



Annual Celebration

Faith Covenant Church

35415 W. 14 Mile Rd, Farmington Hills, MI

48331

GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

2024 AWARDS

CHURCH VITALITY

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

CHURCH OUTREACH

CHURCH PLANTING



THE GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

Many Members, One Body

Arv Anderson & Larry Sherman Award in Church Planting

NEW WINE COVENANT CHURCH, MASON, MI

The Great Lakes Conference is thrilled to share in the wonderful journey that New Wine Covenant Church in Mason, MI is beginning. New Wine's mission is simple yet profound: to reimagine Jesus' love for community with integrity and authenticity being at the very core of everything they do. New faces are welcomed every Sunday. The energy and positivity within the congregation are palpable, reflecting a shared commitment to faith and fellowship.

The pastors, Rick and Terri McGarry, are uniquely positioned to make a difference by reconnecting with the de-churched, individuals who have been hurt by past experiences within religious institutions. Their compassion and understanding create a safe space for healing and spiritual growth. Terri is a licensed professional counselor, specializing in children, teens, and marriages. Both Terri and Rick studied at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary.

At New Wine Covenant Church, families are at the heart of their community outreach efforts. They believe in nurturing strong family bonds and providing support systems that empower everyone to thrive both spiritually and emotionally. They value authenticity above all else and strive to build real connections with each person in the community. At times outreach events are scheduled, but there are no gimmicks, productions, or extravagant displays on Sunday mornings – just faith filled worship along with genuine conversations, heartfelt connections, and a warm embrace for everyone who walks through the doors.

Whether seeking authentic faith, spiritual guidance, or simply a sense of belonging, New Wine Covenant Church welcomes everyone with open arms.



Dave & Beth Chilcoat Award in Church Outreach

FAITH COVENANT CHURCH, FARMINGTON HILLS, MI

Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills, MI has a strong commitment to reaching beyond their walls to share the good news of the gospel with people who don't know Jesus. Outreach has been part of the church's DNA since their founding in 1914 and the church continues to touch lives in powerful, personal ways locally, regionally and globally.

Locally, the church supports Another Way Pregnancy Center, City Covenant Church/Mission City Tutoring Program, At-The-Table (a micro-loan and entrepreneur-mentoring ministry of City Covenant Church in the Brightmoor neighborhood of Detroit), Covenant Community Care (founded by a member of the church in 1997, now providing whole-person healthcare guided by the love of Jesus to 20,000 people each year), the North American Japanese Outreach ministry housed in their facility, and Life Challenge Ministries in Detroit. Regionally, the church supports the work of KICY Radio in Alaska (broadcasting the gospel to Russia), CRU Ministries at Michigan State University, and has long been a leading contributor to the ministries of both the Great Lakes Conference and the larger Evangelical Covenant Church as we strive to develop leaders, strengthen existing churches, and start new churches in order to advance the Kingdom of God in the Great Lakes Region and across North America. Globally, the church has a strong history of supporting Covenant missionaries in Thailand, France, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, and Cameroon, and recently added the ministry of Tal Como Soy (Come As You Are) in the Dominican Republic to the list of global ministries they support.

Faith feels it is necessary to not only give financially to ministries they believe in, but also to get "boots on the ground" in sharing the love of Jesus. During the month of September in each of the past two years, Faith has sent a group of people to the Dominican Republic to work with Pastors Jochy and Tammi Hernandez in the ministry of their local church, Tal Como Soy. Their purpose each year was to pour compassion into the community so that the residents might connect with the church and eventually come to know and follow Jesus. The surrounding area consists primarily of single mothers with no male involvement. These families do not feel welcome in the typical local church because they are expected to have their lives in "perfect order" to attend. By contrast, Tal Como Soy encourages everyone to "come as they are" so they can experience the love of Jesus Christ regardless of where they are in their personal life.

