



CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Celebration



HIGHLIGHTS

God is at work in local Covenant churches and ministries of the Central Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church (CCECC). We are grateful that we are moving mission forward together in our conference.

We praise God for the hospitality shown to us by the members of the host church, Libertyville Covenant Church in Libertyville, IL! They opened their doors to us for this three-day event. Here are some highlights from Celebration 2025, held on May 1-3.

We had over **240 registered participants** at this in-person event. This included 111 Covenant ministers and additional guests who attended the Central Conference Ministerial Association (CCMA) Annual Meeting (May 1-2). There were also 92 delegates and additional guests who attended the CCECC Annual Meeting (May 2-3), and Harbor Point Ministries Annual Meeting (May 3).

In addition to delegates and ministers, **we had several special guests join us**, including Rev. Dr. Kanyere Eaton, Covenant minister from the Bronx, NY, who proclaimed the Word on Thursday evening. Her sermon was about the Samaritan woman, found in John 4. Rev. Dr. Danny Martinez preached on Friday evening on Numbers 4, addressing the Celebration 2025 theme of “Moving Mission Forward Together.” We were led in vibrant worship over the three days by Leslie Hodgkinson and Desiree Robertson. You may find the worship services on the [CCECC YouTube channel](#).

Participants were also able to attend **workshops on Friday afternoon on a variety of topics**, including: learning about spiritual direction, led by Bob Tenglin; a study on church board effectiveness and team emotional intelligence led by Chris Hackett; trauma informed ministry in the church led by Meagan Gillan; safeguarding our children at church led by Emma Mueller; and a workshop for our Spanish speakers led by Abraham Bejarano.

CCECC Treasurer Susan Kauffman, presented the 2025-26 revised Central Conference budget, as well as the proposed 2026-27 budget. The budgets were approved by the delegates.

The CCECC has one church **being removed from the roster of ECC churches** in 2025:

- **Iglesia del Pacto Nuevo Amanecer, Chicago, IL**, has merged with another church to form a new church.

The CCECC is welcoming **three churches** that are **joining the ECC** in 2025:

- **Iglesia Casa de Paz** (House of Peace Church), Streamwood, IL. This church was a Central Conference church plant that is now joining the ECC.
- **Eden Church, An Evangelical Covenant Church**, Muncie, IN. A church established over 163 years ago that wishes to be part of the ECC family.
- **Iglesia Restauracion del Covenant**, Chicago, IL. This church has arisen from the merger of two churches: Sobre La Roca Church and Iglesia Nuevo Amanecer.

There are **six ordination candidates** from the Central Conference, who will be ordained at Gather 2025:

- **Drina Lizama (OWSa)**
Luz de Esperanza Covenant Church, Campton Hills, IL
- **Rafael Lizama (OWSa)**
Luz de Esperanza Covenant Church, Campton Hills, IL
- **Norma Ramos (OWSa)**
Iglesia del Pacto Evangelico Peniel, Chicago, IL
- **Travis Randolph (OWSa)**
Chaplain, Illinois Department of Corrections, Galesburg, IL
- **Cody Taylor (OWSa)**
First Covenant Church, Rockford, IL
- **Vernee Washington (OWSe)**
Kingdom Covenant Church, Chicago, IL

OWSa—Ordination to Word and Sacrament
OWSe—Ordination to Word and Service

Central Conference Celebration 2025

HIGHLIGHTS (con.)

The Central Conference currently has one church plant: Bethany Covenant Church, St. Charles, IL, led by Pastor Laura Tarro. There are two additional church plants that are preparing to enter into formal church planting partnerships with the CCECC and the ECC in 2025.

Superintendent Danny Martinez reported on ministry in the Central Conference. He emphasized the need to work together and also to resource and train the whole church to mobilize. To this end, the Central Conference is offering several leadership training opportunities in 2025:

- **Church Planters' Training for the Established Church.** Do you wonder why church plants are able to attract and retain people and make them disciples of Christ? Would you like to learn proven and intentional church planting approaches in your church? This event will take place on **September 6, 2025, 9:00 am—3:00 pm**, at Northbrook Covenant Church. Online registration is coming soon. Visit centralconf.org for updates.
- **Church Chair Training.** Are you a new chair? Do you need ideas for running a more effective leadership team? Alan Forsman, a leader in the field of Ecclesial training, alongside other leaders, will share helpful tools and approaches related to this very important role in the church. This event will take place on **October 11, 2025, 9:00 am—5:00 pm**, at Church of the Good Shepherd, Joliet, IL. Online registration is coming soon. Visit centralconf.org for updates.
- Shortly, there will be an online **Risk and Liability Assessment Questionnaire**, which your church will be emailed. This is an online series of questions which will help you identify areas of opportunity to protect and care for your church. A conference staff member will meet with your Leadership Team to debrief the answers and provide resources.

Rev. Dr. Danny Martinez was re-elected as Superintendent to lead the Central Conference for another four year term. Please pray for him and the conference staff. Pray for the them to continue to be good stewards of the conference resources and vessels of God's grace among the churches and ministries of the Central Conference.

The following Covenanters were elected by the delegates to serve on the **Central Conference Executive Board**:

- **Jeff Gustafson** (Vice Chair), first, three-year term
Bay Evangelical Covenant Church, Green Bay, WI
- **Evan Geisalhart** (Treasurer), first, three-year term
Glen Ellyn Covenant Church, Glen Ellyn, IL
- **Rev. Tammy Hallam**, first, three-year term
Eden Church, Muncie, IN
- **Laurie Schwalm**, first, three-year term
First Covenant Church, Rockford., IL
- **Rev. David Washington**, second, three-year term
Kingdom Covenant Church, Chicago, IL
- **Rev. Tamela White**, first, three-year term
Calvary Covenant Church, Chicago, IL

The following people were elected to serve on the **Harbor Point Ministries Board** by the delegates:

- **Sarah Buki**, first, two-year term
Naperville Covenant Church, Naperville, IL
- **Andrew Clausen**, first, two-year term
North Park Covenant Church, Chicago, IL
- **Rev. Linnea Ek**, second, three-year term
Community Covenant Church, Menominee, MI
- **Roger Lautz**, first, two-year term
Glen Ellyn Covenant Church, Glen Ellyn IL
- **Anna Lund**, second, three-year term
Winnetka Covenant Church, Wilmette, IL
- **Kimberly Steiner**, second, three-year term
Winnetka Covenant Church, Wilmette, IL

We also give thanks to the following **Central Conference Executive Board members, who have concluded their time of service**:

- **Susan Kauffman**, Board Treasurer,
Hillcrest Covenant Church, DeKalb, IL
- **Kurt Tillman**, Nominating Commission Chair,
Glen Ellyn Covenant Church, Glen Ellyn, IL

Celebration 2026

April 30 — May 2, 2026

Location:
Evangelical Covenant Church,
Princeton, IL