues to be directed by Joe and Tammy Faulkinbury, where they minister to that very needy community.

I am so grateful to the members of the GLC Executive Board who give of their time and expertise as we seek to guide the work of our Conference. As you can imagine, given the times we live in, the challenges that we face are great, particularly fiscally. My hope is that each church in the GLC would take it upon themselves to begin giving a percentage of their local income to the greater work that we are seeking to do together in the Conference. A special word of thanks to Steve Ormond, Nicole Laing, Sarah Gordon, and Kathy Jackson, who now conclude their terms of service. Your service is appreciated and your voices will be missed.

We are working together as partners in the greater work of the Kingdom of God that has been given to us. Let us support each other in prayer, encourage each other when we have the opportunity, work with each other when that is possible, and give together to the greater work to which we are all called to participate.

Respectfully submitted,



REV. GARTH McGRATH

GLC Superintendent

"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 2019, I once again 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). Because of our partnership, people in 8 states are hearing about the abundant life that Jesus makes possible, and they are seeing evidence that there are, in fact, people who claim to know Jesus who are actually striving to follow him. Because of our partnership, countless people in those 8 states are being served well in the name of Jesus by Covenanters who take seriously their calling to put the interests of others ahead of their own, and in many instances they are getting a glimpse of the diversity of people who will sit together at the eternal messianic banquet because of the diverse ethnicities they observe when our churches gather for worship on Sunday morning. Because of our partnership, churches that have lost missional momentum are being resourced in order to regain it, and churches that are flourishing are being equipped and encouraged in order to remain strong. Because of our partnership newly planted churches are bringing the whole gospel to communities throughout our region in fresh and powerful ways.

CHURCH PLANTING:

Under the direction of our half-time Director of Church Planting, Alan Tumpkin (who also serves as Lead Pastor of LifeChurch Southfield), the GLC and the ECC—in partnership with the LifeChurch Southfield, LifeChurch Livonia, and LifeChurch Canton—planted our newest church, LifeChurch Auburn Hills, in the city of Auburn Hills a near-suburb of Detroit. Alan and his team of church-plant coaches also provided ongoing support, coaching and encouragement to the pastors and leaders of our other four most recent church plants: Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI (2016), New Community Covenant Church in Elkins, WV (2017); The Movement Covenant Church in Nashville, TN (2017); 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. Finally, the GLC and the ECC partnered with LifeChurch Southfield, and the rest of the LifeChurch Network to provide Church Planting Residency experience for Georgia Hill in anticipation of planting the fifth LifeChurch in the Detroit area: LifeChurch Riverside which is expected to begin weekly services in the second half of 2020.

As we move forward with church planting initiatives in the years ahead we continue to envision that our preferred 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 (especially when it includes a residency) tends to produce the strongest church plants. Other models for planting will be utilized and/or considered as appropriate, including the “partnership” model in which multiple churches contribute financially to the birth of a new church, the bi-vocational or co-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, our Conference 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 (Jamestown, NY). Authorization to plant LifeChurch Auburn Hills in 2019 was approved based on the availability of some remaining Covenant Manor proceeds designated for church plants and donations from individuals. Now, and into the foreseeable future, we are looking for individual donors (Mission Friends for Church Planting) and local churches to meet the GLC costs of planting a new church. To help us in our endeavor, in 2019, a generous donor provided a matching grant in the amount of \$150,000 to help us raise the funds for the next four church plants. LifeChurch Riverside will launch in 2020 because of contributions from local churches and individuals in the amount of \$37,500. Those funds were matched by the donor, enabling us to invest \$75,000 of Conference resources over a three-year period to help this church plant flourish and become self-sustaining. We anticipate that our next church plant will be in the Youngstown, OH, area. Please visit the GLC web site at www.greatlakes.cc to become a Mission Friend for Church Planting.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY:

