



HOPE AGAIN

GLC Annual Celebration
April 23-24, 2021

GLC Documents 2020-2021

- ◆ **Delegate Documents**
- ◆ **Ministry Reports**
- ◆ **Church Plants under Covenant Agreement**
- ◆ **Camps**



Table of Contents

Delegate Documents– 2021

<i>Agenda</i>	3
<i>Delegate Orientation</i>	5
<i>Nominations</i>	8
<i>Sample Ballot</i>	10
<i>Closed Churches</i>	11
<i>2020 GLC Annual Meeting Minutes</i>	13

Ministry Reports 2020-2021

<i>Greeting from ECC President</i>	15
<i>Chair of GLC Executive Board</i>	17
<i>Superintendent</i>	19
<i>GLC Ministerial Association</i>	23
<i>GLC Spiritual Directors Network</i>	25
<i>GLC Women Ministries</i>	26
<i>North American Japanese Outreach– NAJO</i>	27
<i>GLC Executive Board & GLC Staff</i>	29
<i>GLC Churches</i>	31

Church Plants under Covenant Agreements:

<i>Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church</i>	34
<i>New Community Covenant Church: Elkins</i>	36
<i>The Movement Church</i>	38
<i>Lighthouse Church</i>	40
<i>LifeChurch Auburn Hills</i>	42
<i>LifeChurch Riverside</i>	44

Camp Reports:

<i>Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp</i>	46
<i>Camp Mission Meadows</i>	49
<i>Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp</i>	51



Agenda

41st General Assembly of the Great Lakes Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church

April 24, 2021

I. Organization of the Meeting

- A. Call to Order..... Tom Sharkey
- B. Approval of Agenda Tom Sharkey
- C. Welcome.....Tom Sharkey
- D. Approval of Committees
 - 1. Credentials Jody Eidnes
 - 2. Tellers.....Jody Eidnes, Peg Wolter
 - 3. Parliamentarian.....Herb Kolbe

II. Greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church.....Lance Davis

- A. Report of the Board of Nominations — GLC representative.....June Kenny

III. Report of the Credentials Committee..... Jody Eidnes

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee..... Tom Sharkey

- A. Election of Officers and Board Members

V. Good News Report

- Church Planting — GLC Church Planting updateGarth McGrath

VI. Superintendent Report Garth McGrath

VII. Closed Churches..... Garth McGrath

- A. Redeemer Covenant Church, Caledonia, MI
- B. Faith Community Covenant Church, Youngstown, OH

VIII. Good News Report

- A. Church Vitality —Redeemer, Liverpool, NY.....Bill Miller

IX. Treasurer’s Report (2020 Financials) Katherine Kayser



Agenda (cont.)

X. Good News Report

A. Church Leadership —GLC Camps: Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp, Camp Mission Meadows, and Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp.....Joe Faulkinbury, Bryan Muecke, Jackie Haines, Marc Eix

XI. New Business:

A. Camp Mission Meadows Leadership Transition.....Garth McGrath

B. 2021 Budget Katherine Kayser

C. Approval of 41st Annual Meeting Minutes..... Tom Sharkey

D. Approval of Ordination Candidates Tom Sharkey

XII. Good News Report

A. Church Outreach — Grace, Louisville, KY.....William Mack

XIII. GLC Staff Q & A GLC Staff

XIV. Election Results for Officers & Board Members Tom Sharkey

XV. Installation of Officers & Board Members..... Garth McGrath

XVI. 2022 Annual Meeting Celebration Location..... Jody Eidnes

XVII. Adjournment..... Tom Sharkey



Delegate Orientation

2021 Great Lakes Conference Annual Meeting

WELCOME to the Annual Meeting of the *Great Lakes Conference*. It is the hope of the Great Lakes Conference Board that these pages will acquaint delegates with the procedures and information for this meeting, described in the **Constitution of the Conference** as the **General Assembly**.

The **purpose** of this Annual Meeting is the same as the purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ - at all times and in all situations - *to discern and to do the will of God*. Depending on the circumstances, there are several ways this may be done; the circumstances of the Annual Meeting - the size of the delegation, the complexity of the issues that will come before us - require that we proceed more formally than is usually necessary in smaller Christian gatherings. We proceed according to the **Conference Constitution and Bylaws** as well as **Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised**. At first, some of the language used on the floor of the Annual Meeting may seem strange to you, but you will soon understand it as a kind of oral "*shorthand*" that keeps the business moving along. A brief glossary of some common parliamentary terms is at the end of these pages. The reason for a rather strict adherence to these rules may be stated as follows:

- **It protects the right of the majority to decide**
- **It protects the right of the minority to be heard**
- **It protects the rights of individual members, both those present and those absent**
- **It prevents a "railroad" of the Annual Meeting by manipulation**
- **It prevents an emotional "stampede" of the Annual Meeting.**

Though other elements are factors, three elements basically determine the direction of each Annual Meeting:

- **the delegates**
- **the Boards and Commissions of the Covenant - particularly the Executive Board**
- **the Moderator.**

I. THE DELEGATES

The individual delegate is the principal "*building block*" of the Annual Meeting. This person must act to receive the reports, to approve recommendations, and to question and debate the issues. Every delegate has the right to speak in the Annual Meeting, but those who do not speak are just as vital to the process as those who do - the power of decision rests with all the delegates.

Discussion, debate, the exchange of ideas and information are, however, at the heart of the process, so these are encouraged. Here are some **guidelines** if you wish to speak on the floor of the meeting:

1. Approach a microphone and wait for the Moderator to call on you.
2. Seek the floor only when the subject you want to talk about is under discussion.
3. When you have been recognized, speak to the Moderator and tell him/her what is on your mind. *You do not have to make a speech to the Assembly; you are speaking to just one person, and the others are listening in.*
4. If you have a question about procedure, ask the Moderator; if you have a question about the subject under discussion, the Moderator will call on the person who is most likely to have the answer.
5. You may speak once to an issue, and not again on the same issue as long as someone else, who has not yet had a turn is seeking the floor.



Delegate Orientation (cont.)

If you have an item that does not relate to the proposed Agenda and you wish to present it to the meeting, it is preferred that you present this, in writing, to the Moderator prior to the Annual Meeting. Opportunity for changes and/or additions is given at the time of adopting the Agenda.

II. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Members of the Executive Board, and others so designated, are the chief "*resource persons*" on the floor of the General Assembly. The Executive Board is the mover of almost all the recommendations that arise from the Agenda, which it also prepares. All recommendations are subject to the amendment, referral, or rejection of the Annual Meeting.

As the mover of most of the recommendations on the Agenda, a spokesperson for the Board is usually granted what the Rules call "*preference in recognition*." This is the privilege of a mover to speak first to his own motion. (*Please note that motions arising from a Board, Commission, or Committee do not require a second; they already have more than one supporter.*)

III. THE MODERATOR

The Moderator of the General Assembly is the Chair of the Conference Executive Board. The Moderator's responsibilities are:

- to interpret and apply the rules of the Meeting
- to expedite the business of the Meeting
- to see that all persons involved in the Meeting are treated fairly
- to clarify what is happening
- to advise delegates in the procedures of the Meeting
- to maintain the discipline and joy of Christian fellowship.

A final word about "**decorum**" in the Meeting. There are rare times when spontaneous applause expresses affirmation and unanimity in the Meeting, but applause during a debate, when there is an obvious difference of opinion, is not fair to the opposing side.

Motives of other persons may never be impugned during a debate. The merits of the motion, and not the motives of the mover, are the issue under debate.

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF COMMON PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

AMEND, MOVE TO - Most motions may be amended on the floor of the Meeting, particularly when they deal with the business rather than the procedures of the Meeting. When an amendment has been seconded, it must be debated and decided, or otherwise dealt with, before the motion it seeks to amend may be further considered.

APPEAL, FROM THE RULING OF THE MODERATOR - A delegate is testing the Moderator's ruling against the opinion of the Meeting. The motion to appeal requires a second. An affirmative vote by the Meeting sustains the Moderator's ruling.

BALLOT, TO ORDER THE VOTE ON A PENDING QUESTION TO BE TAKEN BY - The Bylaws and Rules specify that certain questions be decided by ballot. Questions other than these may also be decided by ballot if a majority of the Meeting concurs with a request from a delegate for it.



Delegate Orientation (cont.)

DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY - This is a vote by rising. It may be demanded by any delegate to verify a vote taken by a voice or by show of hands or may be ordered by the Moderator when a vote by show of hands or by voice has been "*too close to call.*" If it is still not possible to discern the outcome visually, the Moderator may order a count by the *Sergeants-at-Arms*. A majority of the Meeting may also order a count.

INFORMATION, POINT OF - Asking a question about the business at hand.

MR. or MADAME MODERATOR - The traditional form for addressing the Moderator from the floor of the Meeting.

ORDER, POINT OF - A delegate calls the Moderator's attention to a possible breach of the Rules. If the delegate is not satisfied with the Moderator's subsequent explanation, he may appeal if the point has been raised concerning an actual ruling of the Moderator.

PARLIAMENTARIAN - An advisor to the Moderator on Parliamentary Law.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY, POINT OF - Asking a question about the application of the Rules in the business at hand.

PERSONAL PRIVILEGE, POINT OF - A delegate believes that his rights or the rights of another are being infringed upon.

POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME - A delegate may move to postpone the item under discussion until a later point in the Meeting. The motion requires a second and is debatable.

PREVIOUS QUESTION, MOVE THE - A motion to cut off debate on an issue which requires a second, and a two-thirds majority. An affirmative vote merely cuts off debate and is not a vote on the motion under debate.

PUTTING THE QUESTION - Taking a vote

RECONSIDER, MOVE TO - A motion to reconsider an item previously voted upon may be made at any time, though it may have to wait until other business has been dealt with before it can be taken up. If a majority decides that the item previously voted upon will be reconsidered, debate on it re-opens, and another vote is taken (or it is otherwise disposed of, by referral, etc.). The motion to reconsider has unique characteristics: It may be made only by a delegate who originally voted with the prevailing side on the item; it may be made no later than the day following the original vote; it cannot apply to an item when provisions of it have already begun to be carried out (such as the signing of a contract); and it cannot be itself reconsidered.

REFER, MOVE TO - Not to be confused with a motion to table. A referred motion goes to a Board or Committee as designated by the *Motion to Refer*. It requires a second and is debatable.

SECOND - A seconder need not agree with the motion or vote for it. He need only agree that the motion deserves the attention of the Meeting.

