



Gather 2024

138TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

DELEGATE SUMMARY

Gather 2024 was held in a hybrid format with delegates attending online and in person in Covington, Kentucky. A total of 554 delegates were registered and certified, with 360 attending in person and 194 virtually. This summary provides an overview for delegates to share with their congregations. Related news releases are also available at covchurch.org/gather.

STATE OF THE MISSION

The Evangelical Covenant Church, under the leadership of President Tammy Swanson-Draheim, has celebrated a year of rich and diverse ministry, inspired by Acts 2:42-47. Last fall, President Swanson-Draheim traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo to celebrate 100 years of the gospel in the region with the Covenant Church of Congo. Throughout the year she engaged with local churches and regional conferences, emphasizing the Covenant's deep commitment to prayer. She also shared her personal devotion to Jesus, the Covenant Church, and its mission.

In her update, President Swanson-Draheim highlighted significant milestones, including CHET's 35th anniversary, where 115 students graduated, and the appointment of Dr. Jeffrey Caballero as the new president. She also celebrated the contributions of Magdalena Sanchez, who has served as interim president of CHET. President Swanson-Draheim recognized the importance of legacy churches and new church plants in spreading the gospel and

fostering community.

The reorganization of the Covenant Offices was also addressed, with the creation of Serve Locally housing three mission priorities: Make and Deepen Disciples, Start and Strengthen Churches, and Love Mercy Do Justice. The Covenant has reevaluated its remote work environment, announcing a phased approach to a Chicago-based hybrid model, with staff in the office two days a week, increasing to three days a week in 2025. The Covenant remains committed to its Chicago location, planning improvements to the building while enjoying its proximity to O'Hare Airport.

President Swanson-Draheim concluded by inviting delegates to pray for unity within the Covenant Church and for the global church, especially during this politically charged season. She expressed gratitude for the faith community's support and prayers, looking forward to continued collaboration and engagement in advancing God's work together.

The full president's report can be viewed [here](#).

SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOR THE MISSION

- Paul Robinson was called to serve as executive minister of Serve Locally.
- Cyndi Hoffman was installed as the new vice president/corporate treasurer.
- Rev. Dr. David Bjorlin was called to serve as assistant professor of worship at North Park Theological Seminary.
- Dr. Sophia Magallanes-Tsang was called to serve as assistant professor of Old Testament at North Park Theological Seminary.
- Twenty people who generously offered to serve across five denominational boards were elected.



- Delegates voted to ordain 28 individuals to Word and Sacrament, six to Word and Service, and finalize the transfer of four. The service of ordination, commissioning, and consecration of new Covenant ministers was the culmination of Gather 2024.

HONORING FAITHFUL SERVICE IN MISSION

- The 2024 Irving C. Lambert Award, recognizing outstanding urban and ethnic ministry, was presented to [Evelyn Johnson](#) for her outstanding commitment to ministry and her significant role in advocating for women's ordination and multiethnic inclusion within the Covenant.
- The 2024 T.W. Anderson Award, recognizing an outstanding layperson, was presented to [Scott Peterson](#) of First Covenant Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Steven Dawson was honored for his service as interim vice president of finance/corporate treasurer.
- The Covenant honored 52 individuals with Clergy Vocational Service recognition.
- Nine global personnel were recognized for their service: Erika and Nils Clauson, Lillian and Don Dwight, Karen and Carl Groot, Becci Swearingen, and Janet and Ron Ziegelbaur.
- A resolution of sympathy was adopted praising God for the lives and ministries of dedicated Covenanters who have gone to be with the Lord, including 25 pastors, one global personnel, and 18 pastors' spouses.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE MISSION

- The Covenant received eight new churches across six conferences into membership.
- Delegates honored and prayed for one new church planter.
- Twelve churches were voluntarily removed from the membership roster: seven closed, three withdrew, and two merged.

DIMENSIONS OF THE MISSION

- Delegates approved to adopt "The Evangelical Covenant Church and Freedom, Unity, and Responsibility" resource paper.
- Delegates voted to establish the new Commission on Disability and extended the Christian Action Commission for another five years.

FUNDING THE MISSION

- Delegates approved a Fiscal Year 2025 budget of \$18,721,358, as presented by Steve Dawson, interim chief financial officer and treasurer, along with Cyndi Hoffman.
- Gayle Gilreath, executive director of Mission Advancement, reported on 3StrandStrong partnerships, outlining our belief that the local church is God's basic strategy for reaching the world and that the conference and denomination exist to serve and support the local church. To learn more about how your church can partner in mission, go to giving.covchurch.org. To watch the Mission and Ministry Impact Report video, go [here](#). Slides of the Advancement presentation are available [here](#).
- National Covenant Properties reported that 4,000+ mission-minded investors funded 250 loans to Covenant churches, camps, retirement facilities, and affiliated organizations totaling \$250 million in commitments. They provided \$20 million in new loans, with 34 real estate projects totaling \$33 million.
- Covenant Trust reported that in 2023, assets under management grew to \$1.21 billion, and assets under custody are \$1.05 billion, with a total of assets under care of \$2.26 billion. Total giving to Covenant ministries through Covenant Trust, including legacy and current gifts, was \$7.24 million.

THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

The 139th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church will take place June 26-28, 2025, in Orlando, Florida.

For more details, to watch video, and to access slides from presentations at the meetings, go to covchurch.org/gather.