During the first "boots on the ground" trip to the Dominican Republic, the Faith group helped with house construction in the daylight hours and then facilitated workshops in the evening hours for those in the community. Last fall, in addition to helping with construction projects, the team was able to provide professional medical and dental care to almost 300 people who otherwise have no access or ability to pay for such services. This pouring into the community has made a difference. According to Pastors Tammi and Jochy, Tal Como Soy has seen a significant increase in church attendance and participation. Planning is well underway for another "boots on the ground" trip in September of 2024.

As recipients of the Church Outreach Award, may Faith Covenant Church continue to shine the light of Christ to the world, making a lasting difference for the Kingdom of God.



Richard Lucco Award in Church Leadership

BETHANY COVENANT CHURCH, LYNDHURST, OH

The recipients of this year's Church Leadership Award gave sustained, faithful, sacrificial leadership to their church through a tremendously challenging season of ministry. After much thoughtful reflection, prayer, and listening to the Holy Spirit they had the courage to recommend to their congregation that the church end their ministry and become a legacy church – releasing the resources from the sale of the church property to be used to advance the Kingdom of God in the Great Lakes Region.

Bethany Covenant Church in Lyndhurst, OH, was birthed out of First Covenant Church of Cleveland in the 1950's. For many years the church was a beacon of hope in the Cleveland area, known for sacrificial service to their neighbors. The church was also known for generous support of Covenant missionaries, the Great Lakes Conference, and the Covenant Church.

Like many churches in the past couple of decades, Bethany experienced decline and their challenges were exacerbated by the pandemic. But holding on to hope, and still seeing evidence of spiritual growth in the congregation, the leaders of the church – Pastor Debbie Montzingo, Dr. Kathe Derwin, Joy Frame, Denise Green, Lisa Hoxie, Dennis Blything, Gail Means, Marc Papai, and Carol Winzer – persevered. They sought counsel from Conference and Denominational personnel about their circumstances and worked hard to sustain the ministry of the church.

As COVID relinquished its grip, they focused on conversations and evangelism and initiated new, outward facing ministries such as a Community Garden and a Food Pantry in efforts to open doors of relational connection in the community. Meanwhile, they prayed for a miracle that would breathe new life into their beloved church. They also prayed for discernment, holding Bethany loosely, recognizing that the church was the Lord's not theirs. God did not provide, but He did speak gently, "Well done, good and faithful servants. And now it's time to lay it all down." Though painful to accept at first, they understood that it was part of His greater plan for the church to conclude their ministry and become a legacy church. The leaders graciously communicated their recommendation to the larger congregation, which led to a vote in November, and a final worship service on February 11, 2024. Though the journey was filled with heartache and difficult decisions, the leaders of the church found comfort in knowing that what they were doing was right for their community and honoring to God's plan. They recognized that it is sometimes through obedience and painful change that true growth can emerge and are trusting God for that growth to occur in His way and in His time.



February 19, 1954
2nd Building Fund dinner, the ladies serve.



BETHANY COVENANT CHURCH
15th Anniversary May 19, 1969

Dave Dahlberg Award in Church Vitality

SARANAC COMMUNITY CHURCH, SARANAC, MI

Saranac Community Church is receiving the Church Vitality Award because of the deep engagement church leaders and congregants have had in sustaining the missional vitality of their church through challenging and uncertain times.

The COVID-19 pandemic along with consequences of heightened cultural tensions in society during the past 8 years took a toll on many of our churches, and Saranac Community Church was no exception. Worship attendance and giving patterns in their already fairly small congregation in a small community were impacted, causing some degree of anxiety about the future of the church. In the fall of 2022, as the church was emerging from COVID-19, the church learned that their beloved pastor, Becky Poor, had accepted a call to a chaplaincy in New England, creating another set of challenges and a greater degree of uncertainty about the future.

But in the midst of their challenges and uncertainty, the church was convinced that God wasn't done with them yet and decided to lean in and take action. They prayed – regularly, deeply and intentionally – that God would guide them and provide for them so that they could continue to reach their community with the gospel. The leaders sought counsel from GLC staff about the Missional Vitality Resources available to them, welcomed the guidance they received, and employed many of the resources that were recommended. From the outset they recognized the importance of healthy interpersonal dynamics, and focused on fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and collaboration to create a supportive environment for spiritual growth and community engagement. They used the “Periodic Health Checkup” tool to identify strengths and weaknesses in their overall ministry. They saw an immediate need to strengthen their volunteer base so they engaged a conference resource for an all-day workshop to be coached on recruiting, training, and caring for volunteers. They gathered their church members for an all-day “Finding Your Why” workshop which helped them refine their sense of purpose in their local community and re-affirmed their engagement in global mission. They heard their passion to serve children reinforced by conference staff and resolved to hire a children's and family pastor AND call a new lead pastor in the same time frame. They used the “Change Style” workshop to learn how members of their church use different styles to make decisions and how they could value people who have different change styles despite their differences. And finally, while working through the “Living Your Why” assessment tool, they recognized the need to strengthen the church's connections process for newcomers, the need to grow new leaders, and the need to intentionally orient their new pastor to the breadth and depth of their church's ministry.

While all of this growth promoting vitality work was going on, the church was blessed by the ministry of their part-time interim pastor, Darin Youngs. They were encouraged by the 15 people who became new members, and they were thrilled to hold a baptism service for a new follower of Jesus. They also conducted a comprehensive pastoral search process and extended a call. The church is as healthy and vibrant as ever, and is filled with hope as they look forward to welcoming their new pastor in June of 2024.



Past Awards

DAVE DAHLBERG AWARD IN CHURCH VITALITY

2023	Saranac Community Church	2015	Kelly Casey
2022	Kingdom Embassy Covenant Church	2014	Keith Cheli
2021	Lighthouse Church	2013	Bill Anthes
2020	The GLC Churches	2012	Russ Carlson
2019	Stanley Hagemeyer	2011	Sarah Gordon
2018	Forest Park Covenant Church	2010	Josh and Alycia Merriweather
2017	John Wenrich	2009	Bob and Joanne Gielow
2016	Federated Covenant Church	2008	David Dahlberg

RICHARD LUCCO AWARD IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

2023	Bethany Covenant Church and Leadership Team, Lyndhurst, OH	2017	Ja'mel Armstrong & Matt Ness
2022	First Covenant Church - Youngstown, OH Kendall Churchill, Mike Burkett & Greg Anstrom	2016	Greg Applequist & Steve Armfield
2021	Jackie Haines	2015	City Covenant "Mothers of the Ministry"
2020	Leadership Team of Redeemer Covenant Church	2014	Shaun Marshall
2019	Gina Roberts	2013	Dan Wolter
2018	Laura Garvey & Tamra Soderberg	2012	Richard Lucco



Past Awards

ARY ANDERSON & LARRY SHERMAN AWARD IN CHURCH PLANTING

2023	New Wine Covenant Church	2015	Brittany Barlow & Abbie Golden
2022	Mosaic Covenant Church	2014	Alex Rahill
2021	LifeChurch Southfield	2013	Jerry Ricks
2020	Georgia Hill	2012	Herb Kolbe
2019	Donearl Johnson & Cameron Underdown	2011	Father Paul Chateau
2018	New Community Covenant Church	2010	Scott & Tracy Austin, Jason & Lisa Condon Mike & Mel Muscarella
2017	LifeChurch Livonia Leadership	2009	Caleb Skinner
2016	Harlan and Wendy Henderson	2008	Lois Johnson

DAVE & BETH CHILCOAT AWARD IN CHURCH OUTREACH

2023	Faith Covenant Church	2015	Melissa Williams
2022	Christ Community Church	2014	Bruce & Barbara Baehr
2021	Harbert Community Church	2013	Rick Miller, Dave Trosper & Sharon Hamilton
2020	Journey Covenant Church	2012	Marge Palmerlee
2019	LifeChurch Canton	2011	Judd Hamilton
2018	Maria Koliantz	2010	Don Schiewer
2017	GLC Evangelism Cohort Leaders	2009	Alan & Debbie Asp
2016	Shunichi & Masako Miyamoto	2008	Stoneridge Covenant Church & Keystone Church



GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE



OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

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Congratulations to all the award recipients!

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