SUSPEND THE RULES - It is possible to suspend a rule that is standing in the way of accomplishing what the Meeting clearly wants to do either by motion or by unanimous consent. Bylaws may not be suspended unless they are in the nature of "*rules of order.*" This is a complex issue, with each instance subject to the interpretation and ruling of the Moderator.

TABLE, MOVE TO - (Or "**LAY ON THE TABLE**") Unlike a referred motion, a tabled motion goes nowhere. No one considers it, or studies it, or does anything with it, until a motion passes to "*take it from the table.*" If this never happens, the tabled motion is never again considered.

Prepared, in the main, by Everett L. Wilson (*Moderator of the 1985 Covenant Annual Meeting*) in consultation with Robert H. Peterson (Moderator-1983).

Revisions by Evelyn M. R. Johnson (*Moderator-1986*) and Duane Aschenbrenner (*Parliamentarian-1986*).

Revisions by Rev. David S. Dahlberg (*1992*)



GLC Executive Board Nominations

Officers

Thomas (Tom) Sharkey, Boardman, OH (Chair)

Tom served First Covenant Church of Youngstown, OH as Senior Pastor for over 31 years before retiring in September 2019. He grew up in New York City in a Roman Catholic family. Following a period of atheism in high school and college, Tom came to a personal faith in Jesus and began attending a Covenant Church near the college he was attending in Springfield, MA. After sensing (and fighting mightily against) a call to ministry, he finally surrendered and went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from North Park Seminary in 1979. He served as the Pastor of Community Covenant Church in Hopkinton, MA from 1979-81, Associate Pastor of North Park Covenant Church in Chicago, IL from 1982-88 (where he was also adjunct faculty at NPTS), and Senior Pastor of First Covenant Church in Youngstown, OH from 1988 until his retirement. Tom's theological perspectives have been strongly influenced by British theologians & scholars, including John Stott, C.S. Lewis, Michael Green, Alister McGrath, John Lennox, N.T. Wright, and many others. He loves apologetics and is passionate about teaching and preaching. Tom's long tenure in Covenant ministry (41 years) and his long history in the Conference (31 years) give him a depth of knowledge and experience in Covenant life that will be beneficial to the Conference Board. Tom and his wife Lucy have two adult children, including a son (Stephen) who is also a Covenant pastor and Church planter in the East Coast Conference (Highrock Quincy Covenant Church). In his free time, Tom enjoys reading, playing with his grandchildren (six of them now!), spending time with dear friends and reminiscing about the days when he used to do (before his knees gave out) competitive trampoline and springboard and platform diving.

Doug McCann, Stoneridge Covenant Church, Allison Park, PA (Vice Chair)

Doug serves as a Sunday school teacher, a member of the preschool board, and as the Treasurer at Stoneridge Covenant. Doug recently retired from Highmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield, where he worked as an actuary for 29 years. Doug is married and has three grown children. He enjoys bicycling and swimming in his free time. Doug has enjoyed serving on the GLC Executive Board as he has been able to use what he has learned to further God's Kingdom and make good use of his time in retirement.

Cheryl Schut, First Evangelical Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, MI (Secretary)

Cheryl grew up as a "Baptist preacher's kid" and joined the ECC after marrying her Christian Reformed husband Mark. She says that the Evangelical Covenant Church was the perfect mesh for joining their slightly different upbringings. Cheryl has served in many different capacities over the years, including teaching Sunday School to preschoolers, working in the nursery, volunteering as a MOPS Mentor Mom, and participating in the Union High School Card Ministry to name a few. Cheryl has worked part time as a bookkeeper for a tape wholesaler for the past 24 years and helps with special projects for her husband's CPA firm. She finds her true joy in being a wife, mother of 3 grown children, and "Gumma" to 4 beautiful grandchildren (and 1 grand-puppy!) Cheryl has also served on the Finance Committee of the GLC Board.



GLC Ex. Board Nominations (cont.)

Katherine Kayser, Hope Community Church, Detroit, MI (Treasurer) (also being nominated for a three yr. term)

Katherine currently serves as the Treasurer at Hope and was on the recent Pastoral Search Committee. She has also been involved with women's small groups, lay pastors, and inner healing. She was the Treasurer of the Covenant Community Care board from 2010-2016. Katherine is the Financial Director of Image by Design Plastic Surgery, which is her husband Melek's business. They have two daughters, Elizabeth and Evelyn. Katherine wishes to continue to serve on the board because she has a passion for the Lord's work, and she hopes to use her financial background to help further the Kingdom.

Trustees

Connie Berry, Faith Covenant Church, Westerville, OH

Connie grew up in Rockford, Illinois, where she attended Bethesda Covenant Church. She currently serves on the Adult Discipleship Team, teaches adult discipleship classes, and is part of a small group at Faith. She works part-time at Berry Marketing, Inc., and is a mystery writer with her fourth book coming out in June 2021. Connie served as the Teaching Leader for the Columbus North Bible Study Fellowship class for 25 years, retiring in 2016. Connie is prayerfully moving forward to a second term on the GLC board, grateful for the role the Covenant has played in her life and faith for many years. Connie and her husband Bob have two grown sons.

William Mack, Grace Community Covenant Church, Louisville, KY

William "Mack" is the pastor of Grace Community Covenant Church in Louisville, Kentucky. The church was planted with the GLC in 2013. Mack is a native of Louisville and earned a BA in Fine Arts (with an emphasis in African American and Latino Theatre) from the University of Kentucky. He is currently pursuing his M.Div in Christian Counseling at Gordon-Cromwell Theological Seminary. Mack is actively involved in theater; he is a community educator/facilitator and is also trained as a Sexual Health Specialist and a Life Skills Coach. Mack and his wife, Tori, are raising five children and they have one grandson. He believes that serving on the board provides opportunities for growth both for the board member and the GLC as they strive to live out the mission of Christ in their various contexts.



Sample Ballot

GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING – April 24, 2021

GLC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Officers elected annually for 1 year term

Chair –

*Rev. Tom Sharkey

Vice Chair –

*Doug McCann

Secretary –

*Cheryl Schut

Treasurer –

*Katherine Kayser

Trustees - (Vote for 3)

Elected for a 3-year term

*Connie Berry

*Katherine Kayser

William Mack

*Denotes incumbent



Closed Churches Report

REPORT ON CHURCHES TO BE DELETED FROM THE ROSTER OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Name of the Church: Redeemer Evangelical Covenant Church

Location (City, State): Caledonia, Michigan

Reason for deletion from roster: Closed Withdrawn
 Dismissed Merger

Number of members: 29

Year joined the Covenant: 1991

Peak membership (approximately): 250

Reason leading to removal from the roster and comments:

Redeemer had slowly spiraled down in worshipping attendance, membership, and mission for the past 25 years, since the departure of the founding pastor. Despite valiant attempts at revitalizing the congregation, the leadership, along with the congregation, lovingly discerned that our mission was best served by becoming a legacy church. The pandemic was a storm we could not weather. We sold our building to a Burmese refugee congregation and rejoiced to see God bringing new life to our facility through this final act of mission, becoming a "Legacy Church". Redeemer had a heart for their neighborhood and will be remembered as a congregation whose spiritual gift was Spirit-led hospitality and worship.

Signed by *David M. Smith*
(Conference Superintendent)

Date April 1, 2021



Minutes-2020

Great Lakes Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church Minutes of the 40th General Assembly Online Meeting May 2, 2020

I. Organization of the Meeting. The meeting was organized and conducted using Zoom in order to assure proper COVID-19 protocols. Conference staff had set up procedures to allow for delegate participation real time for questions, motions, discussion and voting.

- A. **Call to Order.** Tom Sharkey called the meeting to order at 9 am.
- B. **Approval of Agenda.** Motion made and seconded to approve the agenda. Approved without discussion
- C. **Approval of Committees.** Motion made and seconded to approve the credentials committee and Parliamentarian.

II. Greetings from the ECC. Michelle Sanchez, the ECC Executive Minister of Make & Deepen Disciples brought greetings, a video and presented details of a financial campaign to allow for grants and loans for churches, global relief, missional support and minister crisis assistance. She also announced the Focus on the Blazing Center initiative, promoting renewed reliance on the Holy Spirit. Jesse Slimak offered prayer for Michelle and her work. Later in the meeting, John Wenrich, ECC President, brought greetings and called for a revival in the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. Report of the Credentials Committee. Jody announced that we had 103 church delegates, 10 Conference delegates and 2 Conference Entity delegates present virtually.

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee. Tom Sharkey presented the Nominating Committee Ballot and opened the floor for further nominations. There were none. The Ballot was approved with one abstention. Discussion regarding the need for candidates from the Conference churches in the Southern tier. Tom also noted that camp board members have been approved by the Great Lakes Conference Board.

V. Election of the Superintendent of the GLC. Garth McGrath was unanimously elected via virtual paper ballots.

VI. Old Business. Garth reported on the status of church planting, noting a successful capital campaign with 18 churches and 21 individuals contributing, with one donor pledging \$500,000 in matching funds. Alan Tumpkin reported regarding Dr. Georgia Hill's Life Churchplant and Dave Brown's planting in Youngstown, OH.

VII. Superintendent's Report. Garth thanked pastors for their incredible creativity and flexibility during the Pandemic. He announced Shelley Kurth's resignation and discussed plans for the Vitality initiative support in transition from her leadership. Garth also introduced the Conference staff and gave appreciation for their hard work, in particular in organizing the first ever virtual Annual Meeting. Nicole Laing prayed for Garth.

VIII. Closed and Disaffiliating Churches. Garth reported on the two churches involved.

- A. **First Mission Covenant Church, Ludlow PA.** Motion from the GLC Board to close the church. The motion passed with one abstention.
- B. **Fireside Covenant Church, Oregon, OH.** Motion from the GLC Board to accept the church's disaffiliation with the ECC, and to remove it from the roster. Motion passed, with one "no" and two abstentions. Garth prayed for both churches as they are removed from the roster.



Minutes-2020 (cont.)

IX. Churches Joining the GLC and the ECC. Garth reported on two churches joining the GLC and ECC:

- A. **Kingdom Embassy Church, Muskegon, MI.** By virtual poll Kingdom Embassy's joining the GLC and ECC was approved with one percent abstention.
- B. **One Church, Louisville, KY.** By virtual poll One Church's joining the GLC and ECC was approved, with one percent abstention.

