



the COVENANTER

www.centralconf.org

JOURNEY TO MOSAIC: CHICAGO

GO CREW!
Create. Renew. Equip. Worship:
the senior-high triennial weekend
(formerly Jesustyle). 240 students
from regional churches gathered
for three days of renewal, growth
and serious fun.



(CHICAGO IL) The Mexican mosaic was “fantastic and got more fantastic once you realized it was comprised of tiny beads!” **Vicki Tsui of Parkwood Community Church** (Villa Park IL) remarked as co-facilitator for the recent three-day weekend *Journey to Mosaic: Chicago*.

Despite a paralyzing blizzard two days prior, a multi-ethnic group of fifteen folks embarked on a trip to experience the ethnicity, history, and culture of Chicago—a new experience built upon the premise of learning and struggling together to understand our rich cultural fabric—with an eye for mercy, justice and compassion issues.

Debbie Griffith-Samuels designed the journey to include sessions on Japanese-American internment resettlements in Chi-

cago, the Cambodian killing fields’ impact on survivors that fled, gentrification and the work of **Jesus People Covenant Church** to those caught in the change, and the history and culture of Mexican (and Puerto Rican) immigrants. **Mary Miller**, a two-time participant, was struck by the “beauty and oppression of each culture—alternating bright and hard points.”

The intensity of the trip was sweetened by Mexican, soul food, and Korean meals provided by hosts at Jesus People, **Immanuel Covenant Church, Fellowship Christian Church, and Iglesia del Vida Plena** (Oak Park IL).

Find more about **Journey to Mosaic: contact the director of mission & outreach Debbie Griffith-Samuels at (773) 320-3234**

Navigating Through Stability

(VILLA PARK IL) As people called to “go and make disciples,” church leaders across the conference have engaged the congregational vitality process in an effort to be healthier, more missional disciples.

First, *Veritas* introduces common language about church dynamics and establishes a baseline, then local Vitality teams begin to nurture the work, form relational covenants and shape the effort. Now a cohort of three Veritas churches are part of a next step experiment, called *Navigate*, to bring both pastors and key leaders together with other churches pursuing congregational vitality.

“It takes a partnership between pastors and leaders to intentionally move a church to-

ward healthier vitality,” says **Peter Sjolom**, Central Conference director of congregational vitality. Pastor **Peter Park of Parkwood Community Church** and their leaders meet monthly with the cohort for training and encouragement. Since beginning *Navigate*, Park reflects, “Navigate has reminded the church of the importance of posture... openness and humility is the foundation to finding out what God can do in our midst.” Parkwood joins **First Covenant Church** (Rockford IL), and **Hillcrest Covenant Church** (DeKalb IL) and 23 other churches nationally.

Request more about congregational vitality and navigating change: info@centralconf.org

Go Forth: Multiply

(CHICAGO IL) As a missionary’s kid in South America, **David Swanson** was raised in a second culture, and hoped to again be part of a church that would be diverse, eclectic, and friendly. Now, two decades later, he leads that vision as a church planter in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago—an historically African-American culture.

In 2008, he joined the staff of **New Community Covenant Church** in Logan Square as Pastor of Community Life. “I was excited to be part of a church that was intentionally urban, multi-ethnic and focused on church planting.” As New Community, a church planted by **Peter Hong** in 2002, was planning a church plant in Bronzeville, “I began helping... which led to increased leadership and an eventual call to pastor the new church.” He is “thankful for the opportunity to live out my past (multicultural) experience.”

Jolene Bergstrom Carlson, director of church planting, notes that healthy church plants usually thrive best when a

parent church provides early resourcing: help from the congregation in Logan Square is instrumental. Swanson noted that 35-40 people from the parent church have provided the means for a solid core group and still others have come to the



New Community | Bronzeville leaders and Swanson (top, center)

church through invitations from friends. The new multiethnic church began in April 2010 and has an attendance of about 70 since launching its weekly services.

The Bronzeville congregation worships at a local school with whom they partner on textbook drives and community clean-up.

Contributed by **Craig Pinley, Paxton IL. To learn more about church planting, parenting or partnering: info@centralconf.org**

Just Women

(LAFAYETTE IN) Refresh! Refresh! Rejoice! was the refrain of eighty six women who gathered for the annual Spring Celebration of Central Conference Women Ministries, hosted by the Indiana district.

Ann Richards (Batavia IL) reports that women enjoyed time to refresh with praise song karaoke, rejoice in worship with **Jillian Yu** (Chicago IL), refocus with twelve fast-paced break-out sessions, and be inspired by **Ruth Hill** before she cedes national Women Ministries leadership to **Meagan Gillian** (Naperville IL). The women also honored Ruth with a gift to the 2011 JUST WOMEN project, and recognized the mentorship role of **Renee Shepherd** and the retreat ministry of **Linda Pointer**.

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BELOW: Parkwood Community Church Navigate Team; Pastors of three Navigate pilot churches with director of congregational vitality, Peter Sjolom.