During 2019, twenty GLC churches were formally served by our Congregational Vitality ministry. We were able to provide the workshops, coaching, and consulting utilized in this comprehensive ministry to help churches regain missional traction in a cost effective model that includes a part-time Director, and multiple trained “contract” Associates. In addition to the formal Congregational Vitality ministry services we provided, six churches asked for and received training in the form of the “Seven Systems Workshop.” Regardless of the current state of their church (healthy-missional, stable, critical moment, or at-risk), we urge every church in the GLC to constantly engage in vitality work: Reviewing how effective their ministry is in reaching non-believers; giving opportunities for people to come to faith; growing deeper in Christ; reflecting the ethnic makeup of their community; meeting the needs of people in their community; and pursuing Biblical justice on behalf of the marginalized and the oppressed so that we can continue to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Lay and Pastoral Ministry Workshops: To help churches equip and develop leaders for ministry in their local church, we provided a wide range of leadership development workshops at our 2019 Annual Celebration, including workshops on youth ministry, evangelism, empowering older adults for ministry, human trafficking/justice ministry, and growing/strengthening your church through effective “Connections” ministry. The feedback we continually receive from participants is that the workshops we offer are excellent and timely.

Leadership Support: Through the year, we coached 25 churches in best practices to help them improve their financial accounting and reporting systems, developed fair compensation packages, or reviewed their staffing structure. We guided several churches in matters of property transactions. We came alongside 11 churches to help them address significant conflict in the congregation.

Theological Education: Because of the growing number of church staff members who wish to pursue theological education while serving in ministry, the Conference partnered with North Park Seminary to provide online courses at reduced costs in a cohort format. The cohort will take four classes, called the “Core Four,” which may be applied to any degree program at North Park Seminary.

Pastoral Leadership Development: We coordinated interviews for 24 pastors who either began their credentialing process or hit a significant milestone in that process, provided formal care to several pastors who found themselves overwhelmed by the demands and pressures of their call, or who were placed under care by the Board of Ministry, and informally encouraged and cared for pastors in every one of our churches.

We coordinated logistics for planning the Fall Pastor’s Retreat, at which Pastor Shaun Marshall was our featured speaker.

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 (Covchurch.org/evangelism) to foster intentional evangelism in their congregation. They also coach GLC pastors to raise the temperature for personal evangelism in their church by telling stories of life change taking place in the people they engage with in their daily lives and asking Leadership Team/Council Members to do the same. At our Annual Celebration in April 2019, we celebrated new followers of Jesus, and in the “Offering of Names” for the BLESS initiative in 2019, fifteen GLC Churches reported that they would be praying for a total of 1,216 people in their respective spheres of influence. In support of this effort and to encourage contextual evangelism, the Conference 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 Conference 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 Outreach Ministry (Covenant) in Metro Detroit. We also gave \$10,000 in budgeted funds to Camp Mission Meadows, \$5,000 to Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp (owned by Wallens Creek Covenant Church in Virginia), and \$4,000 to Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp to help them serve GLC churches and people in their respective regions. Six churches used the Lego City for outreach and ministry to children in their community.

CHURCH CLOSURE and VOLUNTARY DISMISSAL:

With heavy hearts, we acknowledge that First Mission Evangelical Covenant Church in Ludlow, PA, voted to close in 2019. We give thanks for the faithful ministry of the pastors and lay leaders who served the church from 1897 to 2019. We give thanks for the people who came to faith and began to follow Jesus, who were discipled, and then went into the world to serve others in Jesus’ name. We grieve the closing of the church, and pray that God will continue to reveal himself in the community. We also acknowledge with sadness that Fireside Church of Oregon, OH, voted to leave the ECC/GLC in 2019. Fireside came into being as the Church of the Open Bible in 1944. In 1982, the name changed to Grace Evangelical Church and in 1995 to New Harvest Christian Church. The church adopted into the GLC/ECC in 2008, under the guidance and pastoral leadership of Mike Przybylski. While we are sad about the departure of the church from our fellowship, we give thanks for the years of fellowship and partnership in the gospel that we shared, and we wish the church well.

