

ANNUAL MEETING 2013

DELEGATE SUMMARY

*Many of the items in this document contain hyperlinks to related stories or videos.
For best viewing, please update to the most recent version Adobe Reader.*

Introduction

The spirit of being “in it together” calls us to share what we have learned during this year’s Annual Meeting with family and friends who were unable to be with us.

Among the potential opportunities to share with your congregation: highlighting key activities and decisions during a worship service “ministry moment”; providing a report to your congregation’s board, council, or leadership team; submitting a written or oral report during a church business meeting, including a brief report in your church newsletter or e-letter.

Following is a distillation of the key decisions and highlights of this year’s gathering to assist you in sharing what you have learned. Links will direct you to related online news stories.

Please advise your congregation that stories, photos, and video/audio recordings of worship services and key addresses will be archived at CovChurch.org/am and CovChurch.tv for future viewing. Videos shown during the meeting also will be archived online. An article on meeting highlights also will appear in the August issue of *The Covenant Companion*.

Key Facts

Membership in the Mission

1. There were 400 credentialed delegates representing 186 churches. Total registered conference attendance, including general conferees, was 580, representing 220 churches.
2. Twenty churches were received into membership, representing combined average attendance of 2,309.
3. Five churches were removed from the membership roster.

State of the Mission

4. The Report of the President and the video recording of the presentation will be found at CovChurch.org. All Annual Meeting videos will be found at CovChurch.tv.
5. Written reports by mission and ministry leadership will be found at CovChurch.org.
6. While 2012 was a strong year for Covenant Mission and Ministry, the continued challenging economic environment contributed to a modest financial deficit. Expenses were managed to meet planned level of expenses. A shortfall in revenue contributed to a deficit of \$280,000 or 1.2% of total Mission and Ministry revenue.

7. Growth statistics:

- Average weekend worship attendance in 2012 increased to 195,609, marking 21 consecutive years of growth.
- During the past decade, the Covenant has grown in size by 40%. During the past 21 years of growth, the Covenant has more than doubled in size.
- From 1996 to 2012, the number of ethnic and multicultural churches grew from 135 to 226, representing 26.8% of congregations and making the Covenant one of the most diverse denominations.

8. The Covenant Pension Plan, which provides retirement benefits to almost 2,200 active and retired pastors, missionaries, and their surviving spouses, continues to reflect strong investment performance. The annual Actuarial Valuation report affirms the plan remains in strong financial position for both the short and long term. Retirement payments for 2012 were \$7.3 million, with \$90 million in retirement benefits paid over the last 20 years. As of May 31, 2013, the Covenant Pension Plan was 102% funded, one of a very few fully funded plans.
9. Bethany Benefit Service provides medical, dental, prescription drug, vision, life, and long-term disability benefits to pastors, missionaries, office staff, surviving spouses, and families (a total of over 3,400 covered lives). The 2013 medical rate increase of 5% was considerably

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below that of other group medical plans. The second half of 2013 will focus on preparing for January 1, 2014 implementation of major components of health reform legislation—the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

10. Covenant Retirement Communities (CRC) serves more than 5,000 residents on 13 campuses in nine states. Covenant Place of Lenexa (Kansas), CRC's first rental community, opened June 3 this year. Covenant Care at Home, providing home health, home care, and hospice care, served more than 2,000 individuals during 2012. Covenant Solutions, CRC's project management business, expanded its master planning and construction management services to Covenant camps during 2012.
11. Enrollment at North Park University last fall totaled 3,142 students in undergraduate, graduate, and seminary programs. Seminary enrollment was up slightly at 265 students, which was followed by a strong second semester influx of seminary students. The Higher Learning Commission approved a new Doctor of Ministry Degree in Urban Ministry Leadership, the first doctoral level program offered by North Park. The first cohort of students will begin studies in April 2014.
12. The Covenant has entered into an agreement with Tenet Healthcare to sell Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock, California. Closing is expected sometime during the fourth quarter this year—the proposal is currently under review by government regulatory agencies. Proceeds of the sale will go into a local community foundation to benefit the health needs of the Turlock community.
13. *The Covenant Companion* received nine top awards during this year's Associated Church Press conference, including one first-place, five second-place, and three third-place awards.
14. All of the Covenant's digital media resources experienced 321,961 visits during 2012, with 3.2 million pages of news, information and resources of all types viewed during the year.