2010 ANNUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

TOGETHER, the churches of the Central Conference strengthen, unite and plant churches in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, eastern Missouri, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. While the ministry of the Central Conference now spans 125 years, its focus and future continue to unite churches in common mission, make the good news of saving faith in Jesus Christ known, encourage Christ-like life among its members and carry out Christ's redeeming work of love, mercy, and justice in the world. Enjoy this glimpse into recent history, and *Thank You* for being in this good work together! More information, audited financial reports, and summaries of the Annual Meeting are available online at www.centralconf.org or by calling (773) 267-3060

GIFTS FROM CHURCHES: \$ 549,480

ECC SUPPORT: \$ 131,125

DESIGNATED FUNDS \$ 407,264



STRENGTHENING: \$ 28,250 **

Veritas (congregational vitality process) initiated in 9 churches across the region to establish mission, language, behavioral covenants, and vitality teams to pursue congregational health.

Generosity Summit attended by Conference staff and board members for continuing education in funding ministry regionally and locally. **Cornerstone Community Outreach** formed to provide program development workshops and support to urban and multicultural ministries.

EPIC (stage two vitality process) now offered for training church leadership teams in practical and spiritual dynamics of leading healthy change.

Navigate (stage three vitality process) pilots new pastor + leadership cohort with three churches: First Covenant Church (Rockford IL), Hillcrest Covenant Church (DeKalb IL), Parkwood Covenant Church (Villa Park IL).

Vitality Partnership experiment underway between Bay Covenant Church (Green Bay WI) and Zion Covenant Church (Sheboygan WI) to share resources and enthusiasm amidst change.

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Partner | Parent | Prayer Churches: Eight churches have committed to parent a daughter church, partner financially, or pray faithfully.



Redeemer Life Covenant Church (South Lake County IL) launched weekly services on Palm Sunday with guest preacher, Dr. Peter Cha, and support by **Libertyville (IL) Covenant Church**.

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Ministry Grants awarded to fourteen churches focused on community outreach: community festival, after-school programming, and a parenting class among others. (*apply online*)

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Ready to Launch: Four new churches are ready to begin gathering launch teams in Palatine IL, Crete IL, St Louis MO, and Indianapolis IN.

PLANTING: \$267,024

Berean Covenant Church (Champaign IL) leads their community with creative outreach and celebrates new partnership with **Riverside Covenant Church** (W. Lafayette IN)

Harvest Covenant Church (Milwaukee WI) builds on a decade of children's ministry to reach neighborhood families, in partnership with the established **Evangelical Covenant Church**.



Outpour Covenant Church (St Louis MO) team model for ministry includes multiple preachers and engagement of every person's gifts.

New Community | Bronzeville sprouted from the parent church plant, **New Community Covenant Church** (Chicago IL), to multiply a multiethnic ministry in a new neighborhood.



City of Hope Covenant Church (Bolingbrook IL) celebrates its Grand Opening this Easter, and enjoys their ministry partnership with **Naperville (IL) Covenant Church**.

Potential Planters: Five potential church planters are in the Assessment process to pray, discern and prepare for planting new churches.

Planter Residency: Friends4Life Covenant Church (Flossmoor IL) hosts a new residency training for new church planter, Lisa Orris.

CONNECTING: \$ 33,113

BreakOut 2010 junior high biannual weekend draws students from 13 churches to learn and lead in service to others in Chicago.

Ministerial Association serves 243 credentialed ministers in the Central Conference.

District Pastors meet monthly in most areas of the Central Conference for prayer, collaboration and mutual study.

Children & Family Ministry Coaches relaunch this year to mentor leaders and volunteers, provide ministry ideas, and offer prayer support.

Women Ministries connected 1100 women in five major events: Spring Celebration 2010, Triennial XIII, and three Fall Fellowship retreats.

Immigration Forum developed by Compassion, Mercy & Justice commission to inform and engage churches on relevant social issues.

CREW (formerly Jesustyle) senior high triennial event welcomed over 200 students to Covenant Harbor Bible Camp for youth leadership and faith development.

Journey to Mosaic | Chicago pilots a seminary tour, followed by a second tour involving 15 Central Conference Covenanters immersed in cultural learning and discussion.

Prison Ministry Roundtable invited 15 church representatives involved in criminal justice ministry to explore practical resources for local churches.

CHIC2012 Central Conference team began preparations to coordinate training and transportation for regional churches attending the triennial national youth event in Knoxville TN.

PASTORAL CARE: \$ 40,506

Ministerium Retreat at Covenant Harbor Bible Camp attended by 80 pastors and many spouses.

13 Ministerial Standing Interviews approved 13 new candidates for ordination, commissioning or licensing this year.

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative has provided 63 pastors the opportunity to develop in constancy, character and competence.

Conflict Mediation facilitated in more than fourteen churches for congregational or pastoral crisis.

Pastor Search Committees in fourteen churches received advisory and resource support from the Superintendent and staff

8 Eight New Pastors welcomed and installed in regional churches.

Spiritual Directors in the Central Conference are now available for pastoral staff.

ADMINISTRATION: \$ 197,101

** Cost of Ministry does not include distribution of professional and support staff costs of \$431,938.