

GREAT
LAKES
CONFERENCE



OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

April 21 - 22, 2023

Annual Celebration

Thornapple Covenant Church
6595 Cascade Rd. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546

GLC Documents 2022-2023



- ◆ Delegate Documents
- ◆ Ministry Reports
- ◆ Church Plants
- ◆ Camps

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Delegate Orientation

2023 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 (real or virtual) 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.

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.

Delegate Orientation

Cont

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. However, 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.

When the Meeting is in session, move to and from your seat quickly and quietly.

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.

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.

Delegate Orientation

Cont

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.

Agenda

43rd Annual Meeting
April 22, 2023

I. Organization of the Meeting

- A. Call to Order.....Doug McCann
- B. Approval of AgendaDoug McCann
- C. Welcome.....Doug McCann
- D. Approval of Standing Rules.....Doug McCann
- E. Approval of Committees.....Doug McCann
 - i. CredentialsJody Eidnes
 - ii. Tellers.....Jody Eidnes, Peg Wolter
 - iii. Sergeants-at-Arms.....Bryan and Jill Van Doornik
 - iv. Parliamentarian.....Steve Ormond

II. Greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church.....Tammy Swanson-Draheim

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

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee.....Sara Charlton

- A. Election of Officers and Board MembersDoug McCann

V. Good News Report- Church Planting.....LifeChurch Riverside, Detroit, MI

VI. Superintendent ReportGarth McGrath

VII. Closed/Disaffiliating Churches.....Garth McGrath

- A. Love of Christ Christian Center, Detroit, MI

VIII. Good News Report- Church Vitality.....Covenant Community Church, Fairfield, OH

IX. Treasurer's Report (2022 Financials).....Brian Rudy

X. Good News Report- Church Leadership.....Church Chair Event; Garth McGrath

XI. New Business:

- A. Proposed Constitution & Bylaws Amendments.....Doug McCann
- B. 2023 BudgetBrian Rudy
- C. Interim Budget for 2024.....Brian Rudy
- D. Approval of 43rd Annual Meeting Minutes.....Doug McCann
- E. Approval of Ordination CandidatesDoug McCann

XII. Good News Report- Church Outreach.....Baptisms; Garth McGrath

XIII. Old Business:

- A. Church Planting Initiative.....Alan Tumpkin
- B. Helping GLC Churches with Financial Matters.....Jody Eidnes
- C. Strengthening Communication with Conference Churches.....Garth McGrath

XIV. GLC Staff Q & AGLC Staff

XV. Election Results for Officers & Board MembersDoug McCann

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

XVII. Expression of Thanks to Retiring Board Members.....Garth McGrath

XVIII. 2024 Annual Meeting Celebration Location.....Jody Eidnes

XIX. Adjournment.....Doug McCann

GLC Nominations

Great Lakes Conference Executive Board

Officers

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

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.

Sara Charlton, St. John's Covenant Church, Millersburg, OH (Vice Chair and Trustee)

Sara has served St. John's as the solo pastor since November 2018. She grew up in a non-Christian home and came to know the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ during her freshman year at North Park University. After getting her B.A. in History and then her M.Div from North Park Seminary, she served as an interim pastor in Kansas for fifteen months before coming to the GLC. Sara is currently the Vice Chair of the GLC Board. In her spare time, Sara enjoys reading mysteries, baking, and spoiling her niece.

Amorette Clausen, Forest Park Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI (Secretary and Trustee)

Amorette has been involved at Forest Park as a member of the Pastoral Search Committee, the Personnel Relations Team, the Children's Ministry, the Middle School Student Ministry Team, and as a women's Life Group leader. She currently serves as Secretary on the GLC Executive Board. When she isn't volunteering in her church and the Conference, she works as a high school counselor. She is married to Shane, who is an electrician. They have two children, 16 and 13 years old.

Brian Rudy, Thornapple Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, MI (Treasurer and Trustee)

Brian has been a member of Thornapple since 1991 and in that time, he has served in many adult, youth, and children's ministries. He served as an elder from 2008-2013 and has been elected to serve again as an elder for 2019-2024. Brian has primarily worked as a finance executive for various companies, often during periods of growth or transition. He is an advocate for good process and best practices. Brian is married and has 3 children. He enjoys the outdoors, learning, travel, sports, and board games. Brian would like to serve on the GLC Executive Board because as he struggles to understand the recent cultural shifts away from God and away from others, he has hope because of Christ. He is encouraged by our opportunities to worship, work, and witness together that all may hear His voice and know His love. Brian looks forward to journeying together in helping every GLC congregation become a healthy, missional church. That we may be one in Christ.

Trustees

John Goss, Grace Evangelical Covenant Church, Clay, NY

Since becoming a part of the Covenant seven years ago (when he was called to serve as the pastor of Grace Church), John has come to appreciate the people and work that is done not just at the local Covenant church level but more broadly at the conference level. He looks forward to serving at the conference level and being able to contribute to the work of the Kingdom in new ways. His desire is to help the GLC serve churches as they engage in the work of making disciples of Jesus. John and his wife, Cherryl, have been married for 21 years and have four children ranging in age from 14 to 20.

Gina Roberts, City Covenant Church, Detroit, MI

Deacon Gina Roberts is a dedicated and trustworthy servant at City Covenant Church/Mission:City. Over the past 11 years, she has worked tirelessly in God's kingdom through a myriad of positions ranging from driving the church van to church administrative duties. Possessing a tremendous compassion for the homeless community, she is the founder and originator of Lovestar Ministry. Gina continued this Godly initiative in the Brightmoor Community by facilitating the Forgotten Harvest Food Ministry, which serves over 600 people a month. Her greatest joy is spending time with her wonderful husband Bernard and beautiful family. As the mother of four and the grandmother of seven, Gina's cup runneth over! She is willing to serve in whatever capacity that furthers the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Her alternative goal is to one day stand before her Lord and hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant!"

Mission Meadows, LLC Board Elected 2023 by the Great Lakes Conference Executive Board

Tom Jones (elected to his third term, ending in 2025)

Tom has served Grace Fellowship in many capacities over the past 12 years, including being part of the church board, volunteering as a Sunday school teacher and giving the tithing message. Professionally, Tom has served over 16 years in education as a math teacher and administrator and 32 years as a restaurant owner. In his free time, he enjoys the outdoors, coaching youth, and church family activities. Camp Mission Meadows was a part of his faith formation in junior high and high school. While attending North Park, camping ministry was always a part of his summers. Tom is married to wife, Jean, and Mission Meadows is the first place his three sons speak of when reminiscing of fun family experiences. Because of the significance camping ministry had in his life, and his desire to see Mission Meadows continue to impact the faith of others, Tom wants to contribute by serving on the Mission Meadows Camp Board.

Tami LaPaze-Paullin (elected to her first term, ending in 2025)

Tami is a longtime Covenant Church Member, and currently the chair of Music and Worship at First Covenant Church of Youngstown, OH. She also serves as the organist for weekly services and scheduled rehearsals. Tami is married to Brad Paullin. She works as a middle school educator in the Youngstown City School District, with the vocation of serving as a Christian presence among the inner-city youth of her school. Tami believes Mission Meadows has an important purpose: to advance the gospel by spreading God's love. As a grateful recipient of that purpose and love (having attended Mission Meadows as a camper and served on staff in various capacities over many years), Tami is convinced that there is no mission or place in the world that is more hallowed than Mission Meadows. She envisions using her strong relational skills and long history of friendships with people whose lives were impacted by Mission Meadows in younger years to encourage others to support the work of Mission Meadows. She would be honored to serve as a board member, using her God-given talents and relationships to promote the future of God's work at Mission Meadows.

Aaron Reinard (elected to his third term, ending in 2025)

Aaron is the solo pastor of Scandia Covenant Church, Russell, PA. As a youth/worship pastor for 25 years and growing up in church, he has been involved in a variety of different camps and camping ministries. He loves camp; but there's something different about Mission Meadows. God has uniquely positioned us to be THE place for camping and retreats in the entire region. He and his wife, Marjorie, have three children: Corban, Tobiah and Elias. In his spare time, Aaron plays ice hockey, restores vintage paintball markers and plays Munzee.

Stephen Zimmerly (elected to his third term, ending 2025)

Stephen is the current Chairman of the Mission Meadows Board, and he would like to see two things accomplished before his third term is completed: the undertaking of a multi-million dollar capital campaign, and paying off the outstanding loan balance of Mission Meadows' pool facility (which will happen as part of the capital campaign). Stephen is actively involved at Hope Covenant in Indianapolis. He currently serves as the Secretary on the Church Council, the Chair of the Public Relations Committee, and is on the executive council. He is also a member of the worship team and contributes to a number of other church committees. Stephen is employed by the University of Indianapolis, where he is a professor of English Literature. He and his wife, Rachel, have four children. Stephen spent many summers at Mission Meadows, as both a camper and staff member, and has been a family camper many times in recent years. God has used Mission Meadows to bless him and his family and countless others during its long history. He would be honored to continue to serve as a board member. Stephen believes that Christian camps are invaluable resources through which God's love can be shared with those who may not experience His love in their everyday lives. As Mission Meadows approaches new changes and ongoing improvements to its facilities and functions, he is humbled at the opportunity to serve the camp in this way.

Mission Meadows, LLC Board (Con't)

Paul Aley (elected to his first term, ending in 2025)

Paul is a long-time Covenanter primarily in the Youngstown, OH area. He is currently a member of Bay Indies Covenant Church in Venice, FL where he lives during the winter months, and attends Zion Covenant Church in Jamestown, NY during the summer months. Paul has been a member of five Covenant churches throughout his adult years, holding various positions of leadership and service, including Sunday School Teacher, Finance Committee member, Search Committee member, and Treasurer. He served on the Board of Trustees of North Park University for 12 years. Paul attended North Park College (now University) for two years and then graduated with a Bachelors degree in Engineering from Ohio State University. He went on to earn a Masters degree and became a CPA in the state of Ohio. He has held various positions of leadership in his career, including serving as President of National Machinery Corporation for 17 years, and owner of AgriEnergy Resources. He and his wife, Barbara, have two children (NPU Grads), and seven grandchildren (three of whom are Mission Meadows campers). In 2020, the Aleys built a home three miles from Mission Meadows. In Paul's words, "One of the reasons was to be able to help Mission Meadows. Barbara was a camper years ago and now enjoys helping in the kitchen as time permits. I enjoy helping on occasion. I believe my management and financial background give me the ability to help at the Board level. We both want to see the Camp grow and extend its Christian outreach."

Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp (PLCBC) Board

Elected 2023 by the Great Lakes Conference Executive Board

Krista Umanos (elected to second term, which ends in 2026)

Krista is an active member of Kentwood Community church in Wyoming, MI. She is a licensed attorney in the State of Michigan. In recent years, she has been assisting veterans in West Michigan while in the employ of the U.S. House of Representatives. She volunteers regularly in the Children's Ministry and is engaged in a mentor relationship. Camp means so much to Krista, husband Ben, and their young daughter. They were married in the chapel in 2012, and Krista considers it a great honor to have the opportunity to use her spiritual gifts and talents to serve the camp and further its mission to impact every life for Christ.