Servant Leadership in the Mission

15. Delegates approved the call of Ed Gilbreath to serve as executive minister of the Department of Communication. He was installed during the Friday evening worship service.
16. Greg Yee was installed as superintendent of the North Pacific Conference during the the Friday evening worship service.

17. A number of individuals were elected to denominational boards.
18. During the ordination service, 55 individuals were ordained to Word and Sacrament; two individuals were ordained to Word and Service; four individuals transferred their ordinations; and five individuals were consecrated as Covenant missionaries. Another 120 individuals received a first-time license as they begin the journey to permanent credentials.

Honoring Faithful Service in the Mission

19. The Irving C. Lambert Award recognizing outstanding urban ministry was presented to Nathan Toots, a retired ordained Covenant minister living in Anchorage, Alaska.
 20. The T. W. Anderson Award recognizing outstanding laypeople was presented to Anna Carney Parks, a member of Church of the Redeemer in Los Angeles, California.
 21. Thirty-four individuals received Clergy Lifetime Service recognitions.
 22. Donn N. Engebretson was recognized for his service as executive vice president.
 23. David T. Olson was recognized for his years of service as executive minister of the Department of Church Growth and Evangelism.
 24. Retiring Covenant Communications Executive Minister Don Meyer was honored with the status of Covenant Communication Executive Minister Emeritus in recognition of his nearly 17 years of service.
 25. Retiring missionaries David and Judy Dolan and David and Wendy Mark were recognized for their years of service.
 26. Four retiring members of the Covenant Executive Board were recognized, including Thomas Nelson of Cape Cod Covenant Church in Brewster, Massachusetts; Connie McKelvey of Tigard Covenant Church in Tigard, Oregon; Thomas Robinson of Emerald City Bible Fellowship in Seattle, Washington; and Owen Youngman of Libertyville Covenant Church in Libertyville, Illinois.
 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 12 pastors, two missionaries, and nine spouses. (Check on-site for updated numbers)
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Funding the Mission

28. The Covenant Annual Meeting approved a 2014 Mission and Ministry budget of \$24.4 million. Covenant Executive Board and Covenant Office staff are committed to achieving break-even financial results for both 2013 and 2014. With the exception of adding nine long-term missionaries for 2014, expenses basically remain flat at 2012 actual levels.
29. During 2012, National Covenant Properties disbursed nearly \$40 million to fund projects involving 48 local Covenant churches. Total assets exceed \$380 million, with loans currently totaling more than \$268 million. Since the introduction of Investment Demand Accounts in 2009, more than 260 Covenant churches have invested \$40 million in these accounts, which currently yield 1.5%.
30. During 2012, Covenant Trust Company distributed in excess of \$7.2 million to Covenant causes at the local church, regional conference, and denominational levels. Assets currently under management exceed \$550 million.
31. During 2012, Covenant World Relief sent \$1,070,752 to support 67 projects on five continents. Of this total, \$667,440 supported 45 transformational community development programs and \$403,312 supported 22 disaster response projects.

Living Faithfully in the Mission

32. Delegates approved a Resolution on Stewardship and Generosity. A copy will be found on CovChurch.org.
33. Delegates received a draft Resolution on Immigration and provided input. The resolution will be finalized and come for final action during next year's Annual Meeting. A copy will be found on the Covenant website with a feedback form.

34. Delegates approved one amendment to the bylaws relating to the membership of the Board of Ordered Ministry and four amendments to—and one deletion of—an amendment in the bylaws relating to the membership of the Board of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence. One amendment and one deletion of an amendment to the constitution were read into the minutes of the 128th Annual Meeting for action during the 129th Annual meeting related to the term, vice president. Details are on CovChurch.org.
35. Lord of the Harvest prayer lists (formerly Bringing My World to Christ) were gathered and presented for prayer.
36. Hundreds of Covenanters participated in the two-day Mission Detroit outreach that immediately preceded the Annual Meeting.
37. Approximately 6,000 Congo children have been sponsored by Covenanters representing nearly 300 churches as part of Covenant Kids Congo powered by World Vision. The more than \$2.5 million in sponsorships will be invested in community development in the Equateur Province of Congo. This year's goal is 10,000 sponsored children. Churches are encouraged to sponsor a Hope Sunday event—details are on CovChurch.org.

The 2014 Annual Meeting

38. The 2014 Annual Meeting will take place June 26–29 in Chicago, Illinois. Covenant women also are encouraged to participate in the upcoming Triennial XIV event August 15–18 at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, California. Check CovChurch.org for more details.

Produced by the Department of Communication.

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