HEADWINDS:

Once again, in 2019, 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 2019 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 2020 and are preparing another conservative budget accordingly, but 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. 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.

It is my hope and my prayer that all of our Conference churches will continue to be—or become—healthy, missional, fruitful, and multiplying churches. Such that by the year 2020, every GLC church will have participated in some way to help give birth to a new Covenant Church in the GLC, while supporting the larger mission of the Conference 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



REV. SHELLEY KURTH

Director of Congregational Vitality

“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.” [Ephesians 3:20-21]

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 it might be more fruitful and multiplying. The work of the GLC Vitality team—from a transitional year with my beginning in the role—brought direction and infrastructure changes.

With the role of the Director of Vitality truly at one-quarter time (10 hours a week), the opportunity to engage as many pastors and churches face-to-face was less than ideal. Yet 11 individual churches and over 30 pastors were engaged in GLC Vitality! God has a way of multiplying our efficiency! Despite e-mails, phone calls, cards, attending the retreats, annual meetings and even adding in Midwinter conversations and connections (not covered by my GLC contract), fewer churches engaged the Pathway (the 12-18 month engagement with vitality specialists, three workshops, and an assessment). While only two churches engaged the Vitality Pathway, there were more who took advantage of the new Vitality Touchpoint seminars and workshops. These short one-time events for local church leaders or entire congregation are a new strategy. Over 35 pastors and lay leaders attended vitality events at the Annual Meeting, regional-based sites, or Fall Pastor’s Retreat. Five churches participated in the workshops: “Finding Your Why,” “Revisiting Your Vitality,” “What’s your Style?” (leadership), “Conflict Management,” and “Seven Systems Workshop.” Other workshops available are: “Working to Revision” (mission/vision), “Preparing for Change,” “Leading with Discernment,” and “Team Build—working effectively together” (especially multi-staff churches). These and many other programs are available for your church, or clergy cluster. Regional lay leaders could also take advantage of them.

The team approach to supporting our GLC churches—where coaches and facilitators support the Director of Vitality by coming alongside pathway pastors and leaders or facilitating Touchpoint workshops in their area of expertise—has room for additional staff as well as a need to be used. If you are interested in being trained in the practices of vitality and joining the GLC Vitality Team, a partial scholarship for GLC pastors is available to take part in the Certificate of Vitality through NPTS. Let me know! However, if you are interested in a Touchpoint workshop or seminar that might put one of our current staff to use, reach out to me!

How will your church engage with its trajectory of being more healthy and missional in order to be fruitful and multiplying in 2020? Might it access a workshop that helps further engage one of the areas that will help you build or sustain healthy missional traction, or might it be sharing a story of their healthy missional journey in order to encourage others, or might it be a stand-alone workshop. Vitality is the never-ending work of sustaining congregational health by “living into” your vision that you have discovered from God.

As I continue 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 am also concerned that as so many of our churches are content with where they are, which is a dangerous space to settle. It is easy to lose sight of how much goes into sustaining health. Having a coach, a colleague, a facilitator, come alongside is vital to this work. There is increased need for this within our churches, and it seems more opportunities than ever exist. Let’s work to reach out to each other, lean into the conference offerings for moving forward, and build STRONG churches that are living into the vision and mission that the Holy Spirit has led you toward in this season of ministry!

Give me a call, or shoot me an e-mail, if this is an area where you might feel a need to “hit the gym” and build some ministry muscle. I would be happy to talk more about congregational vitality in the life of your church.

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

Shelley

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 purposes and reason, and are being built together into the entity known as the Church.



The GLC Lego City may be reserved or checked out for a few days or several weeks. If your church is interested in using the Lego City, please contact the conference office (734-451-4670; 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.

In the past year, the Lego City has traveled through Michigan and Pennsylvania. In 2019, it spent 22 weeks on the road helping churches reach their communities for Christ.

- Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, Michigan
- Evangelical Covenant Church, Cheboygan, Michigan
- Thornapple Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Stoneridge Covenant Church, Allison Park, Pennsylvania
- Mission Covenant Church, Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania

ANNUAL REPORT

May 2020

2019 was the fifth year the Spiritual Directors Network of the Great Lakes Conference has operated as an ongoing Special Ministries category within the Conference and the tenth 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 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, are worth offering the Network members reimbursement.

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 members conduct retreats and classes in their congregations and elsewhere. Some also have ministries in prisons, 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 2020 for \$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. It is with deep gratitude, for the ongoing support of the Great Lakes Conference, we submit this annual report for 2019.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti Harrison

ANNUAL REPORT

May 2020

"He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then He said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" [Revelation 21:5]

The GLC Ministerial Association serves our pastors by supporting the credentialing process for clergy through the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). We seek to strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship amongst our pastors through regional clusters and our annual Fall Pastor's Retreat and to provide care and assistance to GLC pastors in times of need.

One of the highlights of the year is when we gather together for the Fall Pastor's Retreat. It is a time of connection, fellowship, learning and much needed rest. This year we gathered at Mohican State Park in Ohio. Shaun Marshall, the ECC's former Director of Vitality, spoke to us about the reality of change and transitions. That life and ministry are always evolving, Jesus is always making things new (Rev. 21:5) and embracing the creativity of transitions leads to new possibilities and life. Shaun's teaching was timely and gave us new tools to engage in the rapidly changing realities of contemporary life and ministry.

This year our Fall Pastor's Retreat will be held on November 9-11, 2020. Al Tizon, the ECC's Executive Minister of Serve Globally, will be speaking to us on the theme of whole-gospel evangelism and discipleship in a polarized culture and engaging in pastoral ministry in an age of political and social upheaval. The location for our gathering will be determined soon.

One of the major responsibilities of the Ministerial Association is to support the credentialing process of pastors through the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). Rev. Dr. Linnea Carnes currently chairs this committee and oversees the team of pastors who interview and support clergy through this process. If you are an ordained pastor in the ECC, we would like to encourage you to consider serving on this important life-giving team. The work of supporting and credentialing pastors is a vital part of our growth as a conference and denomination. If you have an interest in serving, please contact me at ppangbor@gmail.com or Jody Eidnes at jody@greatlakes.cc.

As pastors, we know that good self-care is vital to sustaining pastoral excellence within ministry. Staying healthy in pastoral leadership includes a rhythm of rest, renewal through intimacy with God, authentic fellowship with others, and becoming a life-long learner. There are many opportunities within the ECC to help each one of us stay healthy. All of us can receive Spiritual Direction through the GLC Spiritual Directors Network. Nationally, the ECC offers Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grants in the areas of character, competence, and constancy, as well as the Leadership Cohort and the Living Forward retreat series. The Leadership Cohort offers pastors the opportunity to reflect upon and strengthen their leadership. The Living Forward Retreat series offers clergy who are 55+ years of age the opportunity to engage in the dynamics of call later in vocational life. I encourage you to take advantage of these great opportunities for renewal and growth. (Covchurch.org/vocational-ministry/spe).

With Peace in Christ,

Pam Pangborn - Chair

ANNUAL REPORT

May 2020

2019 was a year of great change for Women Ministries in the Evangelical Church. With change comes some regret as we 'lose' some of our unique identity, and excitement as we grow into the challenges that God has set before us.

Changes:

- At the denominational level, Women Ministries does not exist as a separate entity. That does not mean that ministry of, for, and by women has gone away. It means that the focus on women has moved into all the five ministry priorities and the impact on women should be considered for all ministry initiatives. Existing projects, such as Lycee Vanette School for Girls and Advocacy for Victims of Abuse (AVA), have moved to the appropriate ministry priority, such as Serve Globally, Love Mercy Do Justice.
- At the conference level—WOMEN MINISTRIES IS ALIVE AND WELL!! As long as there are women who are passionate about enabling other women to grow deeper in their relationship with the Lord, there will be Women Ministries in the Great Lakes Conference. In 2019, we had approximately 300 women attend retreats at Mission Meadows Bible Camp, Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp, and a new retreat at Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp. It was exciting to grow a new retreat in a new area. Our speakers were Ruth Hill and her daughter Pastor Rebecca Worl, who led us on a fun-filled adventure through the epic story of the Bible, and Professor Kelli Worrall from Moody Bible, who spoke about how the love of Jesus pierces us and embraces us. Beth Chilcoat was our first speaker at CMMBC, and she spoke about the beauty of "Be Still," and letting God's love wash over us.