Craig Smith (elected to first term, which ends in 2026)

Craig is the Pastor of Worship, Evangelism and Community at the Evangelical Covenant Church of Whitehall, Michigan. He has also been the Youth Pastor for the previous 15 years, but this year he has transitioned to other ministries. He is also the proud father of four children: Hannah (23), Maddie (21), Samuel (20), and Lauren (18). Craig has been married to his wife, Michelle, for 26 incredible years and she is a big supporter of the work he is doing in the White Lake Area. Craig grew up attending PLCBC and even spent a summer on staff in 1989. He deeply believes in the power of camp to change lives through the gospel, and he will continue to encourage anyone who will listen to invest in the mission and ministry of Portage Lake. He will be honored to help lead this Godly institution for the next three years.

Michelle Bennett (elected to first term, which ends in 2026)

A love for summer camps runs deep in Michelle; from growing up going to camp each summer, marrying Simon who worked at a camp the first six years of their marriage, and sending her two boys, Liam and Jack, to Portage Lake for the last eight years. Michelle appreciates the unique position faith-based camps have to affect the spiritual growth in youth, seeing the positive impact in her own life and in others. As the Communications Coordinator at (and member of) Thornapple Covenant Church, she is dedicated to helping the church advance its mission through effective communications. She also owns her own communications firm and for the past 22 years has helped non-profits, corporations, and educational institutions create websites, brochures, training programs, presentations, and videos. Michelle looks forward to using both her work experience and faith history in her work on the Board and is excited about what this opportunity will bring. In her spare time, Michelle enjoys reading and leading book club, being loved aggressively by her dog, Sparty, being hospitable and opening her home to family and friends, pontooning on the river by her house, and exploring new cities with her three boys.

Sample Ballot

GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING – April 22, 2023

GLC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Officers elected annually for 1 year term

Chair –

- *Doug McCann
- _____

Vice Chair –

- *Sara Charlton
- _____

Secretary –

- *Amorette Clauson
- _____

Treasurer –

- Brian Rudy
- _____

Trustees - (Vote for 5)

Elected for a 3-year term

- John Goss
- *Amorette Clauson
- *Sara Charlton
- *Gina Roberts
- *Doug McCann (2-year term)
- _____

*Denotes incumbent

GLC Minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting

Faith Covenant Church - Westerville, Ohio

April 30, 2022

I. Organization of the Meeting

A. Call to Order

Tom Sharkey

The meeting was called to order at 8:39 a.m. The Chair acknowledged that the region in which our GLC Annual Meeting is taking place was historically stewarded by Shawnee, Miami, Wyandotte and Hopewell indigenous people groups. The Chair also named and welcomed our Mission Friend guests from Denominational Offices and regional entities.

B. Approval of Agenda

Tom Sharkey

Peg Kohring moved to approve the agenda. Gina Roberts seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Welcome

Tom Sharkey

Tom talked about the theme of the weekend being unity and read from Philippians. He asked that we keep in mind the Trinity as our example of oneness. Tom introduced Tim Heintzelman, Pastor of Faith Covenant Church of Westerville, our host church. Tim brought a welcome and a prayer.

D. Approval of Committees

i. Credentials: Jody Eidnes

Bob Hoey moved to approve. Peg Kohring seconded. Motion approved.

ii. Tellers: Jody Eidnes, Peg Wolter

Brian Kyle moved to approve. Mark Nelson seconded. Motion approved.

iii. Sergeants-at-Arms: Bridget Reynolds, Veronique Sweet, Dan Wolter, Peg Wolter

Bill Nyerges moved to approve. Semmeal Thomas seconded. Motion approved.

iv. Parliamentarian: Roy Nichols

Sara Charlton moved to approve. Dawn Columbare seconded. Motion approved.

II. Greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church

Steve Klimkowski

Steve spoke as the Chief Financial Officer for the Covenant Offices. He spoke about how God was at work through the pandemic and showed a video from ECC highlighting some of the good things that have been happening in the Covenant all around the world. Steve gave a financial update of the ECC. He shared that the budget has declined over the past few years, and our giving is declining. We have been able to meet our budget, but more needs to be discussed here. He explained some Covenant benefits that are available to everyone. The ECC's aim is to support and equip churches to do ministry.

III. Report of the Credentials Committee

Jody Eidnes

Jody Eidnes reported that 75 delegates from 36 churches and 2 camps as well as 6 GLC Board members were in attendance at the meeting.

Tom Sharkey opened up a time for people to share in small groups about what God has been doing in their churches. A Portage Lake Bible Camp video (SOAR) was shown, bringing the group back to order. Tom prayed for the ministry of Portage Lake Bible Camp.

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee

Tom Sharkey

Tom called on Sara Charlton, Chair of the Nominating Committee, to present the nominees for Conference Board positions.

GLC Minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting

Con't

Trustees

Mark Nelson, Austintown Community Church, Austintown, OH, 2 -year term (to balance term rotations)

Harvey Cozart, Lighthouse Church, Richmond, KY, 3-year term

Ardena Duren, Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI, 3-year term

Brian Rudy, Thornapple Covenant Church, Grand Rapids, MI, 3-year term

Officers

Chair - Doug McCann, Stoneridge Covenant Church, Allison Park, PA

Vice Chair - Sara Charlton, St. John's Covenant Church, Millersburg, OH

Secretary - Amorette Clausen, Forest Park Covenant Church, Muskegon, MI

Treasurer - Katherine Kayser, Hope Community Church, Detroit, MI

A. Election of Officers and Board Members

Tom Sharkey invited a unanimous ballot. Semmeal Thomas moved. Jeff Kahl seconded. Motion approved.

V. Good News Report- GLC Church Planting

Garth McGrath & Alan Tumpkin

A church planting video was shown highlighting Georgia Hill and LifeChurch Riverside, a church that was planted at the start of the COVID pandemic. LifeChurch Riverside has met almost exclusively on-line and is flourishing.

Garth shared that our most recent church plants have all survived through Covid. He recognized the churches and their pastors, asking them to stand. Alan prayed for the churches.

VI. Joining Churches

Garth McGrath

Garth invited Matt Ness, Pastor of One Church in Louisville, KY, to the stage. Garth explained how One Church was a merger of two congregations - one predominantly African American (Soul Center) and one predominantly Caucasian (The Avenue) - with the purpose of exploring who Jesus is and engaging in the community through intentional, multi-ethnic ministry. Matt spoke about struggles they experienced but that through it all people are finding Jesus. He shared some of the ministry opportunities that have come out through this.

A vote was proposed to welcome One Church of Louisville into the GLC. The recommendation came from the Executive Board so no second was needed. Motion approved. Garth prayed for One Church.

VII. Superintendent Report

Garth McGrath

Garth gave a word of encouragement to the Conference as we emerge from the pandemic. He introduced staff and GLC team members. He talked about the rollout of Missional Vitality resources coming from the ECC. He explained how the Periodic Health Checkup Tool could be used by churches to assess the health of their ministry. He described the new Vitality Workshops, Coaching for pastors, the Crescendo program, and the Evangelism Cohort. Crescendo coaches spoke about the great things they're seeing through this program and invited churches to participate. Garth then shared that Tammy Swanson-Draheim is the Denominational Presidential Nominee.

Other elections include Executive Ministers for Serve Globally (Grace Shim) and Develop Leaders/Ordered Ministry (Herb Frost) and superintendents for the Northwest (Kara Stromberg) and Pacific Southwest Conferences (Bryan Murphy). Garth read a letter concerning the resignation of the Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp Director. Tom Sharkey prayed for Garth. Tom asked for a motion to receive the report. There was a motion and a second. Motion moved.

GLC Minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting Cont

VIII. Closed/Withdrawn Churches

Garth McGrath

A. Gateway Community Church in Powell, OH merged with Press Church. They asked to voluntarily withdraw from the GLC and the ECC. The executive board made a recommendation so there was no need for a second. Motion was unanimously approved.

B. Artisan Covenant Church, Rochester, NY asked to voluntarily withdraw from the GLC and the ECC because of differences specifically related to LGBTQ issues. The executive board made a recommendation so there was no need for a second. Motion was unanimously approved.

C. Nueva Vida, Jamestown, NY asked to voluntarily withdraw from the GLC and the ECC citing differences of conviction related to Baptism and Women in Ministry. The executive board made a recommendation so there was no need for a second. Motion was approved unanimously.

IX. Good News Report- Church Vitality

St. John's Evangelical Covenant Church, Millersburg, OH

Eric Shaver shared about past turnover and turmoil in their church. The Great Lakes Conference came in to help and got them on the path of looking like an ECC church. They called Pastor Sara Charlton and they are growing. He shared a number of ministries that they have started or are a part of.

X. Finance Officer's Report (2021 Financials)

Kim Carlson

Kim shared that overall, the Conference is in good shape financially. He shared the 2021 financial summary. We were below budget on income, but our expenses came in below budget too. We have been able to plant new churches using grant funds. In looking at our balance sheet, we are healthy. But the lifeblood of our Conference is General Fund support, and the giving in 2021 was the lowest in 12 years. Kim asked churches to consider giving more to the GLC. Questions were asked about why the church fund giving began to decline and whether the GLC will provide help with looking at/understanding financial health in individual churches.

XI. Good News Report- Church Leadership

Keystone Church/Center of Life, Pittsburgh, PA

Garth shared in place of Tim Smith who wasn't in attendance. He shared the history of the church and the community. Tim was called to pastor the church and also created a non-profit to partner with the church and bring help to the community. A video was shown about their Center of Life ministry.

XII. New Business:

A. New Camp Director for Camp Mission Meadows

Garth McGrath

Jackie Haines was introduced as the Camp Director. She is most excited about children who tell her they invited Jesus into their lives. They'll have a full camp this year. One big need is a struggle to get staff. She asked for prayer for staffing and also financial needs. She asked for prayer that they would continue to move in the direction God has for them. Steve Zimmerly, Chair of the Camp Board, prayed for Jackie and the camp. A Mission Meadows video was shown.

B. 2022 Budget

Kim Carlson

Kim explained the income parts of the budget and the expenses. Because church giving to the Conference is down, the extraordinary income items help to balance our budget. We are in good shape through hard times. The motion was made by the Executive Board to approve the budget. The budget was approved unanimously.

C. Interim Budget for 2023

Kim Carlson

Kim shared that we need to approve an interim 2023 budget since our next meeting isn't until April in 2023. A motion was made for the GLC Executive Board to be authorized to implement an interim 2023 budget until a final budget is approved at the 2023 Annual Meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Approval of 42nd Annual Meeting Minutes

Tom Sharkey

Tom asked for a motion to give the Executive Board the authority to approve the meeting minutes. Motion was made by Dan Soderberg and seconded by Dawn Columbare. Motion approved.

GLC Minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting Con't

E. Approval of Ordination Candidates

Tom Sharkey

Tom presented Jay Baehr, Bobby Benavides, Dave Chatel, Lynne McLaughlin, and Bill Miller for ordination. Bob Hoey moved. Ken White seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

XIII. Good News Report- Church Outreach

City Covenant Church, Detroit, MI

Semmeal Thomas, pastor of City Covenant Church, invited numerous people to the stage to share. The church has sustained a food ministry that provides meals to impoverished neighbors in one of the poorest sections of the City of Detroit four nights a week and delivers food to people who cannot get to the church. The challenges of COVID were monumental, but the church adapted and met the needs. Outreach in the community is pervasive and persistent, for God's glory and neighbor's good.

XIV. Old Business

A. Church Planting Initiative

Garth McGrath

Garth shared that thanks to proceeds from the sale of the Redeemer Covenant Church building in Caledonia, MI, and contributions to the Matching Grant for Church Planting, we have funds to plant churches. We have three churches currently being started. We are taking donations for church planting.

XV. GLC Staff Q & A

Staff was available to answer questions. A woman asked what resources are available to help our churches in the area of financial knowledge and understanding within churches. The training and equipping resources available to the church from the ECC and the GLC were explained. As a Financial Officer at her church, she didn't know about the resources within the ECC and GLC.

A man spoke about the cost to bring delegates to the meetings which can limit churches at the voting, representation level. Jody shared that next year we plan to have an in-person AND digital option. A man asked each person on the staff to share a sentence describing what their area of service is, and what they want us to go home with.

Phil Carr said he's here to encourage and empower church planters. Dan Wolter said he'd like to respond to the need for financial help that was suggested. Peg Wolter would like more donations. Alan said he wants to love well. Jody said she will do whatever the churches need, but she needs churches to communicate their needs. Kim said he likes to do his job well so that Garth can concentrate on the things he needs to worry about and not money. Garth said we have a reputation of having one of the strongest finance committees in the denomination. He also thanked Steve. He feels moved by pastors and leaders who are passionate about reaching people in their communities to share the love of Jesus. Jack shared that a challenge has been to help smaller churches with their financials. A man asked if conference staff is being compensated fairly with the rise in inflation. The answer is yes. Ken White appreciated Kim's work on the financial documents. He would like a one-pager about how money is spent so he can bring it back to his church.

Someone asked about whether Garth has had any extended time away/break as he works in a challenging job. He also asked about strategy going forward and whether we're doing reacting vs. forward thinking. Garth answered that we want to be intentional about connecting with our churches and sustaining missional traction through the rebuilding of Missional Vitality of the ECC. That's coming... but he acknowledged we can do better in the area of strategic thinking.

A man thanked Garth for his support. He asked if there were things we can be doing/praying for the staff specifically. Jody said we have an opening in the office that needs to be filled. Garth shared that he's mindful of the needs of sharing stories and wonders if there is someone who could help to highlight ministries and stories to share with the larger conference. He asked for prayer for wisdom as we deal with challenging things. Tom Sharkey suggested gift cards as a way to show appreciation.

A woman shared that she had a wonderful weekend full of love and that she can't wait to share it back home. A man shared that he wanted to acknowledge that we are planting churches that are led by women and people of color and we need to celebrate that.

GLC Minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting Con't

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp Promotional Video was shown and delegates were encouraged to send ministry teams to help run the summer camps.

XVI. Election Results for Officers & Board Members

Tom Sharkey

The results of the Election of Officers and Board Members was reported as follows:

Trustees

Mark Nelson, elected to his first term, a 2-year term (to re-balance term rotations)

Harvey Cozart, elected to his first 3-year term

Ardena Duren, elected to her first 3-year term

Brian Rudy, re-elected to a 3-year term

Officers (elected annually)

Chair - Doug McCann

Vice Chair - Sara Charlton

Secretary - Amorette Clausen

Treasurer - Katherine Kayser

Appointment: Tom Sharkey also reported that Jim Russell, a member of Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills had been appointed by the Conference Board (per the bylaws), to finish a Board position vacated by William Mack when he relocated to Chicago. Jim will serve two years of that unfinished term.

A Note on Election of Camp Board Members

Tom Sharkey reported that GLC Bylaws stipulate that the Conference Board acts on behalf of the GLC to elect (or appoint when needed) Camp Board members for Mission Meadows and Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp, the two camps owned by the Conference.

Tom reported that the GLC Board had recently acted in the following ways regarding the Board of Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp: elected Stephanie Taylor (member of Thornapple Covenant Church) to her first 3-year term; re-elected Steve Hansma to serve his second 3-year term; and re-elected Mark Schut to serve his second 3-year term.

Tom Sharkey also reported that the GLC Board recently acted in the following way regarding the Board of Mission Meadows: Appointed Tami LaPaze-Paullin (member of First Covenant Church, Youngstown) to fill the unexpired term of Don Pangborn; Elected James Swanson (member of Pleasant Community Covenant Church, Warren, PA) to his first 2-year term; re-elected Carolyn Palmquist to serve her second 2-year term; elected Fred Rizutto to serve his second 2-year term.

XVII. Installation of Officers & Board Members

Garth McGrath

Garth announced that all of the Board members and Officers are duly installed.

XVIII. Expression of Thanks to Retiring Board Members

Garth McGrath

Garth presented Tom with a gift and a card thanking him for his work as Chair of the Conference Board.

XIX. 2023 GLC Annual Celebration Location

Jody Eidnes

Jody shared that next year's meeting will be held at Thornapple Covenant Church, April 21-22, 2023.

XX. Adjournment

Tom Sharkey

Meeting was adjourned at 12:04. Steve Hoffman made a motion. Seconded by Bob Hoey. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

President's Letter - Tammy Swanson-Draheim

Dear Great Lakes Conference,

March 2023

Greetings and grace to you all as you join together in Jesus's name to celebrate all that God has done within your conference this season.

As you gather, please know how much I appreciate your partnership in ministry and how deeply I value the stories of ministry experiences that you share with me. It is encouraging to know that we do not journey alone.

I am grateful to be surrounded by so many people praying for me and for the church. Thank you for joining in the call to prayer each month as we pray together as a church body and set ourselves in a posture of listening to God. It has been a privilege to pray with you and for you. Please continue to remain steadfast in your prayers. I truly believe we must be in a spirit of prayer to find a way forward together.

In this first year in the role of president, I have been focusing my time around three main areas:

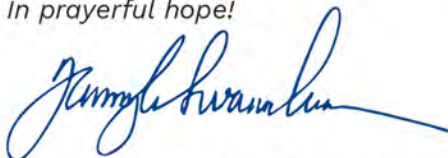
Listening: This has centered around listening to staff, conference personnel, the ministerium, and local church members. We have conducted a global church needs survey to help inform where the needs currently are and how local churches need resource support.

Praying: As we root ourselves in a posture of prayer, we seek to create a climate in which we have space to pause, breathe, reflect, and begin to re-enter spaces of collegial respect and love for one another.

Discerning: How do we move forward together as a church body? I was tasked with identifying a path forward through the discerned position on human sexuality and its impact within the Covenant as a whole. During my president address at Gather 2023, I am looking forward to sharing how, through much prayer and a collaborative effort of our many governing bodies, this task has been going. Covenant Offices leadership has also been entering a time of discernment around re-organizing our ministry model to better align God's mission with the resources he has provided in this season for a thriving future.

Thank you for showing up in Jesus's name to be good news for God's glory and neighbor's good. I look forward to many more opportunities to share stories of how God is moving within your ministries in the coming year. To him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, be the glory in the church throughout all generations forever and ever.

In prayerful hope!



Tammy Swanson-Draheim, PRESIDENT, EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

GLC Executive Board Chair - Doug McCann



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I started attending a Covenant church 24 years ago because I was relocated by my employer. None of us wanted to move but, we had no real choice. We started to feel better when we found a church we felt drawn to. We had no idea what a Covenant church was, but this church was biblically solid and the people there were very friendly. We became deeply involved and seemed to fit in. However, every once in a while, we'd hear an odd expression like: "Where is it written?" or "How goes your walk?" and everyone would smile and nod. It seemed like some sort of secret handshake. At one of these times, an older Swede saw my expression and took me aside to explain the tradition. The tradition of concern with the biblical foundation for a consistent walk with Christ confirmed our sense of belonging.

In the midst of the cultural tensions and burdens created by the pandemic these last couple of years, "How goes your walk?" has taken on new meaning.

David wrote in Psalm 40:

1 I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned and heard my cry. 2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. (New Living Translation)



GLC's Church Chair Event

I imagine that each of our congregations is at a different stage of David's experience as we emerge from the pandemic and strive to regain missional traction in our respective communities. Some of us are patiently crying to the Lord for his intervention. Others may have gotten to the point where they are steadily walking along.

At the GLC Conference level, it seems like we are out of the pit of despair, and out of the mud and the mire with our feet set on solid ground, but still not quite steadied as we walk along.

As David writes above, getting to the point where we are steadied as we walk along is God's work. So, we will look to him for his direction, relying on him the whole way. At the same time, he calls us to join his work and it makes a difference how we respond and participate with our heart, soul, and mind.

GLC Executive Board Chair

Cont.

Part of our response must be to focus our efforts on what is truly important. The local congregation is what is truly important. Take a look at the Constitution and Bylaws that we are showing to you this year in preparation for a vote next year. The proposed statement of purpose is all about the local congregations. As we move forward, we will be reaching out to the local congregations to understand how we can best help you. And going forward, we will focus our ministry on what will be most helpful to the local congregations.

We need your help as well. General Fund income for the GLC has been flat or declining since 2015. The local congregations, on whom we depend, have also had a tough time. However, the decline of GLC income has been a greater percentage than the decline of income of the congregations. We have no objection to sharing in the tough times. But, make it an even sharing. If every local congregation added a half percent to the percentage of income that they give, the GLC would be well provisioned to minister to the local congregations. Many congregations can't increase their percentage at all, not even a half percent. So, if you have been financially blessed, consider doing more.

Being steadied as we walk along is just a small goal, which doesn't reflect the complete history of God's blessing on his church. Instead, let us continue on to verse 3 of David's Psalm 40 and trust that soon we too will be saying:

3 He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.

Amen. Let it be so.

Respectfully Submitted,
Douglas R. McCann
Chair



How goes your walk?

Superintendent - 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 2022, I once again join the Apostle Paul in giving thanks to God for the faithful partnership in the gospel shared by the 74 churches of the Great Lakes Conference (GLC). I am thankful for the local ministry of our churches and for the contributions they continue to make in order to sustain our shared ministry at both the conference and denominational levels. Because of our partnership last year people in eight states heard the gospel, observed churches meeting the needs of their neighbors, and watched churches embrace ethnic diversity and strive for racial righteousness in order to more closely resemble the messianic banquet table of eternity. In the pages of this Annual Report, you will read about initiatives of the Conference directly tied to our mission priorities of Church Planting, Congregational Vitality, Leadership Development, and Outreach. Here are some introductory comments and highlights:

CHURCH PLANTING:

Thanks to a generous matching grant (provided in 2019) to plant four churches and thanks to proceeds from the sale of the Redeemer Covenant Church building in Caledonia, MI in 2021 (70% of which can be used for new church plants) the GLC has had the resources to start new churches in recent years. In 2022, we started Mosaic Covenant Church in Grand Rapids, MI; The Freedom Room in Detroit, MI; and Life Transformation Church in Columbus, OH. An additional grant made it possible for us to employ Phil Carr to coach current and prospective church planters. Meanwhile, Alan Tumpkin continued to serve the GLC on a half-time basis to guide the work of church planting, recruit prospective church planters, and provide technical coaching and pastoral care to church planters.



A few of our church plants

MISSIONAL VITALITY:

With the launch of new ECC resources for Vitality in 2022, the GLC was able to add tools to the ongoing consulting work we do to help our churches sustain or regain their missional traction. Multiple churches used the (no-cost) "Periodic Health Checkup" congregational survey tool to solicit feedback from congregants about perceived strengths and opportunities in their ministry and then consulted with GLC staff on recommended next steps. Several churches held the "Finding Your Why" workshop for their congregants to work together in discernment of next steps for their ministry. And five pastors received formal coaching from a Missional Vitality Coach, raising the total number of coached pastors to eleven. Moving forward, I encourage every church in the Conference to use the "Periodic Health Checkup" to assess the missional health of their congregation and every lead pastor to engage the services of a Vitality Coach (full scholarships available) for at least six months.

Superintendent Report

Cont

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Our leadership development priorities in 2022, once again coalesced around equipping pastors and elected lay leaders for the challenges created by our rapidly changing culture, helping our churches lean into our collective calling to pursue racial righteousness, providing leadership training to address particular needs in local churches, assisting in pastoral transitions, supporting pastors in the credentialing process with the ECC, and caring for our pastors and lay leaders in the midst of the often exhausting work they do to lead their churches.

Some Highlights in 2022:

Conflict: Addressing conflict in healthy ways was the subject of numerous informal coaching conversations with both pastors and lay leaders in local churches. Racial Righteousness: We encouraged our churches to take steps toward reflecting the demographics of their community, to address racism in their communities, and to pursue ministries of compassion, mercy and justice. Leadership Support: We coached 36 churches in best practices to improve financial accounting and reporting systems, develop fair compensation packages for pastoral staff, or review their staffing structure. We provided a webinar to help church leaders strengthen their financial management practices. We consulted with two churches in matters of possible property transactions. We coached 15 churches/pastors in the various stages of pastoral transition: preparing for a transition, concluding a ministry, finding an interim pastor, conducting a search process, and installing a new pastor. Theological Education: We engaged with North Park Seminary staff to continue to provide access to theological education at reduced costs for GLC church staff members.



Baptism at Camp



*Hope Community Church
at Women's retreat*



*Mission Trip to the
Dominican Republic*



*Communion at Mosaic
Church - Grand Rapids*

Credentialing: We guided, coached, and coordinated licensing interviews for 15 pastors who either began their credentialing process or hit a significant milestone in that process. We monitored/assisted 37 additional pastors in the GLC who have renewable credentials with the ECC. Care: The cumulative toll on pastors and leaders caused by the lingering impacts of the COVID pandemic, racial tension, and political polarization continue throughout 2022. To care well for our pastors, GLC staff members prayed regularly for our pastors, contacted pastors individually to check in, urged participation in monthly "cluster" gatherings with peers for prayer, the sharing of best practices, and for mutual encouragement. Staff made it possible for pastors to visit one of our camps for 3-day/2-night getaways at no cost. Multiple pastors received mental health therapy to deal with acute challenges, and partnered with the GLC Ministerial Association officers to provide scholarships so that any pastor who wanted to attend our Pastors Fall Retreat could do so.

Superintendent Report

Con't



CHURCH OUTREACH:

GLC staff members consistently urge our churches to use the BLESS resources of the ECC to foster intentional evangelism. In 2022, five pastors began an annual GLC Evangelism Cohort to strengthen their leadership skills in this critical dimension of their overall ministry. Because our conference camps play a vital role in helping our churches reach people who don't yet know Jesus – particularly youth and children, the Conference once again gave financial support to Camp Mission Meadows, Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp, and Portage Lake Bible Camp to help them serve GLC churches and people in their respective regions.

All of our GLC Ministry initiatives and services are designed and carried out with the intention of helping conference churches become (or remain) - healthy, missional, fruitful and multiplying churches so that together as a Conference of churches we will continue to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. May God bless us and empower us as we partner together to reach that worthy goal.

I conclude my report remembering that the GLC suffered a tragic loss in the passing of Diamond Deyampert, church planter and pastor of The Freedom Room, Detroit, MI on June 17, 2022. The tragedy of the loss was compounded by the fact that Diamond died by her own hand, leaving all who knew her and loved her – including our Conference Staff, church leadership team members, and fellow Covenant pastors – in utter shock and deep grief. The Conference was able to care well for congregants and church leaders and supported their decision to end the ministry, but the deep pain of our collective loss remains. Peace to Diamond's memory.

Garth McGrath

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Garth McGrath".

GLC Ministerial Association Chair - Ken White

Over the past year, it has been a privilege to serve as the Chair of the Great Lakes Conference Ministerial Association (GLCMA) with fellow Ministers, Debbie Montzingo, Jay Fast, Becky Poor, George Goodman, and Carl Franzon. As part of our meetings, Garth McGrath is also an ex-officio member.

The Great Lakes Conference is composed of 74 churches in Michigan, Ohio, the western half of Pennsylvania, western New York, Kentucky, Tennessee, the western half of Virginia, and West Virginia. There are approximately 195 credentialed ministers in the Conference.

This past year, the GLCMA coordinated the Fall Pastors Retreat with speakers Herb and Paula Frost. Prior to that conference, a few members of the GLCMA served as part of the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS). We also took part in organizing the ministerium part of the Conference Annual Celebration. As the chair of GLCMA I was part of the National Ministerial Association Executive Committee that is composed of the chairs of the conferences throughout the US and Canada, along with the chairs of our ethnic ministerial associations, and a few members of the denominational leadership, approximately 25 in total. This committee had not met since the beginning of the pandemic, and as part of that we were asked to answer a few questions. My hope is that in the coming years I can receive GLC ministerial input on these questions. Here is my response to the questions we were asked, which serves as my report for this year.



Sunrise at the Pastors Retreat

1. What are the most significant challenges currently facing those in your association? What resources are needed for responding to those challenges?

Along with every other church in our denomination, we have faced COVID-related challenges that come from the loss of congregational members and ensuing budget challenges, along with the emotional drain of the COVID experience. Ministers must navigate what these declines mean, along with how to minister in-person, both in the congregational setting and in areas like visitation. The resources necessary for these challenges include emotional/mental health resources such as: continuing pastoral care for pastors, therapeutic needs for counseling, and funding. Pastors continue to need help in forward planning and the systems necessary to move forward, encouragement in vision-casting and strategic thinking, and how to effectively communicate the gospel to others. Our superintendent, Garth McGrath, has stated that during this time Caucasian pastors that are leaning into issues around racial righteousness have experienced strong resistance. The Anti-Racism Discipleship Cohort has been a good resource for this ongoing work.

GLC Ministerial Association Chair

Con't



Pastors Retreat- Maumee State Park

2. Where do you see the Spirit at work amongst your association members?

The Great Lakes Conference has seen 8-10 new church plants in the last few years. During the first year of COVID, Harbert Community Church started the Harbor Country Emergency Food Pantry for those with food insecurity, and this has given them great standing in the community. Along with them, Journey Covenant Church, Cuyahoga Falls, OH has reached out into the community to meet food insecurity needs. Churches who have sustained their online ministry, like Life Church Southfield, MI and Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, MI, are beginning to experience the fruit of that with people connecting and coming back. Bethany Covenant in Dubois, PA has engaged in a Shalom circle, an initiative of LMDJ, to meet needs.

3. What are ways that we can learn from you to connect with others in ministry, what are ways that we can pray for greater connection?

A cluster group in Syracuse, NY has sustained an online meeting format so that pastors can keep connected internationally. The LifeChurch network group in metro Detroit meets once a month for sermon prep and brainstorming, so that several churches can share sermon ideas and generate other ideas. Perhaps a prayer calendar, similar to the Serve Globally Prayer Calendar would be helpful for each conference and nationwide.

4. How is your Ministerial Association living into the "Six Fold Test?"

Over half of our recent church plants since 2009 (23 church plants - 16 in total) have church planters who are persons of color. The officers on our ministerial association are diverse and our mosaic is becoming richer.

GLC Spiritual Directors Network

2022 is the eighth year the Spiritual Directors Network of the Great Lakes Conference (SDNGLC) has been operational as an ongoing Special Ministries category and the thirteenth year of its existence. In the past few years, our communal practices were curtailed as the world grappled with the reality of Covid 19 (this included not gathering in retreat as a network in 2022). However, we are excited to report we are in the planning stages for a 2023 retreat.

We look forward to once again offering one retreat per year to our Network members, providing an opportunity for personal renewal, collaboration, encouragement, and resourcing. In these retreats, we invite guest speakers to teach on various topics related to spiritual direction that are relevant to our individual practices. At times, we provide resources such as books and other materials and we offer to 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.

Our Network numbers have shifted as people move and adjust their lives. We currently have 15 active spiritual directors engaged throughout the Conference. All are eligible to attend the retreats and are seeing directees on a regular basis. Of the individuals being seen regularly, less than 30-40% are Covenant pastors.

Many of our members conduct retreats at, and classes, in their congregations and elsewhere, some also have ministries in prisons, inner healing, and on miscellaneous other topics. Several of our directors offer direction at the women's and men's retreats at Portage Lake Bible Camp. Through those associations, Portage Lake Bible Camp has added a Contemplative Retreat to their retreat season, led by SDNGLC directors. Through all these efforts, many people are ministered to each year. Sharing our experiences with each other is part of the resourcing and networking advantages we receive when we gather at our annual retreat.

Given there is a surplus in our account at the end of 2022, we are not requesting annual support from the Conference for 2023. We do anticipate requesting funding for future years to allow our retreats to be offered to the Network members.

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 2022.

Patti Harrison



*Spiritual
Direction*



Are you seeking a deeper relationship with Christ? A soul friend or spiritual companion can offer support, encouragement, and accountability on your spiritual journey.

GLC Women Ministries - Chair

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:57

These words from the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth were certainly true for GLC Women Ministries in 2022. We appreciate the opportunity to share what the Lord enabled us to do through Women Ministries in the GLC. We faced some challenges during the year but with the Holy Spirit's guidance we have been shown the way to take amid unforeseen circumstances.

We give thanks to the Lord that we were able to hold our first in-person overnight fall women's retreats since Covid interrupted them three years ago. "Reignite" was our very fitting theme as we reignited retreats after a three year absence due to Covid. Our retreats looked a bit different this year. Some of the usual "frills" were not there, breakout and recreational offerings were scaled back, and attendance was down from previous years. Retreats were held last fall at Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp, near Manistee, MI; Camp Mission Meadows near Jamestown, NY; and at the Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp near Jonesville, VA. It was good for women to be together again and comments like this one, "I love meeting new people and the friendships I develop last a lifetime" reflect their joy. There were first-timers at all three retreats which demonstrate the value of gathering in community. Going forward, our camps will be more involved in the planning and we look forward to continued good working relationships with them as we strengthen the vital mission of retreats for women in Covenant churches and in our communities.



We also give thanks to the Lord that our GLC Women Ministries chair, Phyllis Van, is recovering and gaining strength after months of hospitalization and rehabilitation. This is clear evidence of God answering prayers and restoring her to health and wholeness.

As we look to the future of Women Ministries, our focus needs to be on its vision including areas that still need to be developed. This could include mentoring, spiritual direction, or contemplative gatherings, to give some examples, as well as raising awareness of areas that are already available. We desire to reignite a passion in women to know the Lord more fully and to encourage all of us to grow spiritually and relationally as well. We are confident that as we depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us that He will lead the way and open the right doors at the right times.

A part of casting an expanded vision for Women Ministries also involves developing a diversified team of women of different ages, from various states in the conference and different size churches in rural, urban, and suburban settings. The team needs to represent the composition of the Conference. Assistance will be needed from lay leaders and pastors to help identify women who share our passion and who would be potential team members. We recognize that we also need assistance if we are to become a ministry resource for our Great Lakes Conference churches.

The future for Women Ministries in the GLC is bright but challenging and changing in the uncertain times in which we live. The same God who led women many decades ago to form Covenant Women is the same God who will walk with Women Ministries into the future. "For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:4. We give Him our thanks and praise!

Bette Wagenmaker, GLC Women Ministries planning team member

NAJO Report 2022

Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto

It has been almost 13 years since Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto came as missionaries from Japan to the Great Lakes Conference (GLC). The Miyamotos, the GLC, and the Detroit area churches, formed North American Japanese Outreach or NAJO to share God's love and Good News among the many thousands of Japanese living in the GLC. NAJO is based at Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, MI, where many of the ongoing ministry events occur. Some of these events include Conversational English Class, American Cooking Class including, Thanksgiving food demonstration, Bible Study (in person and over Zoom), and a variety of crafting classes. 2020 and 2021 saw a decline in ministry due to the Covid pandemic as many of the Japanese here in the GLC who worked for the Japanese auto companies returned home. However, 2022 saw a number of Japanese families return to the Detroit area. In late winter and early spring, the Miyamotos and Faith Covenant Church hosted several special events:

- Feb. 14 - Open House/Valentine's party at the Miyamoto's- This was a meal with over 15 Japanese and Faith Covenant Church members.
- March 31 - Easter Luncheon at the Miyamoto's- There were 12 Japanese adults and 14 kids plus six Faith Covenant Church members. Pastor Mike shared an Easter message.
- April 17 - Easter Sunday - Eight Japanese families attended the service at Faith Covenant Church. Between services many kids had the opportunity to hunt for Easter eggs.

The Miyamotos returned to Japan for a 2-month summer mission trip from 5/22 - 7/18. Shunichi spoke at six venues; he and Masako were overjoyed to see God's work- six new believers, 18 people who returned to the faith, and 17 people who rededicated their lives. One of the highlights of the trip included a reunion in Nagoya for Michigan returnees (Japanese that gave their lives to Christ through NAJO while in the US). Everyone enjoyed a great time of fellowship, talking about church, old memories, and the realities of life back in Japan. Another highlight was participating in a 5-part workshop of a Japanese translation of "BLESS", the discipleship training program from the ECC. They were able to put chapter 3 (eating together) into practice by hosting a potluck with a family from the Japan Covenant Church.



NAJO Report 2022

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After the Miyamotos returned to the US, it was time to start looking forward to the fall. In September, ESL classes (renamed "Friends ESL") restarted at the church. The ESL students were offered more than just the opportunity to learn English but were also given the opportunity to join a Bible study, make American foods like apple pie, and have a fun Thanksgiving dinner while learning about American culture.

In December, two Japanese women professed their faith and become Christians. It was a long, slow process over Zoom, but finally in their last meeting with the Miyamotos, the ladies understood the true love of Christ and believed. Hallelujah!

NAJO and the mission and ministry of Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto stay the same, but the people that are ministered to are always changing as expats come and go. NAJO and the Miyamotos are grateful for God and for the support of the GLC churches that have made this ministry possible.



GLC Executive Board and GLC Staff

Board Members

Chair.....Doug McCann
2025 - 2nd

Vice Chair.....Sara Charlton
2023 - 1st

Secretary.....Amorette Clausen
2023 - 1st

Treasurer.....Katherine Kayser
2024 - 2nd

Trustee.....Bruce Baehr
2023 - 1st

Trustee.....Gina Roberts
2023 - 1st

Trustee.....Jim Russell
2024 - filling term

Trustee.....Connie Berry
2024 - 2nd

Trustee.....Mark Nelson
2024 - 1st

Trustee.....Ardena Duren
2025 - 1st

Trustee.....Harvey Cozart
2025 - 1st

Trustee.....Brian Rudy
2025 - 2nd

GLC Staff Members

Superintendent.....Garth McGrath
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Ass't to the Director of Church Planting.....Phil Carr
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GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE
OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

21840 W. Nine Mile Rd.
Southfield, MI 48075
248-595-8098

Great Lakes Conference Churches

Four Rivers Church	Calvert City	Kentucky
Grace Community Covenant Church	Louisville	Kentucky
One Church Louisville, Inc.	Louisville	Kentucky
Lighthouse Church	Richmond	Kentucky
Christ Community Church	Allegan	Michigan
LifeChurch Auburn Hills	Auburn Hills	Michigan
Evergreen Evangelical Covenant Church	Branch	Michigan
Life Covenant Church	Canton	Michigan
Evangelical Covenant Church	Cheboygan	Michigan
Dearborn Evangelical Covenant Church	Dearborn	Michigan
Citadel of Faith Covenant Church	Detroit	Michigan
City Covenant Church	Detroit	Michigan
Detroit Bible Tabernacle	Detroit	Michigan
Hope Community Church	Detroit	Michigan
LifeChurch Riverside	Detroit	Michigan
Messiah Church	Detroit	Michigan
Federated Covenant Church	Dowagiac	Michigan
Faith Covenant Church	Farmington Hills	Michigan
Bachelor Evangelical Covenant Church	Fountain	Michigan
Esperanza Covenant Church	Grand Rapids	Michigan
First Evangelical Covenant Church	Grand Rapids	Michigan
Mosaic Covenant Church of Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Michigan
Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church	Grand Rapids	Michigan
Harbert Community Church	Harbert	Michigan
Kalamazoo Covenant Church	Kalamazoo	Michigan
Bretton Woods Covenant Church	Lansing	Michigan
Evangelical Covenant Church	LeRoy	Michigan
Christ Covenant Church	Livonia	Michigan
LifeChurch Livonia	Livonia	Michigan
Faith Covenant Church	Manistee	Michigan
Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church	Muskegon	Michigan
Miracle of Faith Ministries	New Baltimore	Michigan
Evangelical Covenant Church	Northport	Michigan
Forest Park Covenant Church	Norton Shores	Michigan
New Hope Church	Richland	Michigan
Love of Christ Christian Center	Royal Oak	Michigan
Saranac Community Church	Saranac	Michigan
Crossroads Community Church	South Lyon	Michigan
LifeChurch Southfield	Southfield	Michigan
West Bay Covenant Church	Traverse City	Michigan

Great Lakes Conference Churches

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Covenant Presbyterian Church	Tustin	Michigan
Evangelical Covenant Church	Whitehall	Michigan
Fruitland Evangelical Covenant Church	Whitehall	Michigan
Grace Evangelical Covenant Church	Clay	New York
First Covenant Church	Jamestown	New York
Zion Covenant Church	Jamestown	New York
Redeemer Evangelical Covenant Church	Liverpool	New York
First Covenant Church	Ashtabula	Ohio
Austintown Community Ev. Cov. Church	Austintown	Ohio
Life Transformation Church	Columbus	Ohio
Revival Covenant Church	Columbus	Ohio
Sanctuary Columbus Church	Columbus	Ohio
Journey Covenant Church	Cuyahoga Falls	Ohio
Covenant Community Church	Fairfield	Ohio
Redeemer Church	Hamilton	Ohio
Bethany Covenant Church	Lyndhurst	Ohio
St. John's Evangelical Covenant Church	Millersburg	Ohio
Faith Covenant Church	Westerville	Ohio
First Covenant Church	Willoughby Hills	Ohio
First Covenant Church	Youngstown	Ohio
Stoneridge Covenant Church	Allison Park	Pennsylvania
First Covenant Church	Bessemer	Pennsylvania
Bethany Covenant Church	DuBois	Pennsylvania
Emmanuel Mission Church	Kane	Pennsylvania
Cityview Covenant Church	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania
Keystone Church of Hazelwood	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania
Evangelical Covenant Church	Port Allegany	Pennsylvania
Scandia Evangelical Covenant Church	Russell	Pennsylvania
Mission Covenant Church	Sugar Grove	Pennsylvania
Pleasant Community Church	Warren	Pennsylvania
The Movement Church	Antioch	Tennessee
Wallens Creek Covenant Church	Duffield	Virginia
New Community Covenant Church	Buckhannon	West Virginia
One Hope Covenant Church	Elkins	West Virginia

2023-2024 Camp Board Members

Mission Meadows, LLC Board Members

Mission Meadows Board Members serve 2-year terms and may be elected for three consecutive terms.

- Position 1: Tom Jones (elected to his third term, ending in 2025)
- Position 2: Tami LaPaze-Paullin (elected to her first term, ending in 2025)
- Position 3: Aaron Reinard (elected to his third term, ending in 2025)
- Position 4: Stephen Zimmerly (elected to his third term, ending 2025)
- Position 5: James Swanson (serving his first term, ending in 2024)
- Position 6: Carolyn Palmquist (serving her second term, ending in 2024)
- Position 7: Fred Rizzuto (serving his second term, ending in 2024)
- Position 8: Paul Aley (elected to his first term, ending in 2025)
- Position 9: Vacant

Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp Board Members

Camp bylaws stipulate that the GLC Executive Board acts on behalf of the Conference to elect PLCBC Board Members. Board Members serve 3-year terms, and may be elected two consecutive times.

- Position 1: Krista Umanos (elected to second term, which ends in 2026)
- Position 2: Craig Smith (elected to first term, which ends in 2026)
- Position 3: Michelle Bennett (elected to first term, which ends in 2026)
- Position 4: Lars Anderson (serving his second term which ends in 2024)
- Position 5: Eric Lans (serving his first term which ends in 2024)
- Position 6: Cindy Pointe (serving her first term, ending in 2024)
- Position 7: Steve Hansma (serving his second term, ending in 2025)
- Position 8: Stephanie Taylor (serving her first term, ending in 2025)
- Position 9: Mark Schut (serving his second term, ending in 2025)

Director of Church Planting - Alan Tumpkin



After two years of a pandemic that brought pain and weariness to church planters across the country, God saw fit to open the world up. Many of our churches, years one through five have recovered nicely and are now experiencing fruit. In 2021, we did not assist in the planting of a new church, but in 2022 we assisted in three church plants, The Freedom Room led by Diamond DeYampert (see discussion below), Life Transformation Church led by David Williams, and Mosaic Church of Grand Rapids led by Noah Filipiak. Though planted during the tail end of the pandemic, two of the three churches are gaining traction, making disciples, and serving their respective communities.

Even though last year was fruitful for new church plants, it brought personal challenges for me. From May through August, I was on bed rest due to stomach cancer surgery. Fortunately, the GLC was prepared for my absence, contracting Justin Bowers to serve as a coach for new church plants, as well as Phil Carr, who serves as the Assistant to the Director of Church Planting. Our church planting movement didn't miss a beat. Not only were new churches served, but churches that were planted over the past five years received coaching, church visits, and pastoral care. As you will see in our church planting reports, the efforts of our church planting team produced much fruit in the form of missional traction in many of our church plants.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the tragic loss of Diamond DeYampert, one of our church planters, in June, 2022. Sadly, after struggling with mental and physical health issues, Diamond took her own life. Diamond's death took place while I was on leave, but I'm thankful for a GLC staff that served the Freedom Room community by walking alongside, organizing group grief counseling, and helping this young community close out their mission in dignity. This tragic loss has motivated us at the GLC, as well as the broader denomination, to begin discussions on how we can ensure the readiness of church planters, which means rethinking our assessment process, especially as it relates to mental health.

As we move forward with church planting initiatives in the years ahead, we continue to envision that our preferred model for planting will be the "parenting" model. In this model, the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) and the GLC partner with an existing church to work together to give birth to a new church plant. Research and our own experience continue to show that this model tends to produce the strongest church plants. However, other models for planting may also be utilized and/or considered. Other models include the "partnership" model in which multiple churches contribute to the birth of a new church, and the house-church model which is a group of believers gathering in homes for worship, typically led by a parent church or overseer. We are open to these models, however, as mentioned earlier, plants do better with parents.

Please visit the GLC web site at www.greatlakes.cc to become a Mission Friend for Church Planting.



One Hope Covenant Church



Pastor Bobby Benavides

What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

Our biggest challenge was financial. We are trying to meet certain needs in the community and stay true to the heart of our original vision of planting our church. We want to be a church that would be missed in our community if we had to close our doors. In order to do that, we need to be serving and loving the community well.

So, we were limited in what we could accomplish due to our rent payment and other financial responsibilities.

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

Although our finances were not the best, we still saw a group of people in our church rise to the occasion to serve and love our community well. They planned service events, they collected clothing and canned food items, and they worked to make sure our trunk or treat and community meal were a success.

They definitely didn't hold back their gifts and used them to glorify God to the community around us.

What are you grateful for on behalf of the church for 2022?

We are grateful that the GLC and other churches helped to support us financially to keep us moving forward. We are grateful for the new families and individuals who came to join us at the end of 2022. We are grateful that our children's ministry is back in action. We are thankful that we are still open and God is allowing us to do what we are called to do.

One Hope Covenant Church - Elkins, WV



What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

We still continue to struggle financially. We are in a rural community with people who do not have a lot of financial resources to spare. We are able to keep moving, but that is one of the greater needs that has arisen over 2022.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

Now that we have found ourselves on the back end of COVID and are able to plan for future events, we are getting back into gear of planning and implementing community service projects and partnering with other churches to serve together.

We have a block party planned for an under-resourced part of our community to spread some love and joy in a place that does not necessarily receive that well. We have summer events and outreach plans in motion. We hope to see an increase in people attending, but most importantly an increase in people coming to hear the message of love and hope of Christ through our church being in the community, serving and sharing His gospel.

Lighthouse Church



Pastor Harvey Cozart

What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

Our biggest challenge was experiencing a financial deficit that we are currently working towards shrinking. Another challenge was watching our Children's Ministry grow but needing more volunteers to help serve in that ministry.

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

During the year of 2022 God has done some exciting things through Lighthouse Church! We had several powerful testimonies of students coming to faith through the Campus Ministry Staff who attend our church and with whom we partner with in sharing the gospel on campus. We have been able to make a significant impact in our community in our partnership with the Richmond Teen Center through our Give N Go Youth Mentoring Outreach! We have been able to lead our congregation in strong discipleship through our Inductive Community Bible Study that we do every 4th Sunday of the month! We have been able to grow as a community and church body by launching our weekly Lighthouse Community Groups! We have seen new faces visit our church weekly and new members and families become a part of our church! We are so thankful for all that God is doing. God is a missionary who is on a mission and He has called us to join Him on that mission. His mission is that we would go preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations.

Lighthouse Church - Richmond, KY



What are you grateful for on behalf of the church for 2022?

I am grateful for a church that is hungry for scripture and the presence of the Lord. I am so grateful for our leadership and their servant hearts for our community and the church.

What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

The needs we saw from the congregation were from those who were grieving after suffering loss. We helped those with financial hardship, and prayed for folks in the congregation who had sickness and other health issues during the year.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

My Prayer and hope is that our church would be bold in the area of evangelism and share their faith to all who God would put in their path. One goal is to continue to grow our Community Groups so that we will see seven thriving Community Groups by spring! Our hope is to lead many to faith and have several baptisms during the year of 2023. Another goal is to help train and equip our leadership and the congregation to faithfully utilize their gifts to meet the needs of the Body of Christ and the local church.

LifeChurch Auburn Hills

Pastor Donearl Johnson



What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

Our biggest challenge in 2022 was regaining traction from the cascading effects of launching a multiethnic church plant in 2019, the disruption of the pandemic, racial and political tension in 2020, getting our team, volunteers, and members back into the rhythm of in-person gathering in 2021 and fully transitioning back to in-person. Also, we had to move from our elementary school where we launched and had all of our previous gatherings and outreach, and find a new location because the school district could no longer accommodate us due to their custodial workers being overworked and understaffed post-pandemic. Additionally, we had to make cuts on an already bare-bones budget that impacted staffing and somewhat limited our outreach activity.



LifeChurch Auburn Hills
Auburn Hills, MI

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

Despite the many challenges we have encountered in our short existence, we have witnessed God continue to grant us favor in the Auburn Hills Community. We partnered with the city to plan and lead the MLK Day program for the citizens of Auburn Hills and challenged them to make moves toward pursuing justice. During the summer, we partnered with the school district and an amazing local non-profit organization (Kaleo Arts) to provide an environment of community and creativity through song, arts, and drama to a select group of students that culminated in a full performance. We connected with the families and established deeper relationships through continual outreach. Several of the families came to visit us as well. Also, a member of our church felt led to start a mentoring program to connect with several of the young ladies who participated. The parents were open and allowed their daughters to participate.

Additionally, we were able to secure a new location that was very close to the school and negotiate a good deal that was instrumental in providing space for more outreach without extra cost. God has brought new families and individuals who have committed to LifeChurch Auburn Hills, which is helping us move forward. We have experienced relational depth and growth as we joined together to go deeper in our faith and reach out to our community via small groups, picnics at the park events, Friday evening basketball games (20+ participants), a family fun night, a chili cookoff, participation in an annual Auburn Hills Easter Egg Hunt, a holiday drive, and various other outreach activities in passionate pursuit to make and deepen disciples and to be a blessing to our neighbors. We also celebrated that two individuals recommitted their lives to Christ.

LifeChurch Auburn Hills

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Our Next Gen/Life Students (6th - 12th graders) had the opportunity to lead an entire Sunday service from the worship to the delivery of the message. It was a powerful service with many adults who were moved to tears by the two young speakers' vulnerability, honesty, and resolve to follow Christ. Also, they have been faithfully serving in some capacity every Sunday.

Lastly, we had a church retreat that created space for us to celebrate where we have been, thank God for where we are, and share and anticipate where God is leading us as a multiethnic community. We were able to connect and have fun while participating in various games and activities which included boating, kayaking, and a moment of empowerment to close out our day.

What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

We have reached a point of financial strain due to the various disruptions and transitions that have had a direct impact on staffing and outreach. We have reached the end of life on much of our equipment that has been in use since our launch. Also, we have leaders and volunteers who are tired but yet pursuing. This has presented direct financial needs, the need for new instruments, cabling, sound equipment, and updated technology.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

Our hope is to continue to gain momentum and reach more people in our community. We are actively planning and partnering with our local school district to launch the Auburn Hills Life Center which will provide a safe space where children and families can be educated, empowered, and engaged through value-added workshops, creative curriculum, life skills training, and networking opportunities. We are working with industry professionals to address some of the residual mental health needs from the pandemic and have launched grief support groups to journey with so many who have experienced loss. Additionally, we plan to continue to foster relationships with local organizations to provide for real and felt needs. Lastly, we are committed to evaluating and refining our ministry systems, caring well for those God sends us, and continuing to trust God for vision and provision.



LifeChurch Riverside

Pastor Georgja A. Hill



What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

Our biggest challenge during 2022 was making the transition from online church to in-person church. Since we started during the pandemic, the only thing we ever knew was being an online church. During 2022, we had to put into action our skills as an in-person church, welcoming people in and figuring out how to do safe COVID procedures and having live music. We had some bumps and bruises along the way, but we continued to learn and grow. Currently we meet twice a month in person and every week online.

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

God's presence was felt as we began to function more smoothly on Sunday mornings which contributed to our teams functioning well. We gained a certain amount of stability as the setup team, teach team, and connections teams gained their 'rhythm'. This made it possible for us to welcome newcomers and enjoy one another during the service.

What are you grateful for on behalf of the church for 2022?

I am super grateful for the volunteers! LCR (LifeChurch Riverside) folk have done a great job of staffing the teams, showing up for service with a smile on their faces, helping any who have a need and they have given from the heart. I am always reminded that it takes a team of committed people to be the church of Jesus Christ. We had a combination church anniversary-volunteer appreciation brunch on the first Sunday in December of 2022. I really enjoyed the laughter, the friendship and the opportunity to thank all those whose contributions have made LifeChurch Riverside happen.



LifeChurch Riverside
Detroit, MI

What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

We are still looking for a more permanent location. We are meeting on a former college campus, Marygrove College, and this has worked quite well for us, but we would like to have a space that we could call our own. We are in the process of looking.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

We are planning to go weekly during the Spring of 2023. We are planning to reach out to all those in our database with love and support. We plan to make prayer, and offering prayer to folk, an even more important part of our ministry. We will focus on evangelism and do an outreach at a large downtown Detroit event. We are planning two major day-long workshops: one during the fall and one in the spring. We will celebrate at least one Riverside Scholar with a financial gift.

Mosaic Covenant Church of Grand Rapids



Pastor Noah Filipiak

What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

Our biggest challenge was getting this new church plant off the ground. Initially, that was gathering enough people on our launch team, running preview services (which were a lot of work!), and then doing more outreach and more recruiting to get the "second wave" of core people that we desperately needed. We needed this second wave so we would have critical mass and enough volunteers to run things without our initial crew of volunteers getting burnt out.

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

The number one place was with salvations and baptisms. We did a ton of outreach and got to see God do some amazing things. We had 17 people make first time decisions for salvation (16 in 2022, 1 in 2023 so far). Some of these people are transient and for some their decision may not have "stuck" (I'm reminded of the parable of the sower often!), but I praise God that each of those decisions did mean something and that the Holy Spirit will use them. For some, it was the moment they crossed the line of faith and became a Jesus follower and for others, I know the Holy Spirit will use it to bring fruit when they are ready. We also had the privilege of baptizing six people in 2022 and four more so far in 2023. It is awesome to hear testimonies of someone's salvation and to see how our baptism services inspire others to accept Christ and be baptized at our next baptism service. We also saw God at work in our church shaping it to become more multi-ethnic. This is a huge intentional goal for us and as a white church planter, frankly, is a big risk. We really put it out there that we are multi-ethnic, did a lot of intentional things to make that vision a reality, but it was a risk. There was a chance we wouldn't actually become multi-ethnic. This will always be an intentional challenge for us, especially with a white lead pastor, but praise God that we are multi-ethnic and aim to continue to grow in this.



Mosaic Covenant Church of Grand Rapids

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What are you grateful for on behalf of the church for 2022?

That we got off the ground! We were doing a lot of outreach in the summer, but our Sunday attendance was stagnant. It was basically the same people, and a small number at that. To be honest, our overall group hadn't changed much from our initial launch team we had from January - April and I could feel the discouragement setting in. So we did a "Fall Festival" in September. This was three outdoor worship services in our parking lot where we rented a big tent and then after church had a cookout with a bounce house and kids' activities. These three Sundays were very well attended and really gave us exposure in the neighborhood. We saw people come to Christ and become permanent members of Mosaic. This event got us out of the rut we were in as we experienced new salvations, more ethnic diversity, numerical growth, and more people coming from our immediate neighborhood. While we still have a long way to go, I feel we have critical mass now and we continue to have natural momentum. That's what I mean by "off the ground."

What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

We continue to need more volunteers, particularly in our worship team, kids ministry, and setup team. I am always conscious and aware of the potential of burning out our faithful volunteers. Our need is for our new attendees to become committed volunteers, as well as tithers. We also have a lot of physical needs. Helping people find jobs, buy cars, and secure housing. We will need energy to do our Summer Lights outreach ministry again as well. It was a ton of energy last summer, and I am hoping and praying that people are excited to go again, and not fatigued by the prospect of doing it all again.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

I'd love to see us grow in our discipleship. I'd love to see our new small groups be places where people dig deep into relationship with God and with each other. I'm thankful for our four small groups as they provide a space outside of Sunday morning for ministry to happen. We also have a goal of growing our Sunday attendance further, connecting more with the neighborhood, and seeing our brand new youth ministry grow both deep and wide. Another goal with our youth ministry, is to provide a church and discipleship bridge for all the teens we've done outreach with from the Boys & Girls Club, Summer Lights, and Grand Rapids F.I.R.E. track team small groups that we lead in the summer.



Mosaic Covenant Church of Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids, MI

Life Transformation Church



Pastor David Williams

What was the church's biggest challenge for 2022?

A significant challenge we had in 2022 was effectively communicating the ministry of our church to our community. The pandemic made the use of social media platforms very important for doing ministry. Coming out of COVID, people in our society began to “visit” churches through digital means before coming to worship in person. Our plans to effectively use social media for the purpose of connecting with people in our community were undermined by a lack of consistency in our volunteers. For various reasons we had three different persons during 2022 that were responsible for our social media. We hope to have greater consistency in the year ahead.

Where did you see God at work in and through the church during 2022?

We signed our Church Planter Agreement in July of 2022, which allowed our pastor to focus more on the church and less on other work to support his family. With the infusion of resources from the Conference and the Covenant, we were able to purchase video equipment and secure personnel for our worship service (musicians, streaming director, videographer). We were able to expand our outreach efforts to two additional ministry agencies, “She has a Name” (addressing Human Trafficking), and “Kindway” (a prison ministry). At the request of our adopted public school officials, we purchased over 200 headphones for the students in the school, and we provided teachers & staff with an appreciation luncheon. We provided personal hygiene and household supplies to victims of human trafficking who had made their way out of their captivity.

What are you grateful for on behalf of the church for 2022?

We are grateful that we were able to start two discipleship groups coming off of our year of discipleship training. We are super grateful for the people who have been faithful from day one, especially in light of the fact that we started our church development in the midst of the pandemic. We are grateful for the indicators that we may have the opportunity to move into the city of Columbus from the suburbs soon. And we are grateful for the opportunity to establish new Kingdom partners.



Life Transformation Church
Columbus, Ohio

What needs have resulted for the church from 2022?

We need more committed laborers to bring in the harvest. We need to find a church in the city that will allow us to share their church building with us. And we need to find more generous givers to help with the cost of our ministry, because the overall cost of ministry after the pandemic is greater than pre-pandemic.

What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for the church for 2023?

We hope to move into the inner city, gather and make more disciples, and collaborate with other churches and the area to serve the community. We intend to improve our social media presence, engage in more outreach events, and engage in at least one domestic trip. We would love to participate in an overseas mission trip, too. We plan to start a children's bible study at the elementary school we adopted.

Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp - PLCBC

We exist to help people experience the transforming power of God at camp by engaging in real FUN, real FAITH, & real FRIENDSHIP

It is a fact that God transforms lives at camp. What has been true for 76 years was also true this year, God was at work transforming lives – those of campers, families, and staff. Each of those stories make up part of the larger story of God – the story of creation, redemption, salvation, and transformation. Actually, the thing that makes a story worth telling is how someone(s) overcame, grew, and became more than they ever thought they could. At camp, we've witnessed that this year both individually and collectively.

In our efforts to do good ministry this year, we've faced some challenges including navigating Covid, a shortage of summer staff, full-time staff transitioning away, a broken dining hall well during family camp, a polluted well at my house, and even the death of the dining hall coffee machine at the kick off of summer. I have a phrase written on the board above my desk that synthesizes a way of dealing with challenges I've tried to practice over the years: When you encounter a "problem ... absorb, adjust, overcome." With God's help we have overcome and turned headwinds into the resistance needed to SOAR (the summer theme from Isaiah 40:31).

Retreat Season

We began the year with several weekend retreats hosting non-Covenant churches and college groups from Michigan. In one case, we had 317 campers and leaders (in addition to our own volunteers and staff) at camp. Every bed and floor space were consumed and the thousands of footprints in the snow proved just how much real fun was had and real faith was engaged. We also hosted our own GLC high school retreat, fishing retreat, and several adventure learning school groups. The fall resumed with a schedule full of the Men's and the Women's retreats, two quilting groups, and a junior high retreat along with several contract groups from various colleges, high schools, plus large family reunions contracting with us for space. Each of these weekends became opportunities to deepen friendships and engage with God in profound ways.



Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp

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Summer Season

Summer is our most potent ministry time at camp. We see lives transformed over a week of worship, small group engagement, games, waterfront fun, high ropes adventure, and much more. The numbers from this past summer (outlined below) speak to lives transformed. What can't be quantified is: the number of kids who returned home to influence their nominal or non-Christian families, staff who grew to trust Christ in fresh ways or significantly changed the trajectory of their lives, friendships that were deeply forged throughout the summer, new skills or confidence in leading others gained by many, and the immense amount of fun and laughter that breathed life into everyone who came to camp.

Summer camp by numbers



Staff

After losing our cook at the beginning of the summer, we were excited to hire Patti Church as our new Food Services Director in November. Patti is a native of the metro-Detroit area but has family in Manistee. Early in her career she managed several McDonald's franchises, an upscale deli, and even had her own catering business called Patti's Cakes. She has spent the last 12 years running her own house cleaning business. Patti makes working in the kitchen a wonderful experience due to her joyful spirit and deep love of the Lord. Eric Ek (who I reported on last year) began his work in March as our Director of Operations and Finance after nine years as the youth pastor at Faith Covenant in Farmington Hills. His attention to detail and all the behind-the-scenes work has been a gift to us this year. A huge thanks goes out to the rest of our staff who has faithfully served throughout a year of transition: Randy Bennetts (Facilities Manager), Kirstin Crawford (Program Director) and our interns, Willy Condon, Connor Fritz, Tyler Hanson, Maddie Schmuztler, and Fisher Spessard. The work they have done is extraordinary, and I am thankful for the gift they have been to me and all those who have been to camp this year.

Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp

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Staff Continued

A special thanks to Kathy Smith who as our office manager has been the face of camp for visitors and callers for 22 years. Kathy will conclude full-time work with us at the end of the calendar year. We thank God for the gift she has been! We continue to search for a marketing director to fill out our staff – a much needed position in drawing people to camp and camp to people. Please join us in prayer as we seek the right person to help us in our endeavor to help more people experience the transforming power of God.



Capital Projects

We are continually striving to be good stewards of the land, buildings, and resources that God has provided us for ministry to campers. To that end, we have made repairs to several buildings including a roof blown off a shed during a windstorm, and have added insulation to our two oldest cabins for winter use. We finished renovations in the staff lounge with new paint, carpet, and an HVAC system that allows us to use it in all seasons as another comfortable meeting space of small to medium sized groups. We also made a considerable investment in one of our staff houses that had consistent water in the crawl space and cracked window seals. After raising the house and setting a new block foundation, the windows were replaced, and a new deck was built to access the much higher (and dryer!) residence.

General Finances

I am incredibly thankful for the abounding generosity of the Portage Lake family who continue to give to the important ministry of camp. Weekly I am overwhelmed by the substantial and sacrificial gifts given by those who have encountered God here. As we continue to build back staff positions, do necessary repairs on aging buildings, and be good stewards of the gifts God has given us, I am happy to report our solid financial position. Our cash position remains stable at \$178,455. We had several capital projects that went beyond what was designated in the budget, but we were able to cover these expenses with appropriate memorial funds after talking with families about using remaining balances. Without the PPP loans to rely on this year, it felt good to see our finances rebound after the Covid season. Our scholarship and memorial funds are flush and giving to the new Dining Hall eclipsed \$2 million. We are blessed!!

Thank you all for your partnership in this potent ministry through prayer, financial gifts, and hands-on support. God is transforming lives at camp through **real FUN, real FAITH, and real FRIENDSHIP!**

Grace and Peace,

Marc Eix - Executive Director
Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp

Mission Meadows, LLC

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.

