

COVENANT ANNUAL MEETING

ESTES PARK, COLORADO

2011

Delegate Summary.....

What a privilege it is to observe the incredible ways that God is at work through our shared Covenant ministries. As delegates, we have one more important task ahead of us—to share with those back home what we have learned during the Annual Meeting in Estes Park, Colorado.

I encourage you to seek opportunities to share what you have learned. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Sunday worship—offer a “ministry moment” highlighting key activities
- Small groups—perhaps you can tailor information to specific areas of interest
- Church board, council, or leadership team updates
- Church business meeting—offer a written or oral report
- Church newsletter—provide a brief recap of key decisions
- E-newsletters—include a brief recap for email distribution

- Bulletin insert—for those still using bulletins, provide an overview of key actions

To assist you in preparing reports to your church family, we have distilled the key decisions and important highlights of this year’s gathering. This summary will be archived in the Annual Meeting section of the Covenant website at covchurch.org. Other helpful resources will be found on the website as well, including PowerPoint slides and information used in various presentations.

Finally, please advise your congregation that stories, photos, and video/audio recordings of worship services and key addresses will be archived on the ECC website for future viewing. An article on meeting highlights also will appear in the August issue of *The Covenant Companion*.

May God bless your efforts to share the good news of God’s work among us with our larger Covenant family.

Key Facts.....

1. There were 417 credentialed delegates representing 198 churches and 11 regional conferences. Total registered conference attendance, including general conferees, was 621, representing 224 churches.
 2. Complete news coverage of the 2011 Annual Meeting will be found on the Covenant website at CovChurch.org. Stories will remain archived on the site, suitable for downloading.
 3. The Report of the President will be found on the Covenant website, as will a video of the presentation for streaming or download. All videos will be found at CovChurch.tv.
 4. Growth statistics:
 - Average weekend worship attendance in 2010 increased to 178,074, marking 19 consecutive years of growth.
 - During the past decade, the Covenant has grown in size by 32%. During the past 19 growth years, the Covenant has increased 89% in size.
 - From 1996 to 2010, the number of ethnic churches grew from 81 to 215, representing 25% of congregations and making the Covenant one of the most diverse denominations.
 5. The Covenant Annual Meeting approved a 2012 Mission and Ministry Budget, which will support the following ministries:
 - World Mission:.....\$ 9,582,000
 - Compassion, Mercy & Justice:\$ 4,087,000
 - Church Growth and Evangelism:\$ 3,554,000
 - Ordered Ministry:.....\$ 1,719,000
 - Christian Formation:\$ 1,274,000
 - North Park University & Seminary:.....\$ 1,140,000
 6. Eleven churches were received into membership, representing combined attendance of 2,157.
 7. Six churches were removed from the membership roster.
 8. The Covenant Pension Plan remains in a financially strong position to pay benefits, both short and long-term. During 2010, assets increased by \$20.9 million, or 14.1%. Over the last 14 years, payment minimums for retirees and surviving spouses are up 106% and 126% respectively. Total 2010 benefit payments to retirees and surviving spouses were \$6.7 million. Total pension benefit payments over the last 19 years total \$77.5 million.
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9. Delegates approved two amendments to the bylaws, one calling for the nomination of one candidate to certain boards instead of two candidates, and one amendment calling for the nomination of one candidate each for the positions of Annual Meeting moderator, vice moderator, and secretary from a slate prepared by the Board of Nominations. Details are on the Covenant website.
 10. During the ordination service, 42 individuals were ordained to Word and Sacrament; seven individuals were ordained to Specialized Ministry; seven individuals transferred their ordinations; and two individuals were commissioned for staff ministry. During Tuesday's opening service, eight short-term missionaries and two project missionaries were commissioned.
 11. The Commission on Stewardship was extended for a five-year term.
 12. A status report was presented by the Search Committee for President and Dean of North Park Theological Seminary.
 13. Debbie Blue was re-elected to a four-year term as executive minister of the Department of Compassion, Mercy and Justice.
 14. Curt Peterson was re-elected to a four-year term as executive minister of the Department of World Mission.
 15. Meagan Gillan was elected as executive minister of the Department of Women Ministries. Appreciation was expressed to Ruth Y. Hill, who retired from that position in May, for her years of service.
 16. Ann P. Wiesbrock, the new president of Covenant Trust Company, was introduced.
 17. Also introduced was Cynthia J. Halverson, the new executive director of the Office for Advancement.
 18. Three regional leaders were installed, including Mark Stromberg, superintendent of the Northwest Conference; Tammy Swanson-Draheim, superintendent of the Midwest Conference; and Curtis Ivanoff, regional field director of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska.
 19. Retiring regional leaders also were recognized, including James A. Fretheim, superintendent of the Northwest Conference; Kenneth P. Carlson, superintendent of the Midwest Conference; and Rodney J. Sawyer, regional field director of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska.
 20. Four retiring members of the Covenant Executive Board were recognized, including Christian Breuninger, Kim Carlson, Rebekah Eklund, and Marc Eix.
 21. Thirty-six individuals received Clergy Lifetime Service recognitions.
 22. The T.W. Anderson Award recognizing outstanding laypeople was presented to Marvin Branstrom, a member of Sierra Bible Church in Murphys, California.
 23. The Irving R. Lambert Award recognizing outstanding urban ministry was presented to Robert Owens, Lithia Springs, Georgia, who serves as superintendent of the Southeast Conference.
 24. Delegates participated in a Covenant Life Roundtable, discussing the Organizing for Mission initiative that is evaluating the best alignment of personnel, structure and resources to advance the mission of the Covenant while bridging to the future.
 25. Delegates approved a new Covenant Resource Paper: *The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice*. A copy will be found on the Covenant website.
 26. Delegates also approved two new Resource Papers to be developed over the next one to two years. One will be titled *The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Great Commission*. This paper will seek to inform, inspire, and re-ignite passion for evangelism and discipleship, responding to the "more disciples" part of our missional language. A second paper will be titled *The Evangelical Covenant Church as a Reflection of the Mosaic of the Kingdom of God*. This paper will seek to inform and focus our passion to be a church that fully welcomes and empowers people from every nation, tribe, people, language, and both women and men, responding to the "more populations" part of our missional language.
 27. 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 19 pastors, 14 spouses, and 5 missionaries.
 28. The 2012 Annual Meeting will take place June 21-23 at the Hyatt Regency Irvine in Irvine, California.