X. Treasurer's Report. Katherine Kayser presented the 2019 balance sheet and income statements and Kim Carlson responded to a question.

XI. New Business.

- A. **New Camp Director for PLCBC.** Garth reported that Marc Eix has been appointed the new Director for PLCBC. Marc discussed his plans and Garth prayed for Marc and the Camp.
- B. **2020 Budget.** Katherine Kayser presented the proposed budget and it was approved by virtual poll with 98% approval and 2% abstention.
- C. **Interim 2021 Budget.** Motion made and seconded to allow the GLC Board to adopt an interim budget in 2021 until the 2021 Annual Meeting. By virtual poll the motion was approved 98% with 2% abstention.
- D. **Approval of the 39th Annual Meeting Minutes.** They were approved by virtual poll, 98% with 2% abstention.
- E. **Affirmation of Ordination Candidates.** By unanimous affirmation through Zoom's "hand raise" function, candidates Semmeal Thomas, Sara Charlton and Bill Miller were approved. Dennis Carlson offered a prayer of thanks and empowerment for them.

XII. Election Results for Officers and Board Members. Garth announced the new officers and Trustees.

XIII. Installation of Officers and Board Members. Garth installed the new officers and Board Members.

XIV. Thanks to Retiring Board Members. Garth thanked Nicole Laing and Steve Ormond for their service on the GLC Executive Board.

XV. Recognition of Retiring Pastors. Garth offered thanks for the work of Dennis Carlson and Tom Sharkey as they have retired.

XVI. Giving of Awards. Garth presented the following awards and prayed for each:

- A. The Richard Lucco Church Leadership Award was given to Gina Roberts of City Covenant Church in Detroit, MI.
- B. The Chilcoat Award in Church Outreach was given to Life Covenant Church Canton. The award was accepted by Church Chair, Dan Dureno.
- C. The Arv Anderson and Larry Sherman Award in Church Planting was given to Donearl Johnson and Cameron Underdown.
- D. The David Dahlberg Award in Church Vitality was given to Stan Hagemeyer.

XVII. 2021 Annual Celebration Location. Planned for Westerville, OH.

Motion to adjourn passed at 12:41 pm.



ECC President– Greeting



The Evangelical Covenant Church

April 2021

TO: Celebration 2021 of the Great Lakes Conference
Garth McGrath, Superintendent
Tom Sharkey, Conference Chair

Greetings on behalf of the Evangelical Covenant Church!

It was a year ago in mid-March that pandemic shutdowns began. None of us will soon forget how difficult the past year was, and everything we had to navigate, fight for, and endure. I am convinced, however, that the church was built for times like this. The Gospel, communicated through the local church, is the hope of the world.

In spite of the challenges and losses we experienced in the past year and all that we continue to face, as followers of Jesus, we can say with truth and confidence: God is faithful. Because God is faithful, we continue to proclaim and demonstrate the whole Gospel.

Our mission is to join God in God's mission to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. Our mission priorities remain constant: to start and strengthen churches, make and deepen disciples, develop leaders, love mercy and do justice, and serve globally.

Together we are a multiethnic mosaic of mission friends committed to the whole mission of the church. As a multiethnic denomination, we seek to live into the beloved community that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described. Therefore, we are developing a "Becoming the Beloved Community" resource suite that will help our Covenant family continue to become an authentic reflection of the kingdom of God—here on earth—as depicted in Revelation 7:9: *"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."*

In addition to your conference annual meeting, I invite you to join delegates from hundreds of other Covenant churches June 22-26 for Gather 2021, which will include the 135th Annual Meeting. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, our Covenant family will be connecting virtually. Information can be found at gather.covchurch.org.



ECC President– Greeting

In this season of uncertainty and ambiguity, I am reminded of TW Anderson, the only lay person to serve as president of the Covenant from 1933 to 1959. Elected during the height of the Depression, he guided the church through a time of challenge, conflict, and developing identity.

He contributed to a book entitled *Covenant Memories, Golden Jubilee*. It was written in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Covenant, from 1885 to 1935. President Anderson writes: *“Living movements are not static but adapt themselves to new conditions. But basic principles remain the same.”*

The mission and the mission priorities remain the same, but the methods change as we adapt to new conditions. It’s part of our Covenant DNA.

I am grateful to be serve alongside you. Your partnership in the Gospel will help us emerge from this crisis, not just three strands strong, but three strands *stronger*. We are in it together, going deeper in Christ and further in mission.

I pray that this promise from God will encourage you and our entire Covenant family:

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” —Isaiah 43:19

In Christ’s love,
John S. Wenrich
President



Chair of GLC Executive Board Report



Tom Sharkey

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There's a fascinating incident in John's gospel where Jesus and His disciples encounter a blind man as He's on His way to Jerusalem. The disciples ask a profound question, and the whole incident later causes quite a stir within the Jewish leadership. John writes:

“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’” ~ John 9:1-5

This passage puts me in mind of the kind of year we've had as a nation, and indeed, around the world. There are many who are asking why this whole COVID-19 pandemic has happened. I've even heard that some want to blame it on God, but perhaps we, like the disciples, are asking the wrong question. Rather than looking to point the finger and assign blame, perhaps we should be looking for the ways God is calling His people to respond in the midst of tragedy. How are we displaying the work of God in our lives and in the life of our churches? How are we called to be light?

Regardless of what is taking place in the world around us, we — as the people of God — still have a mission; we still have a responsibility to our God to do the work He gave us to do. In the best of times, that work is never easy. In the worst of times, it can be more challenging, but it doesn't go away. We're still called upon by our God to rise to the challenge and be lights in the darkness.

We must remember the words of Jesus. *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* There's no doubt that night is coming. Indeed, it seems at times as though we're in it, but Jesus is still in the world as the light through us.

Jesus not only claimed to be the light of the world, but He told His followers that, *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* (Matt. 5:14-16).

Here, in the Great Lakes Conference, many of our churches have sought to be light in the midst of darkness. In a time when shadows and darkness reign, the light shines all the brighter. I think of a little Church in Cuyahoga Falls, Journey Covenant, that rose to the challenge and opened a pantry that is doing great service far beyond their size. Under the dynamic leadership of Pastor Jeanette Brown, they have taken on the responsibility of reaching out into their community to serve those in dire need. They haven't let their small size hold them back.



Chair of GLC Executive Board (cont.)

And I know that this story could be repeated around the GLC. As a conference, we sought to continue God's work in planting churches, supporting pastors, encouraging Church leaders, and joining in the greater work that God is doing around the world through The Evangelical Covenant Church. Thank you for your support during this stressful time. In a time when many churches are wondering if they're going to make it, the support for our conference work has continued to pour in. For this, we are so very grateful.

It's been a great privilege for me to be a part of the team that seeks to guide the work of the GLC. I'm blessed to work with an amazing conference staff, led by our Superintendent Garth McGrath, and blessed with the enormously talented Jody Eidnes. Jody has Peg Wolter in the Conference office to help her along with Kim Carlson, our GLC Finance Officer. Garth is assisted by Kevin Butcher when he finds that he's a bit overwhelmed by requests for advice and intervention. Alan Tumpkin continues to do great work in Church Planting during a very challenging time.

As we saw the retirement of Dave Nesburg from Portage Lake last year, and the coming of Marc Eix (tough year, Marc, for a transition!), so this year Bryan Muecke has chosen to step down from his role as Camp Director at Mission Meadows. We're thankful for Bryan's service and also grateful that the Assistant Director, Jackie Haines, has been willing to step up into the role of Interim Executive Director. Our prayer for both our camps is that this season of trial will end soon, and we can get back to normal and serve our conference through great summer camps & retreats.

I am also grateful to the members of the GLC Executive Board who give so generously of their time and expertise as we seek to guide the work of the GLC together. As you can imagine given the difficult times we live in, the challenges we face are greater, particularly fiscally. My hope and prayer is that each Church in the GLC would seek to begin giving a percentage of their local income — not just a set amount — to the greater work that we are seeking to do together in the Conference. And to my fellow Executive Board members, your service is greatly appreciated, and your voices give me courage, hope, and wisdom.

We are all working together as partners in this great work we have to do for the Kingdom of God. Work that has been given to us individually and collectively as a group of churches. Let us be intentional in our support for each other in prayer, reach out with encouraging words to each other when we have the opportunity, work cooperatively with each other whenever that is possible since we work for a common Lord, and give of ourselves together to the greater work to which we are all called to be fellow workers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas F. Sharkey, GLC Chair



Superintendent Report



Garth McGrath

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 2020, 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). I am particularly thankful for the churches who gave faithfully and/or sacrificially through the challenging year of COVID in order to sustain the ministry of the Conference. Because of our partnership in the midst of all the challenges created by the Coronavirus, people in 8 states heard about the abundant life that Jesus makes possible, saw evidence that Christ-followers live out their faith by putting the interests of others ahead of their own, and – in many cases – witnessed a community of people committed to being an earthly body of Christ that embraces ethnic diversity and strives for racial righteousness in order to more closely resemble the body of Christ we anticipate will be seated with Jesus at the great messianic banquet table of eternity. Due to our partnership, we were able to provide all of our churches with guidance and support in their efforts to adapt to COVID realities. Churches that recognized lost missional momentum in their ministries received guidance and coaching through our Vitality ministry. Flourishing churches were encouraged and resourced to continue their good work. And our most recent church plants were coached and equipped to bring 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 Life Church Southfield), the GLC and the ECC - in partnership with the Life Church Network in the Detroit area (Canton, Livonia, Southfield, Auburn Hills) - planted our newest church, Life Church Riverside (Georgia Hill) on April 1, 2020. Despite the challenges created by COVID-19, the church plant flourished. Alan and his team of church-plant coaches also provided ongoing support, coaching, and encouragement to the pastors and leaders of our most recent (within 5 years) church plants: Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church (Arthur Duren) Muskegon, MI (2016), New Community Covenant Church (Bobby Benavides) in Elkins, WV (2017); The Movement Covenant Church (Joey Maldonado) in Nashville, TN (2017); Light-house Covenant Church (formerly Hope City; Harvey Cozart) in Richmond, KY (2017), and Life Church Auburn Hills (Donearl Johnson) in Auburn Hills, MI (2019). Meanwhile, three prospective church planters came into the lineup for possibly starting churches in 2021: David (Tanja) Williams – Columbus, OH; Rick and Terri McGarry - Mason, OH; Diamond DeYampert – Detroit, MI.