Challenges Ahead:

- We will be refocusing Women Ministries in the GLC addressing the question: What resources do our women need? Besides planning the retreats, we will be looking at our specific regional needs, whether that be mentoring, training, connecting people, providing materials, or just being a sounding board.
- We need your help, your ideas, your prayers, your hands, and your feet. If you feel that little tap on your shoulder, it is time to get involved! God has great plans for you!

In His Glory,
Phyllis Van - Chair

ANNUAL REPORT

We are about to pass the 10-year mark since the founding of NAJO. We carry a deep gratitude for the Covenant churches in both America and Japan as well as the financial support that has sustained us.



We are about to pass the 10-year mark since the founding of NAJO. We carry a deep gratitude for the covering prayers from the Covenant churches in both America and Japan as well as the financial support that has sustained us.

Since the start of NAJO 10 years ago, the mission and plan has remained constant. That is, **to proclaim the gospel to Japanese unbelievers.**

NAJO has 3 primary mission activities:

- Ministry to the Japanese in church
- Outreach in and beyond Michigan
- Traveling mission tours

Ministry to the Japanese in the Church

This is a ministry held with the Japanese at Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

We meet people and deepen relationships through the English class (CEC). Some also attend a Bible study for beginners. Through this ministry, we have seen many Japanese come to faith and get baptized. This pattern continued for nine years, but from last year, we noticed the attendance numbers have decreased. One person that deserves a special mention is Satomi Tsujioka. She and her daughters were baptized last year in August. We are so happy that Satomi has shown such passion and has become a faithful disciple of Jesus.



Last year, we moved to the city of Commerce. The ministry has been blessed in this new house, where we are hosting many classes: cooking, crafting, parenting, and Bible studies. We've seen many newcomers and we always prepare a devotion time before sharing lunch.

Outreach in and Beyond Michigan

There have been many opportunities for Japanese outreach activities in and beyond Michigan, but the need started to decrease recently. The reason is that previously, there were many areas with no Japanese pastors. However, we are happy to see that a Japanese

pastor was assigned to some of these areas. At this time, we are still making regular visits to places like Battle Creek and Grand Rapids.

Traveling Mission Tours

Every year, we make a trip back to Japan and visit many regions on an evangelism tour. In my travels, I've noticed the weakening of some teachings in various areas. Starting four years ago, we shifted the goal of our visits to focus on evangelism rallies. This coincides with NAJO's core mission to "proclaim the gospel to Japanese unbelievers."



During our evangelism tour in 2019, we visited 19 churches and preached a message 30 times. As a result, we saw a surprising 51 people make decisions for Christ.

We will continue the annual return to Japan, where we have been crossing denominational lines and have received invitations from many different churches, which is the wonderful work of God.

Returnee Family Increase

The number of returnee families has increased. We have held a small reunion for the returnees, but in the future, there may be a new "New wine, new wineskins" ministry involving this. We're hoping to bring this reunion ministry to its fullest.



Skype Bible Study

This is an age where we are blessed with technology. No matter where you live, if you have the internet, you can join in a personal Bible study. We are going to continue our Skype Bible study ministry with returnees.

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved."
[Romans 10:1].

Cordially,
Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto

PASTORAL CHANGES | ADOPTIONS | PLANTS
2019

PASTORAL CHANGES

NAME	FROM	TO	POSITION
JOHNNY AHO	LIFE COVENANT CHURCH, CANTON, MI	HOPE EVAN. COV. CHURCH, INDIANAPOLIS, IN	LEAD PASTOR
CHAD BENKERT	FEDERATED COVENANT CHURCH, DOWAGIAC, MI	EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH, NOME, AK	INTERIM PASTOR
DAVE BROWN	FIRST COVENANT CHURCH, YOUNGSTOWN, OH		ASSOC. PASTOR
JACK BROWN	SARANAC COMMUNITY CHURCH, SARANAC, MI		WORSHIP LEADER
DAVE DILLER		THORNAPPLE COV. CHURCH, MANCHESTER, CT	IN. YOUTH PASTOR
BRENDAN DRY		LIFECHURCH AUBURN HILLS, AUBURN HILLS, MI	ASSOC. PASTOR
STEVEN FAULK		NEW HOPE CHURCH, RICHLAND, MI	INTERIM PASTOR
HERB FROST	FAITH COVENANT CHURCH, MANISTEE, MI	ECC DENOMINATIONAL OFFICES	DIR. VOC. AND S.F.
PAULA FROST	FAITH COVENANT CHURCH, MANISTEE, MI		CHILD MIN. PASTOR
JOHN GRANDY		LIFE COVENANT CHURCH, CANTON, MI	DISCIPL. PASTOR
STAN HAGEMEYER		EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH, LEROY, MI	INTERIM PASTOR
NEAL HERR	FIRST EVAN. COV. CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MI		ASSOC. PASTOR
STEVE HOFFMAN	KOMSTAD COVENANT CHURCH, BERESFORD, SD	COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, FAIRFIELD, OH	LEAD PASTOR
DON JOHNSON	COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, FAIRFIELD, OH		INTERIM PASTOR
DARRIN LONGMIRE	WESTERN MI TEEN CHALLENGE, MUSKEGON, MI		ASSOC. PASTOR
TORI MACK		GRACE COMM. COV. CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, KY	CO-PASTOR
MIKE POINDEXTER	PLEASANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, WARREN, PA	SONOMA SPRINGS COV. CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM	LEAD PASTOR
AARON REINARD	PLEASANT COMM. CHURCH, WARREN, PA	SCANDIA COVENANT CHURCH, RUSSELL, PA	LEAD PASTOR
TERRANCE ROLLERSON	HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH, DETROIT, MI		LEAD PASTOR
TOM SHARKEY	FIRST COVENANT CHURCH, YOUNGSTOWN, OH		LEAD PASTOR
JARED VAN VOORST		LIFE COVENANT CHURCH, CANTON, MI	ASSOC. PASTOR
KEN WHITE	FOREST PARK COV. CHURCH, MUSKEGON, MI	FOREST PARK COV. CHURCH, MUSKEGON, MI	LEAD PASTOR
DARIN YOUNGS	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MUSKEGON, MI		LEAD PASTOR

NEW CHURCH PLANTS

PLANTER	CHURCH
DONEARL JOHNSON	LIFECHURCH AUBURN HILLS, AUBURN HILLS, MI

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BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

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CHAIR
Thomas Sharkey
(2022-2nd)
Retired ECC Pastor
Youngstown, OH
- 


VICE CHAIR
Nicole Laing
(2022-2nd)
Cityview Covenant
Pittsburgh, PA
- 


SECRETARY
Stephen Ormond
(2022-2nd)
Faith Covenant Church
Farmington Hills, MI
- 


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


TRUSTEES


- 


Connie Barry
(2021-1st)
Faith Covenant
Westerville, OH
- 


Sarah Gordon
(2021-1st)
Sanctuary Columbus
Columbus, OH
- 

Mark Henry
(2022-1st)
Life Covenant
Canton, MI
- 

Kathleen Jackson
(2020-1st)
LifeChurch Southfield
Southfield, MI
- 

William Mack
(2021-1st)
Grace Community Covenant
Louisville, KY
- 

Doug McCann
(2021-1st)
Stoneridge Covenant
Allison Park, PA
- 

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

Brian Rudy
(2022-1st)
Thornapple Evan. Covenant
Grand Rapids, MI

LISTING - BY DISTRICT

Church Name | City, State (Alphabetically)