Did you know?

- Undesignated donations to Covenant World Relief totaled \$981,000, for a total of \$7.4 million over the last six years.
 - Of all Covenant churches that have loans, 85% have them with National Covenant Properties. In 2010, National Covenant Properties disbursed \$37.5 million to fund 47 projects. National Covenant Properties recently exceeded \$341 million in assets.
 - During 2010, Covenant Trust Company distributed in excess of \$8.6 million to Covenant causes at the local church, regional conference, and denominational levels. Assets under management currently total \$436.5 million.
 - Covenant Retirement Communities serves more than 5,000 residents in 15 campuses in eight states. Covenant Care at Home now operates in four locations.
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- Covenant Ministries of Benevolence has another new affiliate, Covenant Initiatives for Care, that oversees work directed towards adults with developmental disabilities, at-risk children and families, victims of domestic violence, and health care initiatives such as free or affordable health care clinics.
 - A total of 3,254 individuals were enrolled at North Park University last fall in undergraduate, graduate, seminary and exchange programs.
 - Bethany Benefit Service experienced a 5% enrollment growth and declared a June 2011 monthly premium waiver, saving local Covenant churches more than \$1 million. Bethany provides a range of insurance coverages for pastors, missionaries, retirees, surviving spouses and church office workers.
 - *The Covenant Companion* received seven top awards during this year's Associated Church Press conference, including a first-place recognition an article in personal experience category.
 - The Covenant website currently averages more than 75,000 unique visitors each month, with more than 2.7 million pages of news, information and resources accessed during the year.
 - The Break the Chains anti-human trafficking initiative has surpassed \$500,000 in contributions. The Department of Women Ministries through its various projects has raised more than \$9 million since 1925.