Thanks to a generous matching grant made available to the GLC in 2019 to help launch four new churches, contributions by churches and individuals to our Church Planting Capital Campaign continued to be matched in 2020. Life Church Riverside was planted using these resources. By year's end we had sufficient funds for a second fully-funded (\$75,000) church plant and look forward to using those funds for the next church in the GLC. Please visit the GLC web site at www.greatlakes.cc to become a Mission Friend for Church Planting and to meet our prospective Church Planters.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY:

During 2020, most of our Conference churches received coaching, resourcing, and networking to help them adapt to new realities created by COVID-19. Early in the pandemic, we helped churches shift to on-line for-



Superintendent Report (cont.)

mats for worship, discipleship, youth and children's ministry, pastoral care, and on-line giving. In the ensuing months, the GLC conducted webinars to equip church chairs, pastors, and other elected leaders with best-practice guidance in crisis leadership, communication, finance and property management, PPP Loan Application Assistance, and Strategic Thinking on Reopening. Meanwhile, following the resignation of our Director of Congregational Vitality, three of our churches went on to receive formal coaching for vitality by trained vitality coaches. With the Vitality Ministry of the ECC under comprehensive review and revision, several workshops emerged as particularly helpful to churches seeking to regain missional traction in their community: Trellis (fostering stronger relational/spiritual health); Finding Your Why (helping churches recapture or identify their sense of purpose); EPIC Empowering People, Inspiring Change equips leaders to help their congregation lead change in a healthy way. Dream Again guides a strategic planning process that helps a congregation plan a course of action that gets them from where they are to where they want to be.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Our leadership development priorities in 2020 coalesced around equipping, encouraging, and caring for pastors, youth leaders, children's ministry leaders, and elected lay leaders for the challenges created by COVID-19, helping our churches lean into our calling to pursue racial righteousness, theological education, leadership training to address particular needs in local churches, and support for pastors in the credentialing process with the ECC.

Equipping, Encouraging, Caring for Leaders in COVID-19

As GLC churches were forced to close by the spread of the Coronavirus, we provided pastors with guidance to the best resources for pivoting to on-line worship, preaching to a camera, providing pastoral care to church members, on-line giving, and convening Council meetings. In April, we convened a webinar for GLC Pastors on the subject of Self-care in the season of Coronavirus. We later provided a webinar on strategies for returning to in-person worship/ministry. Through on-line pastor-cluster gatherings in the 9 regions of the Conference, we provided opportunities for pastors to share what they were learning in best practice development, to hear from Conference staff about resources available to them for support, and to care for and support one another. We provided similar experiences for children/family ministry leaders and youth pastors/leaders throughout the Conference.

Equipping the Church for the Pursuit of Racial Righteousness

In 2020, the GLC helped equip pastors and lay leaders to address racism in their communities through several events and/or initiatives. We actively recruited 32 pastors into Anti-Racism learning groups being formed by the Love Mercy/Do Justice team at our denominational office. We convened an on-line "*Listening Experience: Straight Talk on Racism*" in order to help members of our predominantly Caucasian GLC churches more fully understand the deep pain and perspective of our African American brothers and sisters regarding their experiences of ongoing racism in our culture. We hosted a "Just Mercy" Training event and convened a five-week Book Study Group - *Rediscipling the White Church: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity*.

Leadership Support: Through the year, we actively engaged in coaching 24 churches in best practices to help them improve their financial accounting and reporting systems, developed fair compensation packages, or reviewed their staffing structure. We provided a webinar to help church leaders navigate the unique challenges of financial management in a crisis. We guided several churches in matters of property transitions. Meanwhile, 2020 was marked by a high level of tension in a number of Conference churches due to the conflict in American society arising from racial tension, political polarization, and the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of COVID. The toll on pastors and lay leaders was monumental. Significant time was devoted by Con-



Superintendent Report (cont.)

ference staff to walking alongside these leaders to provide emotional and spiritual support.

Theological Education: The Conference continued to partner with North Park Seminary to provide online courses at reduced costs in an on-line cohort format in order to provide church staff members the opportunity to pursue theological education at an affordable rate while serving in ministry.

Credentialing for Pastoral Ministry:

Through the year, we coordinated interviews for 20 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 on-line Fall Pastors retreat at which Dr. Al Tizon, Executive Minister of ECC Serve Globally, was our featured speaker.

CHURCH OUTREACH:

When churches examine their ministry in light of 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. The need for evangelism did not change in 2020, but circumstances called for greater creativity and intentionality on the part of congregants and churches in order to see the new reality as an opportunity to engage with people in ways not previously considered. Many of our churches eagerly embraced the necessary changes and have experienced fruit from their efforts to engage with people in their immediate communities and in distant places. In 2020 we launched a new Evangelism Cohort for GLC Pastors intent on helping their churches raise the temperature for evangelism in their church. Seven pastors began the 15-month cohort in 2020. We also gave financial support to Camp Mission Meadows, Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp (owned by Wallens Creek Covenant Church in Virginia), and Portage Lake Bible Camp to help them serve GLC churches and people in their respective regions. The Lego Ministry of the Conference was put into hibernation through the COVID season, but we look forward to churches being able to use it in 2021.

CHURCH CLOSURES

With heavy hearts we acknowledge that Faith Covenant Church in Youngstown, OH and Redeemer Covenant Church in Caledonia, MI voted to close in 2020. We give thanks for the faithful ministry of the pastors and lay leaders who served the churches, for the people who came to faith and began to follow Jesus, who were disciplined, and then went into the world to serve others in Jesus’ name. We grieve the closing of the churches and pray that God will continue to reveal himself in the community.



Superintendent Report (cont.)

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Not unexpectedly, a number of our GLC churches experienced financial challenges in their local ministries during the year. We are thankful for the increased generosity of a number of our churches and are grateful for the consistent year-to-year contributions of many churches. Because of the collective generosity of our churches, total church contributions in 2020 came in very close to total contributions in 2019. By continuing to practice frugality through the year, our Conference is positioned at the start of 2021 to be able to continue providing the quality services that our Conference has learned to expect.

We anticipate local church financial headwinds that began in 2018 and were very evident in 2019 and 2020 will continue in 2021. We are preparing another conservative budget accordingly. 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 so that 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 so that by December 31, 2021, 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 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 McGrath



GLC Ministerial Association Report

Truly my soul finds rest in God, my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation, he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. Psalm 62:1-2

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Over the past year, the foundations of our communal expression of faith and pastoral life have been deeply shaken by COVID-19 and the polarization that we have experienced in this country. All of us have experienced loss in some way this year, whether it be the physical loss of loved ones within our families and faith communities or the loss of freely gathering together to worship God and experience Christian fellowship. We have experienced emotional and psychological loss through limited face-to-face connections and the stress of navigating this difficult season. Pastors have been stretched thin as they have sought to meet the needs of the rapidly changing landscape of this past year: often with less support from volunteers and reduced finances. The deeply incarnational nature of pastor work has been difficult to enact, and we have learned the power of digital presence through social media and other online platforms.

Through this trial, God has been faithful to graciously supply every need according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19), and we have learned anew that the only foundation that matters is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11) and that His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor 12:9). We give thanks for our pastors who faithfully continued to shepherd God's people through this difficult time and continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in new and creative ways.

The GLC Ministerial Association serves our pastors by supporting the credentialing process for clergy through the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). We seek to encourage each other in our pastoral work, strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship amongst our pastors through regional clusters and annual Pastor/Spouse Retreat, and 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/Spouse Retreat. It is historically a time of connection, fellowship, learning, and rest. This past November, we gathered virtually due to COVID-19. Al Tizon, Executive Minister of Serve Globally, led us in vibrant teachings and discussion on the call of the Church to be whole and reconciled by reflecting the communal life, love, and diversity of our triune God. Pastors were also invited to experience renewal through a contemplative experience (Space to Breathe) led by Jennifer Andersson, the leader of our GLC Spiritual Directors Network. We are grateful that our GLC staff has continued to offer this virtual contemplative space for pastors on a weekly basis on Tuesdays at noon.

This year, we hope to meet together again face to face for our Fall Pastor/Spouse Retreat in early November. Details on the exact date and speaker will be announced at our Annual Meeting.

Another major responsibility of the Ministerial Association is to support the credentialing process of pastors through the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). Rev. Robert Hoey 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 and 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 Bob Hoey at roberthoey64@gmail.com or myself at ppangbor@gmail.com.



GLC Ministerial Association (cont.)

Now more than ever, we know that self-care is not only vital to sustaining pastoral excellence but essential to staying whole within this tough season of ministry. For many pastors, it has been difficult to preserve these life-giving rhythms during this past year. 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 by contacting Jennifer Andersson at jennifersandersson@gmail.com. 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: The Art of Pastoral Leadership offers pastors the opportunity to reflect upon and strengthen their leadership. The Living Forward: Revisioning Your Call 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

Ministerial Association Chair



GLC Spiritual Directors Network Report

The *Spiritual Directors Network of the Great Lakes Conference* operates as a Special Ministries category within the Conference. The year 2020 has been characterized as unprecedented, unusual, and like none other due to the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic. Much of what the network does was put on pause for 2020 to honor the measures in place in the state of Michigan to stem the growth of this virus. We look forward to the days when we are safely able to gather face to face.

The Spiritual Directors Network generally offers one retreat per year to its members in order to support 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, worth offering reimbursement to the Network members for.

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 (such as ministries in prisons) on inner healing and other miscellaneous topics. Over 300 people are reached each year through these various ministries. In 2020, some of our members offered a "Tuesday Space to Breathe" to support GLC pastors and leaders, and we are looking for ways to develop Listening Groups for pastors sometime in 2021.

To continue supporting this ministry, funding is appreciated as in previous years. For 2020, we ended the year with funds that would be sufficient to fund the annual retreat in 2021 as we did not sponsor one in 2020. 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 2020.

Submitted by:
Patti Harrison



GLC Women Ministries Report

We had our speakers. We had the dates set. We were well into planning. And then the 2020 pandemic hit. Everything fell apart or was cancelled.

So, we listened to the women. What did they need during this time of uncertainty? What could we do so we wouldn't compromise their health and safety?

In 2021 (with a slow start due to extenuating circumstances), we will be providing weekly devotions written by women in the conference, quarterly in depth 'retreat' resources that can be used individually or in small groups, and in the fall, we will do a 'retreat' - probably a one-day event and more of a contemplative retreat.

Watch our Facebook page (Women Ministries of the Great Lakes Conference) for information.

