

Delegate Summary

Introduction

The following is a distillation of the key decisions and highlights of this year's Annual Meeting to assist you in sharing what you have learned with your church. Among the potential opportunities to share with your congregation: highlighting key activities and decisions during a business meeting or worship service; 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.

Key Decisions and Highlights

- The Rev. Kara J. Stromberg, who was elected to serve as the next NWC Superintendent, shared her intention to continue developing new resources for rural and small town churches, maintain a strong emphasis on the ministry priorities of Congregational Vitality, Church Planting and Children, Youth & Family Ministry, and "lean into our multiethnic mosaic and develop multiethnic leaders so that we can have a fuller picture of the gospel."
- Pastors, delegates and attendees heard video and spoken testimony on the topic of hope from a variety of ministry leaders.
- John Wenrich, ECC President, brought greetings from the Evangelical Covenant Church. "I want you to know how much I appreciate you and the outstanding collective work of the Northwest Conference. Together we are making a difference with God and for God," Wenrich said.
- During his report, outgoing Superintendent Mark Stromberg reflected on his years of service to the Northwest Conference. "It has truly been one of the greatest privileges of my life to serve, not just as Superintendent, but to serve the Northwest Conference in ministry," Mark Stromberg shared. "I am grateful to God and humbled by this opportunity that I've had."
- Mike Brown, NWC Director of Church Planting, then introduced two new churches joining the ECC: Lakeside Covenant Church, Pastor Steve Anderson (Chanhassen, MN), and Midcurrent Covenant Church, Pastor Sten Carlson (Hudson, WI).
- He also introduced four new church fellowship groups, including: Risen Life Covenant Church, Pastor Chris Auer (Coon Rapids, MN), Catalyst Covenant Church White Bear Lake, Pastors Cory and Cindy Jones (White Bear Lake, MN), En Su Presencia Covenant Church, Pastors Edgar and Alva Ardon (Rochester, MN), and Local Covenant Church, Pastor Seth Lindberg (Champlin, MN).
- Minnehaha Academy President Donna Harris shared a slideshow of photos from the life of the school that highlighted recent athletic and academic accomplishments of MA students. She also shared that MA is experiencing record attendance and fundraising as it rebuilds and recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Harris also shared that the Board of Trustees of Minnehaha Academy approved the school's Strategic Plan last fall, and the school is now in the implementation phase of projects that were identified in the plan. The school also recently launched its own version of a past NWC Children & Family Ministry event called Go:Serve, with over 140 families participating in service projects as a community.
- It was announced at the end of the Business Session that delegates approved the election of Rev. Kara J. Stromberg to serve as the next Superintendent of the Northwest Conference.

- During Friday’s Business Session, delegates also approved a ballot that included the election of Jim Volling (Excelsior Covenant Church, Excelsior, MN) to serve another year on the NWC Executive Board as Chairperson, Mark Coronna (Calvary Covenant, Stockholm, WI), and Dora Wagner (Catalyst Covenant, St. Paul, MN) to 5-year terms on the NWC Executive Board, and electing Tim Carlson (Crossroads Church, Eagan, MN), Lynn Farmer (Epiphany Covenant, Minneapolis, MN), Rose Lee-Norman (Sanctuary Covenant, Minneapolis, MN) and Greg Siwek (Crossroads Church, Eagan, MN) to 3-year terms on the Minnehaha Academy Board of Trustees.
- Delegates approved the NWC budget of \$1,607,404, as well as the budget for Minnehaha Academy.
- Bylaw amendments for both the NWC and MA were also either presented or approved.
- A Minnehaha Academy worship team led attendees in worship during the Friday evening worship service. Special music was provided by the Minnehaha Madrigal Singers throughout the service as well.
- Three Candidates for Ordination were also recognized and prayed for during the service, as were the two new churches joining the ECC.
- A special offering taken during the service raised \$2,060 to benefit the UNITE North Scholarship fund and The Minnehaha Leadership Institute.
- NWC Superintendent-elect Kara Stromberg, shared a message titled, “Strength for the Wilderness.” Stromberg challenged attendees to consider Jesus’ time in the wilderness, found in Luke 4: 1-13, and what lessons we can learn from his example.
- In place of individual reports, this year’s meeting featured a NWC Ministry Director Panel where Conference staff shared what glimpses of hope they saw in their areas of ministry oversight throughout the last year.
- Kara Stromberg, Superintendent-elect, cited the continued and ongoing faithfulness of Children, Youth & Family leaders, as well as the formation of the new Disability Ministry Cohort in the NWC.
- Mike Brown, Director of Church Planting, shared, “We have a team of church planters who are actively planting, but they volunteer their time to plan our monthly gatherings so we can resource each other.” Brown also thanked those who work in the area of coaching in the ECC.
- Hollis Kim, Director of Pastoral Care & Development, highlighted the “courage of pastors who are continuing to be evangelists,” as he shared about witnessing baptism services at Real Life Covenant Church in Waseca, MN, and Alexandria Covenant Church in Alexandria, MN, during the pandemic.
- Ginny Olson, Director of Youth Ministry, said witnessing youth pastors gather together to improvise and organize the One Big Day event when MUUUUCE was cancelled, brought her hope. Olson also thanked the team working on this summer’s UNITE North event, taking place at Bethel University, July 14-17.
- Jon Kramka, Director of Congregational Vitality, mentioned strong participation in the ministerium anti-racism cohort, and the NWC partnership with Oak Hills Christian College to tap into rural expertise and provide contextual training through webinars, and the new Rural Impact Leadership Conference, which took place March 19 at Alexandria Covenant Church in Alexandria, MN.
- Mauricio Dell’Arciprete, Director of Latino Ministry, shared how he’s seen churches push forward in ministry during the pandemic.
- On Saturday morning, attendees also heard reports from leaders of Camping Ministry in the NWC, Women Ministries of the NWC, Solid Rock School of Discipleship, Covenant Ability Network, National Covenant Properties, Covenant Trust Company and Covenant Benefits.
- Following the Saturday Business Session, attendees heard a presentation called “Trusting the Good Shepherd: God’s Leading Through the Valley” from a team of leaders from Minnehaha Academy, including Rev. Dr. Donna Harris, President, David Hoffner, Executive Director of Faith Formation, and Sara Jacobson, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement.