



November 2023

Dear Fellow Servants of Christ,

As you gather for your congregation's Annual Meeting it is a privilege to greet you on behalf of the 74 churches in the eight states that make up the Great Lakes Conference of Covenant Churches. I join the Apostle Paul in saying to you, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I am grateful for your church's work to serve people in your community, lead people to Jesus, help people grow deep in their relationship with God, equip people for service in Jesus' name and support regional and global missions. I am also grateful for your church's contributions to the Great Lakes Conference and the larger Evangelical Covenant Church so that together – in our three strand strong partnership – we may continue to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world.

During the past year, our partnership enabled us to start New Wine Covenant Church in Mason, MI, and to continue our support of the young Churches in Columbus, OH, Grand Rapids, MI, Muskegon MI, Elkins WV, Nashville TN, Richmond KY and Auburn Hills MI. It enabled us to provide missional vitality coaching, evangelism training, outreach resources and leadership development workshops to pastors and lay leaders to help their churches sustain or regain missional traction. It enabled us to support new pastors in the credentialing process and care for pastors who experienced acute financial or emotional distress so they could remain healthy and whole in ministry. And it enabled us to help churches navigate serious conflict, prepare churches for pastoral transitions and coach churches through pastoral search processes to find their next pastor. It was a good year of ministry together.

As we enter the new year may your church experience the grace of Jesus in your life together, the wisdom of God as you seek his guidance, and the power of the Spirit to fulfill your Kingdom calling. May God bless you richly as you serve together in Jesus' name.

Gratefully, and on behalf of our Conference Board and Staff,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Garth McGrath".

Garth McGrath