Summer: Summer camp was down 24% from pre-pandemic numbers. New York State's restrictions were eased just before the start of summer camp, which contributed to lower numbers. However, the excitement of the kids and staff was overwhelming. Children recommitted their lives to God, made new commitments, and families rejoiced in growing closer together. Our end-of-the season evaluation showed the impact we have made in the lives of families and children.

Staff: This year, we developed an internship program with two year-round interns. This program shows the interns the ins and outs of camp and helps them build their faith and career path. The current year-round staff has been working together for over a year, and they continue to grow into becoming a family rather than just going to a work place.

Volunteers: In the last two years, Mission Meadows has focused on developing their volunteer program. This year, we had a work week where alumni came to worship and work for the week. Some people came for a day, two, or a week. We even had some volunteers stay for 3-4 weeks. In the last two years, we have had 52 volunteers giving over 2,800 hours of service!

Reconnecting with Covenant Churches: Mission Meadows focused this year on reconnecting with Covenant Churches. After a brief survey on how Mission Meadows can give back to local churches, Mega Youth Night was started. Mega Youth Night is an opportunity for youth leaders from the local churches to bring their kids to camp for a fun night without having them do any of the planning. Additionally, visits to the churches have been a high priority. We welcome any opportunity to come speak about all that is happening at Mission Meadows.



Retreats: The retreats at Mission Meadows have continued to grow and thrive in recent years. Whether it is our retreats (Senior High, Junior High, Trailblazer, Women, Men, or Quilting) or an outside church group, retreats at Mission Meadows are a space for campers to connect with God.

Finances: Mission Meadows has been blessed by generous donors who want to see Mission Meadows be here for many generations. As a result, the camp has been able to dream about the future of Mission Meadows and how we will be able to serve the campers. As we go into 2023, the board of Mission Meadows will be doing vision casting and planning on how we can expand our reach. In addition, new programming, and camp options are being explored.

In 2019, Camp Mission Meadows began the process of becoming an LLC. However, COVID halted the progression. In October 2022, the property was deposited into the LLC, and we officially became Mission Meadows, LLC.



Make Room for Jesus Campaign: In early summer 2022, we began a multi-year campaign, Make Room for Jesus, to help meet the growing need for year-round sleeping accommodations and meeting space. Since 1997, with the building of the Activity Center, Mission Meadows has grown into a truly year-round retreat center—it has been exciting to see the fall, winter, and spring months finding new and increasing numbers of retreat-goers. Churches and youth groups, from within the Great Lakes Conference and beyond, have come to Mission Meadows to reinvigorate their ministry, and to bring people closer to Christ.

This kind of growth and ministry opportunity has also revealed two basic and essential challenges to this year-round ministry: not all of our cabins are winterized/heated (nor have internal restroom facilities), and only the Chapel's main sanctuary truly functions as a large-group meeting area. We have found this limits the extent to which we can offer accommodations. The motto for the campaign has been, "Mission Meadows will help more people encounter Christ through making more space, for more people, more often, with more support."

One thing is clear, Mission Meadows is ready to shine bright (Our 2023 summer theme) in 2023 with our focus on Matthew 5:16: *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Blessings,
Jackie Haines, Director
Mission Meadows, LLC

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp (CMMBC)

ROOTED! 2022

Jer. 17:7-8

The branches of a tree fall without the trunk to support them. In a storm with hard winds, branches break loose from the trunk. Sometimes they break completely free. Sometimes they are just bent, bruised if you will. They take on a new orientation. But if the tree has a good root system, it will stand, recover, and thrive.

The year of 2022 held much 'promise pruning,' small changes where the Lord's gentle hand of guidance brought us into line with His wishes. Then there was the 'storm pruning,' which tried to tear us out by the root. Both types of storms can be beneficial when the Lord is in charge and our eyes are on Him in full trust for His best.

We did have campers on the grounds again, but unfortunately, we didn't get to have our full list of camp possibilities. Due to lack of staff, we did not get to hold Junior, Senior, Soccer, nor Bicycle Camp. Oh, what a time of blessing for the camps we were able to have! When Covenant Community (Fairfield, OH) still wanted to be at CMMBC during the week of Senior camp, we held a Family Camp. When Pathfinders was at risk of being canceled, we partnered with Powell River Baptist Association, who had a mission team planning a 3-day VBS during that week. The Lord saw that our Trailblazers and Art Camp went as planned. Oh, what a blessing to see the Lord's hand supplying us with time for learning about Christ, time for fellowship, time for fun, time for making new friends and renewing old friendships, and time for our roots and branches to expand - to stretch deeper and higher - ever closer to our Lord.

The Field's family held a family reunion on the grounds in the spring of 2022. There was lots of joy, fellowship and memories of years of service at the camp and church. The parsonage, the original Dining Hall, and the church building were built on property purchased from the Field's family in the Mt. Washington community of Lee County, Virginia. The church building served as Mt. Washington Covenant Church for many years and still serves as the Chapel for camps each summer.



Volunteers are an essential part of our root system. Just as trees use their roots to provide nutrients necessary for upward and outward growth, CMMBC needs and relies on volunteers to serve for growth. Volunteers find upward growth as they bask in the radiance of Christ's love as they reach up to Him for the Holy Spirit's filling wisdom to handle the needs of the campers. Both volunteers and campers experience outward growth as they stretch toward the world around them, making new friends and sharing the love of Jesus with others.

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

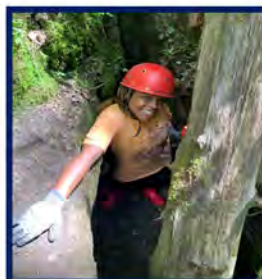
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We were blessed in 2022 to have work teams of various sizes. Grand Valley State University Campus Ministries (MI) sent a 14-member group during their spring break. They were joined by two tradesmen, Derrick Popa and Wayne Hinken, from First Covenant (Grand Rapids, MI). Together they worked on some much-needed construction projects. Jonesville First Baptist, American Concrete (Pennington Gap, VA), and Girl Scout Troop #148 joined us as work groups for building projects and summer camping preparation. Saturday workdays in the spring and fall saw many area volunteers showing up to help.

Our summer camping season saw four camps on site while raising funds for a mission project.

- CMMBC hosted Family Camp for Covenant Community Church of Fairfield, Ohio. They brought 11 people, ages 2 to 17, and 4 adults. Three local teens joined them for the week.
- Pathfinders Camp for ages K-5 saw us busing in 45 campers for an action packed three days with Pinetops Baptist Church of North Carolina. We were graced by the presence of a volunteer from Winnetka Covenant who felt led to keep his commitment to serve. The three days ended with an ice cream social and family time at the splash pad. 40 family members joined their camping youngsters for this.
- A 3-generational team of 22 from Church of the Good Shepherd (Joliet, Illinois) served well at Trailblazer Camp, quickly creating a fun and engaging atmosphere. By Tuesday at breakfast, all our registered campers had switched to overnight campers. We had 18 campers who bunched up on the Chapel steps, begging to get into the church. This group of campers expressed their desire to one day work at CMMBC as junior staff like the Joliet team members.
- Art Camp was hosted by nine local volunteers, serving 21 campers in grades 2-5. This half-day morning camp also ended their week with ice cream and splash pad time with 41 family members joining the fun.
- Our camp summer mission project raised monies for a local organization, Sleep In Heavenly Peace of Lee County, which builds and gives beds (new mattresses and bedding included) to local children who don't have a bed of their own. We raised \$1539 for this most worthy cause. Some campers and camp staff even helped on build days for these beds.
- Between camps, the Splash Pad had 18 different groups with a total of 180 splashers enjoying activities at CMMBC.

Fall brought Jonesville First Baptist and American Concrete back to finish the concrete for the splash pad sidewalks. Recovery In Christ Home (Duffield, VA) sent seven men to put away mattresses and help with fall cleanup. Fall groups using the grounds included 76 members from Maranatha Fellowship, 10 women for the GLC-South Women's Retreat, and 17 for a Jonesville Woman's Club Thanksgiving brunch. In conjunction with Acteens Youth Group (Jonesville, VA), we hosted Lights in the Park in Jonesville, VA.



Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp Con't

What do we see as God's plan for the 2023 camping year?

- **Arts Camp** We would like to be able to offer Art in the morning and Music/Drama in the afternoon to include two different age groups. The younger group would do art in the morning with the older group doing Music/Drama. Then in the afternoon the older would do Arts and the younger groups would do Music/Drama. We need more workers for this to happen.
- **Workers** CMMBC needs many volunteers and mission teams to maintain and improve the facilities. Individuals and groups are invited to help us get ready for Bible Camps and to continue the work on handicap access at the Dining Hall and Splash Pad.
- **Hired summer staff** We have summer positions open for Program, Worship, and Kitchen Interns as well as Summer Camp Counselors. More information and applications are available at cmmbc.org/summer-camp-staff.
- **Summer Mission teams** We need commitments of mission teams for our camps. Without mission teams we cannot do camps. Camps available include:
 - Senior Camp* (grades 8-12) June 18-23 – **mission team needed**
 - Pathfinders* (grades K-5) June 26–30 – **Anchor Covenant (Lake Geneva, WI). Praise the Lord!**
 - Trailblazers* (grades 4-7) July 10-13 – **mission team needed**
 - Arts Camp* (gr. 2-5, gr. 6-12) July 24-28 – **Local Volunteers – additional help welcomed**
 - Bike Camp* (grades 7-12) **dates to be determined by a mission team**
 - Soccer Camp* (grades K-12) **dates to be determined by a mission team and soccer field availability**

Project goals

- o Splash pad social space improvements
- o Install already on-site picnic tables
- o Continue work on handicap ramp
- o Install lights at splash pad
- o Install changing booths
- o Work on parking area
- o Improve camper bath/shower areas
- o Install handicap door in Dining Hall (already onsite)
- o Install fencing around top of handicap parking pad
- o Install steps along handicap parking pad
- o Fix condensation problem in Dining Hall bedroom
- o Replace main waterline from pumphouse to the east side of camp
- o Create a centralized maintenance area for materials and equipment

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

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Legos



Lego and God's Word: a Powerful Combination



What is it about Lego that is so engaging? Put a few Legos in anyone's hands and they will snap the bricks together. Give them a few more bricks and next thing you know they have built something. It is almost irresistible. It's like the Lego calls to us and says, "Come on, you can do it, build something- create something." God's word also has a lot to say about creation and building. The Bible tells us we have been wonderfully made and that we are to build our lives upon the foundation of Christ's words. It also says that we are holy buildings- temples in which God's Holy Spirit resides and together we are living stones that are being built into a dwelling place for our God.



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



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

The GLC Lego City may be reserved/checked out for a few days or several weeks. If your church is interested in using the Lego City, please contact the conference office (248-595-8098; jody@greatlakes.cc). There may be a deposit fee that will be returned to the church if the City is in good shape. If your church wishes to donate toward the Lego City, we could always use bricks. The Lego doesn't need to be new, just whatever your folks have hanging about.



Notes

GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE



21840 W. Nine Mile Rd.
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248-595-8098



Isaiah 30:21 ²¹Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Ephesians 5:1-2 ¹Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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