KENTUCKY

Four Rivers Covenant Church | Calvert City, KY
 Grace Comm. Covenant Church | Louisville, KY
 One Church | Louisville, KY
 Hope City Covenant Church | Richmond, KY

MICHIGAN

Christ Community Church | Allegan, MI
 LifeChurch Auburn Hills | Auburn Hills, MI
 Evergreen Evan. Covenant Church | Branch, MI
 Redeemer Covenant Church | Caledonia, MI
 Life Covenant Church, Canton | Canton, MI
 Evan. Cov. Church, Cheboygan | Cheboygan, MI
 Dearborn Evan. Cov. Church | Dearborn, MI
 Citadel of Faith Covenant Church | Detroit, MI
 City Covenant Church | Detroit, MI
 Detroit Bible Tabernacle | Detroit, MI
 Hope Community Church | Detroit, MI
 Love of Christ Christian Center | Detroit, MI
 Messiah Church | Detroit, MI
 Federated Covenant Church | Dowagiac, MI
 Faith Covenant Church | Farmington Hills, MI
 Bachelor Evan. Covenant Church | Fountain, MI
 Esperanza Cov. Church | Grand Rapids, MI
 First Evan. Covenant Church | Grand Rapids, MI
 Thornapple Evan. Cov. Church | Grand Rapids, MI
 Harbert Community Church | Harbert, MI
 Kalamazoo Covenant Church | Kalamazoo, MI
 Bretton Woods Covenant Church | Lansing, MI
 Evangelical Covenant Church | LeRoy, MI
 LifeChurch Livonia | Livonia, MI

Faith Covenant Church | Manistee, MI
 Forest Park Covenant Church | Muskegon, MI
 Kingdom Embassy Cov. Church | Muskegon, MI
 Miracle of Faith Cov. Church | New Baltimore, MI
 Evangelical Covenant Church | Northport, MI
 New Hope Church | Richland, MI
 Saranac Community Church | Saranac, MI
 LifeChurch Southfield | Southfield, MI
 Crossroads Comm. Church | South Lyon, MI
 West Bay Covenant Church | Traverse City, MI
 Covenant Presbyterian Church | Tustin, MI
 Evangelical Covenant Church | Whitehall, MI
 Fruitland Evan. Cov. Church | Whitehall, MI
 Christ Covenant Church | Wixom, MI

NEW YORK

Grace Evangelical Covenant Church | Clay, NY
 First Covenant Church | Jamestown, NY
 Nueva Vida Covenant Church | Jamestown, NY
 Zion Covenant Church | Jamestown, NY
 Redeemer Evan. Cov. Church | Liverpool, NY
 Artisan Church | Rochester, NY

OHIO

First Covenant Church | Ashtabula, OH
 Austintown Comm. Church | Austintown, OH
 Revival Covenant Church (Praise Chapel Intl.) | Columbus, OH
 Sanctuary Columbus Church | Columbus, OH
 Journey Cov. Church | Cuyahoga Falls, OH
 Covenant Community Church | Fairfield, OH
 Redeemer Church | Hamilton, OH
 Bethany Covenant Church | Lyndhurst, OH
 St. John's Evan. Cov. Church | Millersburg, OH
 Fireside Covenant Church | Oregon, OH
 Gateway Community Church | Powell, OH
 Faith Covenant Church | Westerville, OH
 First Covenant Church | Willoughby Hills, OH
 Faith Comm. Cov. Church | Youngstown, OH
 First Covenant Church | Youngstown, OH

PENNSYLVANIA

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

TENNESSEE

The Movement Church | Nashville, TN

VIRGINIA

Wallens Creek Covenant Church | Duffield, VA

WEST VIRGINIA

New Comm. Cov. Church | Buckhannon, WV
 New Comm. Cov. Church, Elkins | Elkins, WV



