



CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

January 2024

Happy New Year! We are grateful to the Lord for each of the pastors, congregations, and many ministries of the Central Conference. Please know that we are praying for the 110 churches, over 300 ministers, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Central Conference.

We are gearing up to move forward in ministry in 2024. How do we do this? The Church is called to seek the lost, to empower the weak, to care for the sick, to disciple the believer, and to challenge the status quo. We continue to do this, while we also strive to plant churches, help strengthen current churches, walk with ministers, and continue to provide guidance to our conference ministries. We can only do this with your faithful partnership and contribution.

Paul, in Philippians 1:6, reminds us that we are in this together. “Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Post-pandemic, churches are creating their new normal and growing comfortable once again in the mission of the church, to gather those who need the hope of Jesus Christ. This is the perfect time to “move mission forward” together, as this continues to be our theme for this year.

Church plants in our conference are also continuing to move forward in mission after the pandemic. We are seeing the movement of the Holy Spirit through the many people coming to Christ. These new believers are being baptized and joining the church to grow spiritually in community.

Things we accomplished together in 2023:

- In 2023, the Central Conference staff helped over 70 local Covenant pastors obtain their Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) credentials.
- We also walked alongside six Covenant ministers from our conference as they went through the ECC ordination process. These local ministers were ordained at the Covenant Annual Meeting (Gather).
- We continue to walk with churches in the Central Conference that are seeking interim / transition pastors and we offer coaching to these pastors as they step into these roles.
- The conference staff assisted four churches in 2023 with finding interim and transitional pastors. The staff is currently assisting two other churches with finding interim and transitional pastors.
- Currently there are eight Central Conference churches seeking lead pastors. The conference staff is walking alongside these churches’ pastoral search committees. Ten churches completed their search process in 2023 and have called new lead pastors.
- We continue to walk alongside three church plants, with the possibility of adding two church plants in our conference in 2024.
- We are checking in with our Covenant ministers on a regular basis. In 2023, the conference staff did more than 60 care check-ins with local Covenant ministers.

- We assist local churches as they look for information and resources that develop their ministries. This includes the pHCheck, which is a church assessment tool, as well as, Vitality workshops, Leadership Team discernment, and Living Legacy coaching. The conference staff is available to answer any questions you have about resources for your local church.
- Rev. Jill Lind concluded her time with our conference, and we are so grateful for her commitment to care for ministers and lay leaders. Rev. Nicole McClurg is now walking with our ministers.
- The Central Conference staff is just an email or phone call away. Feel free to contact the Central Conference office at info@centralconf.org or at 773-267-3060.

This year, the Central Conference is planning to hold the conference annual gathering, Celebration 2024, as an in-person event, until we are told otherwise. **Please save the dates: Thursday, May 2 – Saturday, May 4, 2024, at Batavia Covenant Church, in Batavia, IL.** We hope Covenant church members can make it to this very special event. We will gather to do Central Conference business, moving mission forward in our conference. More details will be sent to your church shortly, but you may also visit our website at www.centralconf.org/celebration for updates. At Celebration 2024 we are committed to sharing the good news coming from local Covenant churches in our conference. Great ministry is happening all around the Central Conference!

Please know that we cannot do ministry without your prayers and financial partnership. We are empowered by the local Covenant churches in our conference to move mission forward. However, we cannot continue to plant, strengthen, and connect churches without your support. You may find more information on donating to the Central Conference at our website: www.centralconf.org (click on the “Contribute” option).

Finally, we thank you, the local Covenant churches that are giving to the Central Conference from church budgets at 3.5% of the local church giving. If you have been unable to do so before, we invite you to become a financial partner with the ministries of the Central Conference now. We also invite you to consider giving additional funds, as the Holy Spirit leads you.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:20

Grateful to be in the family of God.



Rev. Dr. Danny Martinez
Superintendent of the Central Conference of the ECC