



# CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

January 2025

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*  
**Jeremiah 29:11-13**

**Happy New Year Central Conference! Can we say that God has been good to his people?** Whether 2024 felt like a great year or not, we testify that we are still standing in the grace of the Living God and holding on to his promises in 2025.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, is often used to cast a vision for good things to come. The Lord knows the plans he has for us! However, that is not the whole purpose of this scripture. The Lord also asks us to invest in the land, to make a commitment to be a local agent of change and transformation that goes beyond the walls of our church. How will people know Christ if not through his hands and feet on the earth? That includes you.

We can see in the rear-view mirror all the residue of the pandemic, which just five years ago changed our lives. As we continue to serve and minister in this new normal, can the church retain its relevancy?

Yes, the Central Conference will continue to plant churches, to consider church adoptions, and to seeks other partnerships. However, our focus will be on equipping the local church for the task of seeking the lost, discipling the new believers, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The hope of the world is through the local church living out its purpose in Christ Jesus. More details on equipping the local church will be shared at the Central Conference Annual Meeting in May 2025.

This year, the Central Conference is planning to hold the conference annual gathering, Celebration 2025, as an in-person event. **Please save the dates: Thursday, May 1 – Saturday, May 3, 2025, at Libertyville Covenant Church, in Libertyville, IL.** We hope Covenant church members can make it to this very special event as delegates and guests. We will gather to do Central Conference business, moving mission forward together in our conference. You are also invited to attend the evening worship services on Thursday, May 1, and Friday, May 2, which are open to all Covenanters in the area.

At Celebration 2025 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! More details will be sent to your church shortly, but you may also visit our website at [www.centralconf.org/celebration](http://www.centralconf.org/celebration) for updates.

**Here are just a few things we accomplished together in 2024:**

- We held several training events in 2024, co-sponsored by the conference and several Covenant ministries, including: Church Chair training; Worship Leaders’ training (in Spanish); Church Finance and Real Estate training; and a Leadership Model workshop. We will offer more training events in 2025. More information will be made available at Celebration 2025.

- The Central Conference staff helped over 70 local Covenant pastors obtain their Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) credentials, including ministers seeking ministerial licenses.
- We also walked alongside nine 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 are currently walking alongside another group of ministers preparing to be ordained in the summer of 2025.
- Generous gifts from Central Conference Covenant churches and individual donors provided scholarships for 55 Central Conference participants to attend Unite 2024, the Covenant youth event that gathered youth from around our denomination.
- Steve Burger, the Central Conference children and youth coordinator, worked tirelessly to make sure over 300 students from our conference attended Unite 2024, including organizing transportation for many of the Central Conference participants. Steve also helped coordinate monthly gatherings for conference children and youth ministers and workers.
- We continue to walk with churches in the Central Conference that are seeking interim / transitional pastors, and we offer coaching to these ministers as they step into these roles.
- The conference staff assisted three churches in 2024 with finding interim and transitional pastors. The staff is currently assisting three additional churches with finding interim and transitional pastors.
- Currently there are two Central Conference churches seeking lead pastors. The conference staff is walking alongside these churches' pastoral search committees. Four churches completed their search process in 2024 and have called new lead pastors.
- We continue to walk alongside three church plants, with the possibility of adding two church plants to our conference in 2025.
- We continue to 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.
- We welcomed Anthony Thomas and Karen Palmberg to the Central Conference staff and are thrilled to have them as part of our team, as they bring much wisdom and experience to their roles.
- The Central Conference staff is just an email or phone call away. Feel free to contact the Central Conference office at [info@centralconf.org](mailto:info@centralconf.org) or at 773-267-3060.

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 equip churches without your support. You may find more information on donating to the Central Conference at our website: [www.centralconf.org](http://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 contributing additional funds, as the Holy Spirit leads you.

Believing in God's promise that he continues to walk with us, providing us hope and a future.



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