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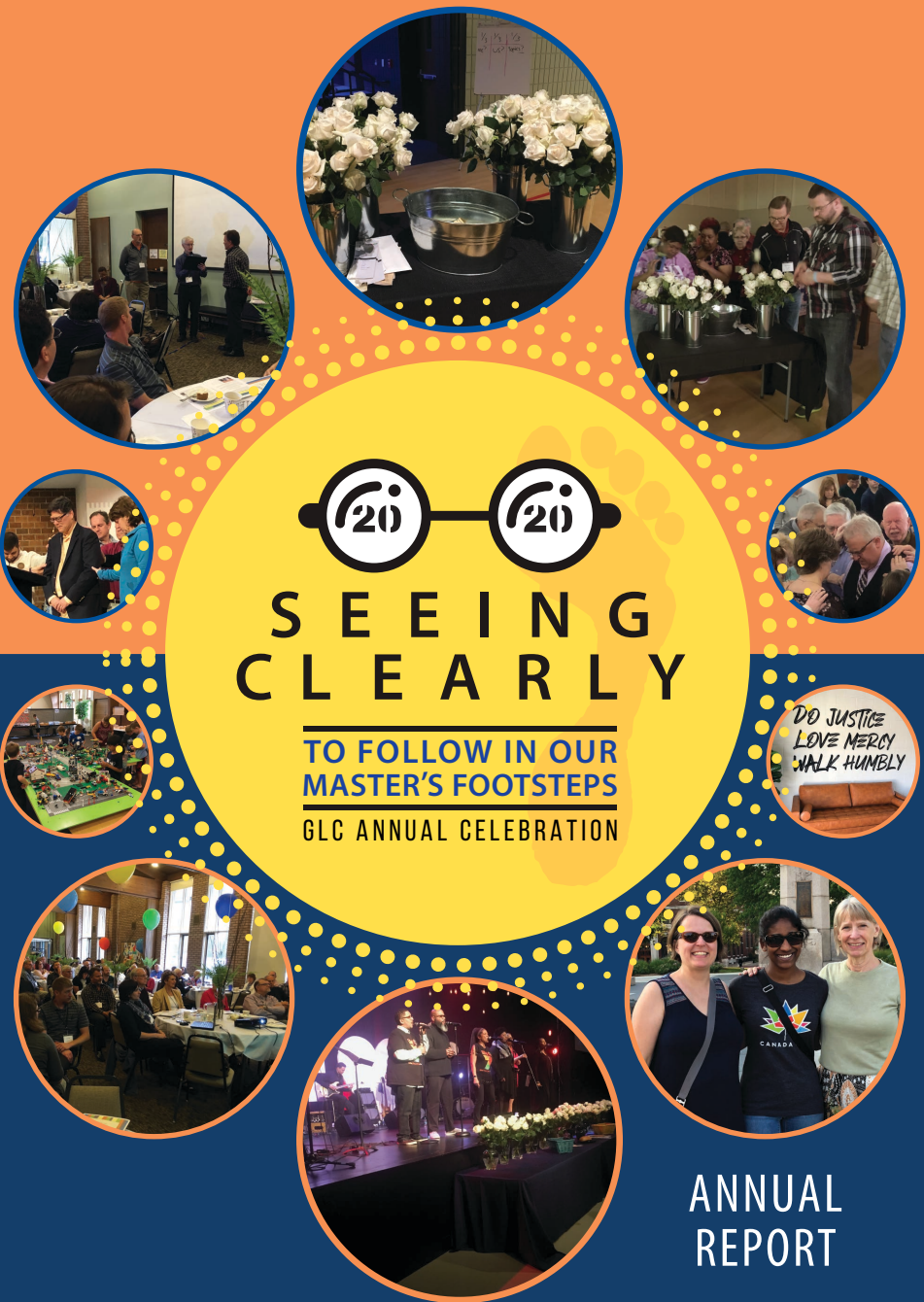
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