Submitted by:
Phyllis Van
Chair of GLC Women Ministries



North American Japanese Outreach

NAJO Report

God has allowed us to meet many Japanese people living in Michigan. We thank God for the supporting prayers of the churches and the people who support our mission work.

In Michigan, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Japanese people who will have to return home by April. It will be significantly more important to follow-up with returnees going forward.

In the 10 years since NAJO's ministry began in 2010, it has consisted of three key points.



NAJO has 3 primary mission activities:

1. Ministry to the Japanese in church
2. Outreach in and around Michigan
3. Traveling mission tours

Sushi Cooking Event in Church. March 6, 2020.



However, because of COVID, NAJO's ministry in 2020 changed drastically. Since NAJO was unable to use the church, all ministry activities from Point 1 had to be moved to the Miyamoto's house.

Craft class in Miyamoto's house. March 4, 2020.

The outreach from Point 2 was currently focused on Japanese people in Grand Rapids and Battle Creek, but that became impossible because of the shutdown.



North American Japanese Outreach

NAJO Report (cont.)



Grand Rapids Bible Study

Our yearly trip to Japan covered in Point 3, where we meet with over 30 different groups to preach, share our mission work, or have reunions with Japanese returnees, is also on hold as well.

Due to the ever-lengthening COVID situation, we are going to transform NAJO's three primary mission activities. The changes are ongoing, but we would like to introduce the three main points of ministry from now on along with our 2020 report.

1. Ministry to the Japanese in Miyamoto's house.
2. Outreach in and around Michigan and Japan via Zoom.
3. Traveling mission tours via YouTube.



The ministry at the Miyamoto's house from Point 1 in January and February was extremely successful. Before the beginning of COVID restrictions, newcomers visited every day, partially due to the dedicated work of Satoshi, who had just recently been baptized at FCC. There were craft, card, and cooking classes. It was a time we are very thankful for since many people had the opportunity to experience the Bible through devotional times.

The outreach from Point 2 moved from being restricted by region to online Zoom Bible studies and Zoom reunions between the US and Japan.

During our temporary return to Japan from Point 3, we only held services at the new covenant church in Tokyo and sent pre-recorded YouTube sermons to other churches for them to watch during their services.

Submitted by:

Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto



GLC Executive Board & Staff

<p><u>Superintendent</u> Ex-officio board member</p>	<p><u>Rev. Garth McGrath</u> Great Lakes Conference 6900 N. Haggerty Rd., Suite 90 Canton, MI 48187 Cell: 248.821.6956 Office: 734.451.4670 Email: garth@greatlakes.cc</p>
<p><u>Chair</u></p>	<p><u>Rev. Tom Sharkey</u> Youngstown, OH Email: tomshark52@gmail.com</p>
<p><u>Vice Chair</u></p>	<p><u>Doug McCann</u> Allison Park, PA Email: dmccann4578@gmail.com</p>
<p><u>Secretary</u></p>	<p><u>Cheryl Schut</u> Jenison, MI cpawidow@hotmail.com</p>
<p><u>Treasurer</u></p>	<p><u>Katherine Kayser</u> Grosse Pointe Park, MI Email: kkayser52@comcast.net</p>
<p><u>Director of Church Planting</u> Non-voting</p>	<p><u>Rev. Alan Tumpkin</u> Great Lakes Conference 6900 N. Haggerty Rd., Suite 90 Canton, MI 48187 Office: 734.451.4670 Email: alan@lifechurchsouthfield.org</p>
<p><u>Finance Officer</u> Non-voting</p>	<p><u>Kim Carlson</u> Onkama, MI Office: 734.451.4670 Email: kimpamcarlson@att.net</p>
<p><u>Conference Administrator</u> Non-voting</p>	<p><u>Jody Eidnes</u> Great Lakes Conference 6900 N. Haggerty Rd., Suite 90 Canton, MI 48187 Office: 734.451.4670 Email: jody@greatlakes.cc</p>

Great Lakes Conference Office
6900 N. Haggerty Rd., Suite 90
Canton, MI 48335
734-451-4670
www.greatlakes.cc
info@greatlakes.ss
jody@greatlakes.cc



GLC Executive Board 2020-2021 (cont.)

<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Rev. William Mack</u> Louisville, KY Email: wdmack3@gmail.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Connie Berry</u> Delaware, OH 43015 Email: connieberry@live.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Mark Henry</u> Canton, MI Email: dmarkhenry@gmail.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Brian Rudy</u> Ada, MI Email: brianrudy@comcast.net
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Rev. Bruce Baehr</u> Clay, NY Email: brucebaehr@gmail.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Rev. Sara Charlton</u> Millersburg, OH Email: sara.m.charlton@gmail.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Amorette Clausen</u> Muskegon, MI Email: amorette.clausen@gmail.com
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Gina Roberts</u> Detroit, MI Email: lovestarministry@ymail.com

Part-time GLC Staff:

Peg Wolter

Cell: 248.921.8336

Email: peg@greatlakes.cc; peg.wolter@gmail.com

Rev. J. Kevin Butcher

Cell: 313.920.9920

Email: jkevinlovecarla@comcast.net



GLC Churches– 2020

Church	City	Stat
Four Rivers Church	Calvert City	KY
Grace Community Cov. Church	Louisville	KY
One Church	Louisville	KY
Lighthouse Church	Richmond	KY
Christ Community Church	Allegan	MI
Life Church Auburn Hills	Auburn Hills	MI
Evergreen Ev. Cov. Church	Branch	MI
Redeemer Covenant Church	Caledonia	MI
Life Covenant Church	Canton	MI
Evangelical Covenant Church	Cheboygan	MI
Dearborn Ev. 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
Life Church Riverside	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 Ev. Cov. Church	Fountain	MI
Esperanza Covenant Church	Grand Rapids	MI
First Ev. Cov. Church	Grand Rapids	MI
Thornapple Ev. 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
Christ Covenant Church	Livonia	MI
Life Church Livonia	Livonia	MI
Faith Covenant Church	Manistee	MI
Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church	Muskegon	MI



GLC Churches– 2020 (cont.)

Church	City	State
Miracle of Faith Ministries	New Baltimore	MI
Evangelical Covenant Church	Northport	MI
Forest Park Covenant Church	Norton Shores	MI
New Hope Church	Richland	MI
Saranac Community Church	Saranac	MI
Crossroads Community Church	South Lyon	MI
Life Church Southfield	Southfield	MI
West Bay Covenant Church	Traverse City	MI
Covenant Presbyterian Church	Tustin	MI
Evangelical Covenant Church	Whitehall	MI
Fruitland Ev. Cov. Church	Whitehall	MI
Grace Ev. Cov. Church	Clay	NY
First Covenant Church	Jamestown	NY
Nueva Vida Covenant Church	Jamestown	NY
Zion Covenant Church	Jamestown	NY
Redeemer Ev. Cov. Church	Liverpool	NY
Artisan Church	Rochester	NY
First Covenant Church	Ashtabula	OH
Austintown Community Ev. Cov. Church	Austintown	OH
Revival Covenant Church	Columbus	OH
Sanctuary Columbus Church	Columbus	OH
Journey Covenant Church	Cuyahoga Falls	OH
Covenant Community Church	Fairfield	OH
Redeemer Church	Hamilton	OH
Bethany Covenant Church	Lyndhurst	OH
St. John's Ev. Cov. Church	Millersburg	OH
Gateway Community Church	Powell	OH
Faith Covenant Church	Westerville	OH
First Covenant Church	Willoughby Hills	OH
Faith Community Cov. Church	Youngstown	OH
First Covenant Church	Youngstown	OH
Stoneridge Covenant Church	Allison Park	PA



GLC Churches– 2020 (cont.)

Church	City	State
First Covenant Church	Bessemer	PA
Bethany Covenant Church	DuBois	PA
Emmanual Mission Church	Kane	PA
Cityview Covenant Church	Pittsburgh	PA
Keystone Church Of Hazelwood	Pittsburgh	PA
Evangelical Covenant Church	Port Allegany	PA
Scandia Ev. Cov. Church	Russell	PA
Mission Covenant Church	Sugar Grove	PA
Pleasant Community Church	Warren	PA
The Movement Church	Nashville	TN
Wallens Creek Covenant Church	Duffield	VA
New Community Cov. Church	Buckhannon	WV
New Community Cov. Church- Elkins	Elkins	WV



Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church



Submitted By: Pastor Arthur Duren

Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI

Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church began their Covenant Agreement on December 1, 2016.

What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

A senior couple visited our church during the pandemic when we were having services in the parking lot. We noticed that they kept returning and were regularly giving. They told us that they decided to make us their church home because they felt the 'Word' was being shared and they felt the love in the congregation.

How has the church fostered connection?

Not being able to meet in-person for service has been challenging. We have had to find creative ways to minister that is safe during the pandemic. Sending fruit baskets to the seniors and activity bags to the homes of children has kept people connected. Daily Live, an online daily devotional at noon has been helping people grow in their faith. This ministry reaches those outside of our membership as well as connecting with members. Also, we are sending Inspirational cards to our members.



How has the pandemic affected ministry?

The pandemic has affected every ministry. Particularly ministries connected with Sunday morning worship as we have not been able to meet due to the pandemic. However, Connections and Children's Ministry have found creative ways to minister to people during the pandemic.

How has the church impacted the community?

We have participated in outreach involving food trucks and toy drives for the community, and we have given monetary donations to the jail ministry and Kid's Food Basket. A neighbor of one of the members called the church office thanking the church for helping her financially during a tough season in her life. She shared that she was a believer but did not have a church home. She said she will visit our church when the pandemic calms. She was invited to attend our noon devotionals and on-line services.

Church giving/stewardship:

Church giving has been steady and has, in most cases, increased. In the midst of the pandemic, we have been fortunate that our giving has not been greatly impacted. We have worked with the Lead Team so they can also minister to church individuals about stewardship. This has helped to reinforce the stewardship message.

Goals that we reached in 2020:

1. Our goal of mission work in the community has been reached. We gave over \$30,000 to missions.
2. Our goal of new gym flooring and carpeting the entry way has been reached.
3. Our goal to raise money for air conditioning was accomplished. We are looking to install it in the spring or early summer.



Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church

Goals we have set for 2021:

1. Increase our giving to \$5,000 weekly
2. Increase our in-person attendance to 250 per Sunday
3. Increase our on-line viewing-Daily devotionals to 200, Sundays-600
4. Increase our missions giving by 5%





New Community Cov. Church: Elkins



Submitted by: Pastor Bobby Benavides

New Community Covenant Church: Elkins, Elkins, WV

New Community Covenant Church: Elkins, began a Covenant Agreement on October 1, 2017. New Community Elkins, along with New Community Buckhannon, are a network of Covenant churches that share a common mission, vision and values, and a heart for WV and Appalachia.

What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

Our worship leader has shared how our church kept him going in the faith. He had struggled with his Christianity and whether or not he was going to try to keep going. He was tired. He was getting frustrated with the hatred he was seeing from many other local churches. When he saw that we were and are striving to communicate a gospel of peace and grace, he loved it. He loves leading worship and has recently been pushed out of his comfort zone to lead an online study for young adults

How has the church fostered connection?

We have encouraged leaders in the church to do online Bible studies with friends and family. People are involved in the conversations and are experiencing growth. We also called and checked on our members regularly.

How has the pandemic affected ministry?

We started to gain a lot of momentum with new people walking through the doors and family members coming. Unfortunately, when COVID hit, we lost some due to internet issues in rural areas. We have had to do online services. The building we were renting had to be shut down until the committee decided it was safe to have people in there again. We have made it through, but it has been a struggle at times.



COVID has shut down most of the ministries within our church. We are limited in our ability to serve the community with volunteers due to our city shutting things down.

How has the church impacted the community?

We have done some canned food drives for our local food pantries and served meals to those who were in need. We collected over \$200 for our Children's advocacy center and provided resources to their office to serve children coming from abusive homes.





New Community Cov. Church: Elkins

We provided school supplies to our high school in preparation for in school learning. We also provided computer equipment to elementary school teachers, with students using Chromebooks for the first time. In the fall, we offered free pumpkins for Halloween to say hi to community and church members.

Church giving/stewardship:

We have had several members sign up for online giving since we have not been able to meet in person. We have also had many outside donors willing to sign up and give. It has been great to see people sign up for online giving, but due to job loss and other issues, we aren't seeing a significant growth in giving

Goals that we reached in 2020:

Many of our goals didn't have time to really get going before the pandemic shut things down.

Goals we have set for 2021:

- 1) Get our average giving to increase
- 2) Utilize the online platforms for giving better
- 3) Invest small amounts of our giving to support our ministry





The Movement Church



Submitted by: Pastor Joey Maldonado

The Movement Church, Nashville, TN

The Movement Covenant Church began its Covenant Agreement on October 1, 2017.

What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

This past year, I was able to marry a couple that had been attending our church for over a year. When they arrived at our church, neither had a personal relationship with Jesus, and they were content with living together unmarried. Both have since given their lives to Jesus, are now married, and serving in volunteer leadership roles at our church

How has the church fostered connection?

Our greatest asset for community and spiritual growth during the challenges of 2020 have been our small groups (Tribes). Our Tribes serve as a key tool for experiencing intimacy, growth, and community. We work hard to include an outward looking focus in everything we do. Even with the challenges of Covid, we have prioritized our “loving our neighbor” assignment.

How has the pandemic affected ministry?

This has been a challenging year. We have had to shift and pivot in every part of our ministry in order to continue forward in our goals.

How has the church impacted the community?

This past year, we have served our community in partnership with our venue Plaza Mariachi, having hosted 6 food drives (serving an average 600 people per drive), 2



community baby showers (serving over 200 mothers-to-be between the 2 events), as well as several monthly initiatives providing services for those in need. Every third Thursday of the month, 30 families receive food boxes (mostly provided by our church), hygiene, and baby supplies as well as counseling, prayer, and spiritual support. This past Christmas, we aided and provided for several, helping to make Christmas special. We also provided Bibles at every event, giving away more than 300 this past year.



Church giving/stewardship:

Our giving has continued to be steady despite the impact of covid. However, generosity in serving our community has increased this past year. We have sown into our church and community in many ways. We were able to do all of this due to our stewardship and commitment to God’s calling for us here. I am proud to say, though it has been hard, we have not given up.





The Movement Church (cont.)

Goals that we reached in 2020:

Our greatest goal has been to impact our community as we continue to grow as a body. I am proud to say we have stayed true to the goals of impact and growth.

Goals we have set for 2021:

As a church, and leadership, we have set one goal with several supportive goals. It is to grow! We view this in 3 points: 1. Personal Growth, 2. Church Growth, and 3. Impact (Community, City) Growth.





Lighthouse Church



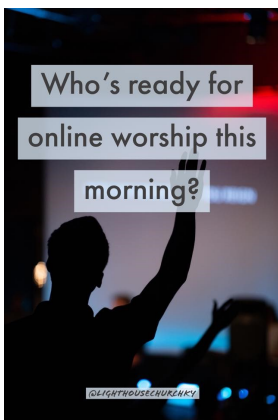
Submitted by: Pastor Harvey Cozart

Lighthouse Church: An Evangelical Covenant Church, Richmond, KY

Hope City Covenant Church began their Covenant Agreement December 1, 2017. In 2019, the church needed a new place to worship. Madison Community Church on the outskirts of Richmond opened their doors to Hope City. During the summer of 2019, Madison Community Church found itself without a pastor and started the conversation of possibly merging with Hope City. The two churches decided to combine to become Lighthouse Church: An Evangelical Covenant Church

What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

We had a gentleman come to faith during our online Worship service. As he was watching the service with his fiancé, he told her he was ready to commit his life to Jesus. He prayed to receive Christ during the altar invitation at the closing of the service. We were then contacted after service about his conversion. It was greatly encouraging to leadership and the church to know that our online services were reaching people. Our technology ministry is doing a great job and growing in how to use media as a way to spread the gospel.



How has the church fostered connection?

We have seven small groups that focus on helping people develop in growing as disciple through Bible studies. Our Bible studies have been able to reach folks that have been feeling isolated and disconnected from the greater church community. We have been able to pray with many folks and see people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the teaching of the word.



Our Youth Ministry has been able to reach new kids in and out of our church. The youth have been meeting faithfully through zoom and have grown tremendously in their faith. They also invite other youth to the zoom youth gathering every Sunday evening.

How has the pandemic affected ministry?

Although we are thankful with our online ministry, not having intentional in-person outreach gathering events has been challenging. We were not able to develop a strong tutoring and mentoring program through our Give n Go outreach ministry. Due to Covid restrictions, we were not able to meet in-person with kids in the community through most of the year.



Lighthouse Church (cont.)

How has the church impacted the community?

A few ways we are impacting our surrounding neighborhood is through the food donation that we are doing for families in our communities and our monthly back pack food ministry for 280 school kids in our community. Our food ministry has had a great impact on our community during this season. We have had many kids and families that have been thankful for our service.

Church giving/stewardship:

We have seen our giving stay consistent through the year even when we were not meeting in-person. We have even been able to set aside a covid-19 crisis fund to help struggling members in our church who needed financial assistance as well as food donations to struggling families in the community including thanksgiving meals.

Goals that we reached in 2020:

- Developing small groups was a goal that has been accomplished. We have seven small groups and plan to launch 3 to 5 more in the year of 2021.
- We have developed a growing youth ministry which was a goal during the year. We have a great youth pastor and assistant that are doing good work in gathering and ministering to our youth.

Goals we have set for 2021:

- Develop five new thriving small groups
- Develop a strong Community & Family outreach team
- Develop a mentor training ministry



Hey guys, we will be meeting at Glenn Marshall elementary this Thursday, 4-6pm to package food bags! We will pack enough for the whole month, (I believe our number is 200), so we really need your help! Please consider this amazing volunteer opportunity! If you can't get there at 4, please still come when you can!

What is a backpack food program?

Backpack food programs provide nutritious, non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food to children to ensure they get enough food on weekends and holidays to avoid hunger when they can't depend on school meals.

Hello church family! Please don't forget to bring the following food items to church, today from 4-6pm. This is a great way to help those in need during this time!

- Canned soups or stews
- Single serve ravioli or spaghetti
- Beefaroni
- Canned fruits
- Canned vegetables
- Oatmeal/cream of wheat
- Cereal
- Rolls/bread
- Spaghetti noodles/sauce
- Potatoes/rice
- Food/store card donations
- Clorox wipes/baby wipes
- Card games/gently used games
- Fun family activities





LifeChurch Auburn Hills

Submitted By: Pastor Donearl Johnson



LifeChurch Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI

LifeChurch Auburn Hills began its Covenant Agreement on February 1, 2019 and is part of the GLC LifeChurch Network. It is a multicultural, multi-ethnic congregation.

What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

In light of the very tense racial climate of last year, we engaged in a deeper pursuit of racial righteousness/reconciliation and justice. It has been encouraging to see our multicultural/multigenerational community create space to have crucial and meaningful conversations even if everyone is not exactly on the same page. This, in and of itself, has significant transformative potential as we are listening to one another and are exposed to different perspectives. More directly, one of our older white brothers reached out to me for a book recommendation that he was going to share with his small group that he has been a part of for 20 years. Based on my recommendation, he selected *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby. The fact that he reached out and is willing to embark on this book study with his friends is amazing. It was a direct impact that had cascading effects on his group. Some rejected the information and others became willing to learn more.

On the whole, as our leaders and church watched God use our community as a voice during this dark season, we became encouraged, affirmed, and inspired to stay true to pursuing and building committed, cross-cultural, and Christ-Centered friendships.

How has the church fostered connection?

As a result of COVID-19, there were significant restrictions placed on our outreach efforts; however, we were able to create virtual spaces to connect and reach more people than before. We spent more time modeling how to reach out to friends and family members and invite them to our virtual spaces. We encouraged them to share the live stream of the services with family, friends, and individuals they had already established a rapport with. We hosted virtual game nights which created space for members to invite their family and friends. As a result, people became more aware of our church and began watching and engaging in our virtual services. We had multiple families join us during the



pandemic due to the online services and digital engagement. On the occasions where we had outdoor services, new members mentioned that it was great to finally meet in person. They had been so engaged virtually it was hard to think of our first-time meeting in person as our first-time meeting.

Also, we launched *7 and 7 prayer* in which we host live prayer sessions at 7 am on Tuesday's and 7 pm on Thursdays. People join the session, receive encouragement, and submit prayer requests live. I have heard feedback from people that I didn't know were watching. They mentioned how these prayers were a blessing and they wished our church was closer. Also, because of the virtual services, I have witnessed many of my former co-workers and old Navy friends join our services. There are friends who never stepped



LifeChurch Auburn Hills (cont.)

into the church while we were meeting in-person but are now attending virtually. We also have individuals in Liberia and Canada that regularly attend.

How has the pandemic affected ministry?

Our original goals were all disrupted due to COVID-19. In particular, our outreach system goal of reaching unique visitors and collecting their data in our system was not reached due to the pandemic. We had many virtual visitors, but we were not able to capture data on all that were reached online. Also, our goal for baptisms/conversions was not reached which also was a result of the pandemic. The pandemic had a significant impact on our growth potential.

How has the church impacted the community?

We are deeply embedded in our community via the work that we performed with the school system as well as our local college and international community. This year, we partnered with another non-profit to assist students who were in need of required school supplies. We hosted an English as Second Language course using the Bible for the literature text for international students/friends who were trying to obtain a better grasp of the English language. Also, we adopted refugee families during the holiday to provide needed support. Additionally, Cameron Underdown (co-planter) launched a website and missional movement to connect those in need with those who wanted to help out during the pandemic. There were 24,000 aid requests that we were able to track to completion via the website: www.mycovidresponse.org since the site launched in March.



Church giving/stewardship:

The pandemic had a direct effect on giving as people felt the personal economic impact. Giving went down, but fortunately it was not too bad. We were able to launch an end of year campaign that was highly successful. We exceeded our goal of \$15k. This was very encouraging especially knowing that this year people were affected economically.

Goals that we reached in 2020:

We were able to still actualize our small group goals by hosting virtual community groups and people who previously had challenges attending small group in person due to work, travel, and home responsibilities were able to participate virtually.

Goals we have set for 2021:

We are hoping to relaunch and begin in-person services early second quarter. Our top goal is to rebuild and relaunch in a strong and healthy way. In March 2021, we will be older virtually than we were in-person. Please see the other top goals below:

Outreach: 1000 unique persons (data collected in our systems)

Worship design: 20 baptisms

Connections: 120 adult members





LifeChurch Riverside



Submitted By: Pastor Georgia Hill

LifeChurch Riverside, Detroit, MI

LifeChurch Riverside began its Covenant Agreement on April 1, 2020 and is part of the GLC LifeChurch Network.

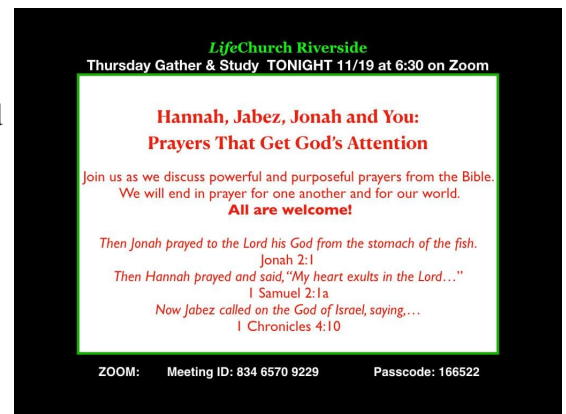
What has been encouraging during this difficult time?

The church began in a pandemic and yet God has been at work. It has been encouraging to be able to impact others like the people at St. Leo's soup kitchen and a group of youth in Detroit. Just being able to give to those two groups has been an awesome blessing. Also, it has been encouraging to hear people say that they have grown spiritually. Like the leader of our Connections ministry, who gave a testimony during prayer time that being involved with LifeChurch has given her the opportunity to strengthen

her faith and renew her relationship with Jesus Christ. She said that although she's been in church for many years now her faith is much more vibrant and applicable to her daily living. We have also been encouraged that people have continued to serve and give online.

How has the church fostered connection?

We have tried to offer something several times a week so that those who need to interact in some way with us, can find a word of hope. We communicated by email and phone and text- whatever we could to stay engaged. Our connections ministry made contact with people both on and off the social media chats. We started our services on Zoom so we could establish eye contact with each other, which was very helpful. Although we have expanded to Facebook and YouTube for broadcasting the worship services, we continue to use Zoom and usually engage some of the 'Zoomers' in some conversation after the service on a topic related to the sermon.



We offered Thursday night Bible studies and kicked off a church wide reading of the Book of Mark. We gathered folks into small groups for conversation once a month on Thursdays using Zoom breakout rooms. We wanted to foster friendships that would be supportive socially and spiritually. In addition, we offered morning prayer on Tuesdays for men and women and on Wednesdays & Fridays for women only



How has the pandemic affected ministry?

LifeChurch Riverside was launched during the pandemic, so strangely enough that is what we know. We shifted our Bible study that had been meeting for about a month to Zoom. We acquired a conference call number so we could gather over the phone for short Monday night messages and prayer. We held our launch team meetings on Zoom. Up till then we had only had two launch team meetings in person. So, we shifted to the social media platforms and basically learned how to work them as we went. I was not very tech savvy when it came to online platforms and had to learn a whole new language, the language of Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom. I had to learn how to *actually* reach people with online media. Just because you are on the platform doesn't mean you have



LifeChurch Riverside (cont.)

reached anyone. God was sort of laughing at me, the girl who had only ever posted once or twice on Facebook.

How has the church impacted the community?

We kicked off weekly services in December and invited people into Christmas gift-giving to a group of Detroit youth known to a number of us on the launch team. People were very generous and winter coats plus gift bags with books and other items were delivered to the front door of the families by LCR folk wearing masks in teams of two. We showed a video of this activity which drew positive responses from a number of people. We also set up a food donation program through Eden Gives, where we pick up food on Tuesday morning from Trader Joe's and then drop it off at St. Leo's Soup kitchen.



We have already planned to volunteer in St. Leo's kitchen as soon as it is Covid-safe. We were also able to make donations through the Reggie MacKenzie Foundation to St. Leo's and to the Detroit youth ministry to

whom we previously donated. This activity seemed to energize people and remind them, I think, that the church is still the church even during the pandemic.



Church giving/stewardship:

We began collecting offerings in the month of December at our second worship service. During the month of December, the average giving was \$354 per attender, plus donations for the 40 Winthrop St. kids. To grow in this area, we had a presentation about stewardship at a launch team meeting with a slideshow explaining the Biblical support for giving as well as our expected expenses for the upcoming year. Shortly thereafter, several givers increased their recurring online giving.

Goals that we reached in 2020:

Our main goal was to start our worship service, and we did that on Zoom which worked pretty well. Seeing people's faces on the Zoom helped to foster a sense of community and identify the others who are coming to Riverside.

Goals we have set for 2021:

1. Increase our giving so that we can make our budget which now includes expenses like studio time, videography and editing which we did not have last year.
2. Increase our numbers; confirm committed membership core, invite new people and develop connected relationships with them.
3. Increase our outreach to the community. We are planning to have an established program to the 40 kids to whom we gave Christmas gifts that would include tutoring support, assistance with an existing Bible study they attend, and access to resources for their families.





Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp



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.

The first quarter of 2020 was typical. Mission teams were scheduled for both work projects and summer camps. Advertising was drawn up and contracted for the summer season. T-shirts were designed and made. Work was focused on completing the construction of the splash pad, and plans were made to celebrate its opening in May. Menus were planned, and early food orders were delivered. Our first mission team of Grand Valley State University students arrived in early March and completed a lot of preparation work for 2020's planned projects. All of the work to prepare for campers and their families to meet God at CMMBC in 2020 was in-progress, and then it suddenly halted. The question that we never thought to ask came into play: How do we serve God at camp when none of our historic models are allowed? Although camp ministry looked a lot different, the work of the Lord continued at CMMBC in 2020. We thank God for creative solutions!

- Senior Camp was set-up as a five-evening revival series with remote teaching. Pastor Chad Manion from St. John Baptist Church in Brundidge, Alabama was willing to use ZOOM for remote teaching. Our local campers came daily to camp for some outdoor activities. Our out-of-state campers joined the ZOOM conversation each evening.
- We thank God for the equipment and skilled labor donated by Boring Construction, Snowy Mountain, Inc., and GLASS Machinery. Although we were not allowed to open the splash pad due to state mandates, we were able to reorder the project. Rather than focusing on finishing the splash pad by the end of May, we completed it in September. During April-June, we focused on redoing the west entrance of the camp. One of our volunteers estimated that more than \$100,000 worth of dirt work was completed at no cost to CMMBC.
- Food inventories that would spoil were distributed to area churches and food ministries. Jonesville First Baptist smoked chicken-leg-quarters and provided free meals to first responders. Osborne Chapel, Pennington Gap First Methodist, and Union Christian Church offered free community meals. Food pantries at Jonesville First Methodist, Mt. Carmel Baptist, and Rosehill distributed frozen meat and other foods to families in need. Acteens, a youth group, was able to fund-raise by preparing meals-to-order. What a blessing it is to cross denominational boundaries!

The Lord continues to provide for the financial needs of CMMBC. In 2020, individual giving provided 64% of our income, and church giving comprised 22% of CMMBC's support. The follow churches contributed to meet our needs:

Advance Community Christian Church (IN)
Campus Ministry of Grand Valley State (MI)
Covenant Community Church (Fairfield, OH)
ECC (Lafayette, IN)
Faith Covenant Church (St. Petersburg, FL)
First Baptist Church (Jonesville, VA)
First Christian Church (Pennington Gap, VA)
Mount Carmel Baptist Church (Woodway, VA)
Northport Covenant (MI)

Ravenswood Covenant Church (Chicago, IL)
Redeemer Covenant (Hamilton, OH)
Salem Covenant (New Brighton, MN)
Trailer Estates Women Ministries (FL)
Union Christian Church (Pennington Gap, VA)
Wallens Creek Covenant (Duffield, VA)
Winnetka Covenant Church (IL)
Woodway Church of God (VA))



Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

We thank you for your faithfulness to the work at CMMBC and thank God that the ministry at CMMBC continues to be affirmed through His provision! We'd like to ask for your continued prayers for some of our more pressing needs. Please pray for:

Workers for the summer. CMMBC needs laborers for grounds keeping and summer staff, as well as the funding to pay them.

Pray for Joe and Tammy Faulkinbury. Tammy underwent surgery for recurring breast cancer on February 16, 2021.

Pray for the CMMBC Board of Directors. This small group of people take their leadership and decision-making seriously.

Pray for our summer of 2021. CMMBC hopes to minister directly to families by being a fountain of blessing to them, offering gift boxes, and individual family reservations to use the splash pad. We are also planning weekly activities through June and July, like "Ride Your Bike with Joe" at a community greenway and "Young Adult Night at CMMBC" for high school students and recent graduates to gather for Bible study and fellowship.

Joe and Tammy Faulkinbury

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

2390 Horse Hollow Road Jonesville, VA 24263

276.346.1013 cmmbc1950@gmail.com www.cmmbc.org



Campus Ministries at Grand Valley State University sent the only mission team to CMMBC in early March of 2020. Students are shown here as they helped to get ready for pouring concrete for the splash pad.



Family Campers having fun.

Senior Camper gathered for 5 evenings of out-of-doors remote teaching and fellowship.





Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

The Splash Pad is finished! The progression of the "Just Add Water at CMMBC" Project is amazing, especially considering that the work was mostly completed by local volunteers.



February 29, 2020



March 28, 2020



May 7, 2020



August 18, 2020



August 28, 2020



Camp Mission Meadows



MISSION MEADOWS

Our Vision: A relational approach to a Christ-Centered experience.

Our Mission: To RAISE up the next generation of Jesus’ followers through Relational, Accepting, Intentional, Safe, and Encouraging summer camps, weekend retreats, and community programming.

Fulfilling our Mission: This last year certainly has been a year of uncertainty! However, it has also been a year of lessons learned, blessings, and evidence that God is in control. When Mission Meadows decided to shut down in March 2020, it did not shut down the Lord’s and church community’s support for the camp. The numerous donations that have poured in are evidence of that. The staff at Mission Meadows were overcome with emotions because of all the love that was shared. From the phone calls to letters and the financial support, the generosity of others was evident. The staff at Mission Meadows decided they too were committed to keeping Mission Meadows afloat. The staff volunteered their time and resources to helping Mission Meadows. Volunteers gathered to mow the lawn, paint buildings, clean rooms, complete water tests, keep the pool maintained, and so much more.

Staff Update: In January 2021, Bryan Muecke, Executive Director, informed the board that it was his time to move on from Mission Meadows. The Mission Meadows family wishes Bryan success and happiness in the next phase of life. Jackie Haines has been made the interim Executive Director. She was previously the Associate Director at Mission Meadows. Although this is a period of transition, there are still many constants. Many of the staff from previous years have agreed to come back for the summer and are looking forward to the many ways they can be a part of transforming lives.



Summer Ministry: Mission Meadows is re-opening our Summer Camp season. This year, we will have day camps available for our Trailblazers (Kindergarten to grade 6) and our Junior High students (grades 6 – 9). Senior High students are encouraged to volunteer for a week. As we have in years past, our day camps will offer children many of the fun aspects of camp including swimming, boating, chapel time, arts and crafts, and adventure recreation time. Day camp can be a powerful tool for the Lord to work in a child’s life while allowing parents the freedom to continue their necessary work schedules.

Building the Family Connection: Another option we will have for individuals and families is the opportunity to rent our cabins. Additionally, thanks to a team of volunteers, we have newly added RV and tent sites. Each of our cabins, RV sites, and tent sites will have picnic tables and fire pits. While renting out your cabin, we will have activities planned throughout the day for your family to participate in. What a great way to draw closer as a family and build the family connection!





Camp Mission Meadows (cont.)

It is also a great way to spend some quiet time in God's creation while drawing closer to Him!

Facilities Improvements: Mission Meadows has been blessed to receive a \$15,000 grant to improve our low ropes course. The improvement of our course along with our rock-climbing walls will give schools, our community, and church groups a great opportunity to have team-building exercises in a safe and fun environment.

Another blessing is that a group of volunteers has agreed to help re-do our dining room deck and a grant to pay for the deck looks promising. God is certainly providing for us abundantly!

Financial Support: Our financial supporters showed their commitment to Mission Meadows. Our end of the year giving was over \$76,000! Praise the Lord! In addition, Mission Meadows benefitted from the Paycheck Protection Program in April 2020 and in February 2021.

Big Picture! It will only be through the support of local churches and individual contributors that we will be able to stand on the other side of this pandemic. Mission Meadows continues to need your support: now more than ever! Please prayerfully consider ways that you and your church can come alongside us. Below are a few ways we are asking for your support:

1. Become a prayer partner with us. Not only in your personal prayer life, but put us on your prayer chain, your prayer meetings, or contact prayer warriors you know.
2. Grab some friends and join us in helping to open camp on our work day on 5/8/2021 from 9 am-4 pm. Please call the office at 716-386-5932 for details.
3. Please spread the word about the summer season! Brochures and a video that you can play at your church, youth groups, or with your friends will be coming very soon.
4. We need volunteers! Even if it is for a single day, one day a week, or a weekend. We have all kinds of needs from putting up bulletin boards, painting cabins, or being a host for a weekend. We would love to talk to you further about how you can help. Please call the office at 716-386-5932.
5. We want you here! Can your small group meet at camp? How about a church picnic? Do you belong to other groups that need space to meet? Please consider using our facilities!



Submitted by:

Jackie Haynes
Interim Executive Director





Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp

PORTAGE LAKE BIBLE CAMP

*Portage Lake invites campers to step out of their daily routines and into Christ-centered 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

The theme for the summer of 2020 (chosen in the fall of 2019) was “*Through the Unknown.*” The theme verse was Isaiah 42:16, “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.” Isaiah speaks to those in exile living in Babylon having had everything they’ve ever known destroyed and their identity left in question. Yet God says through Isaiah, I will transform you; I won’t leave you. As it turns out, this verse – meant to center our programming, worship, and study while at camp – has actually been sustaining during our own year of exile.

If you re-read our mission and vision statements above, you’ll notice that everything camp is about has to do with *proximity*. But very little proximity was possible this year due to the potential spread of Covid-19. That said, God did bring light out of darkness throughout the year. There has been great blessing that has come from the bane of a pandemic.



Retreat Season

The year started with almost every weekend filled by campers energized by powerful worship, speakers, a ton of fun, and kids growing in their faith in record numbers. In that we rejoice – that God used camp to continue his mission, to impact lives for Christ. But like everywhere else, we cancelled and shut down planned gatherings in March and throughout the spring. Then in the fall, when camp is usually packed, most guest groups and regular retreats were cancelled. But again, God used smaller groups – quilters, a Contemplative retreat, a family memorial gathering, small church groups, and individual families – to allow a safe sanctuary for a change of scenery, provide closure

to painful chapters, experience the joy of outdoor activity, and help people engage their faith in a way they might not have in larger settings.

Summer

Who knew that my first act as the new Executive Director would be to cancel camp for the first time in 74 years? It was not exactly the scene I had in my mind when taking on this role. We were able to schedule back three “Portage Getaway” weekends in July which 155 people attended. Here too, God was faithful to meet his children ‘in exile’ as we practiced social distance, ate in different meal groups, worshipped outside at the cross, and participated in less-scheduled days. Nine staff were hired for our truncated summer, and they too were blessed by a close-knit family experience of serving and sharing life together for 6 weeks. Be-





Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp (cont.)

yond that, we learned a lot about what makes a camp experience meaningful, how to creatively navigate Covid, and what adjustments can be made in subsequent years to help campers experience “real fun and real faith.”



Staff

In May, we hired Madison Herfuth to be our new Program Director which became a full-time position in August. After graduating from Hope in May with a theology major and youth ministry minor, she was planning on working at a camp in North Carolina, but because of the pandemic, her position was cut. She was then available to consider coming to Portage Lake. Once again because of the bane of Covid, we have been blessed. We have also been blessed by the work of Gage Flannery for the past two years as our Associate Director: particularly in the transition time after Dave Nesburg’s leaving. Sadly for us, Gage and his family moved back down state in October to be closer to their immediate families. We are now in the process of finding a new Associate Director to oversee operations and finances. A huge thanks

goes out to the rest of our staff who have faithfully served in the midst of very challenging circumstances this year: Kathy Smith (Office Manager), Luci Schweigert (Marketing & Guest Services Director), Randy Bennetts (Facilities Manager), and Amanda Harju (Cook).

Capital Projects

With help from our summer staff whose limited interaction with campers allowed them opportunity for more service projects, we were able to complete several bigger jobs.

- Repainted the outside of the Retreat Center (cabins 12 & 13)
- Built a deck on the east side of Cool Beans
- Dug a trench for power at lakeside cross; added plugs for electronic worship instruments
- Dug trenches around cabins 6, 7, and 8 and added screening to keep out animals

Dining Hall

It has been the plan all along to begin building our new Dining Hall this year. However, with the onset of Covid and its effect on the economy, new giving slowed to a trickle even as established pledges were being fulfilled at a steady stream. At the end of 2020, over \$1.4 million has been given with another \$1.1 million pledged toward a project that is estimated at \$3.4 million. This seems daunting especially given our initial timeline. However, Covid has changed our social landscape forever, and it has directly impacted food service. Because of this, tweaks to how we serve, eat together, and, as it turns out, build our Dining Hall will have to be made. In other words, we may have had to make expensive changes after or in the middle of construction had we already started the building process. Another blessing in the bane of it all.





Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp (cont.)

General Finances

While we experienced less than 10% of our normal summer attendance and far less than that in our spring and fall retreat seasons, we ended the year with a strong cash position almost doubling last year's General Fund Balance!

2019 year-end ... \$79,709 2020 year-end ... **\$155,316!!**

This was due in part to a PPP loan, memorial funds used for capital projects, board authorized transfers, and the *incredible generosity* of the Portage Lake family. I can't even begin to express how thankful I am for the support of those who gave during this thin season of ministry. In particular, during our Campsgiving fundraiser at the end of November, people gave over \$130,000 to help us end the year in the black and continue to thrive. On top of that, Year-end giving was equally overwhelming as people gave out of their hearts and with tremendous abundance.

I'm near tears as I write this. Who knew that we would struggle through a pandemic, financial fear, quarantine, distance learning and working, and a myriad of other challenges this year? Who knew we would live like exiles in our own homes? Who knew that I would get to lead an organization that has been so formational for me over the last 50 years in the midst of such times? Who knew that I would have a front row seat to such an outpouring of love and generosity from people who love this place as much as I do? Who knew?

God knew. None of this surprised him. He is in control. He is Steadfast (2021 Summer theme)!

God has overcome darkness with light, made rough places smooth ... God never forsakes us.

I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve in this new role as Executive Director. It's not what I expected. It's not what I would have scripted but it's what is ... and God is in it. That's all that matters!

Grace & Peace,

Marc Eix
Executive Director
Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp

