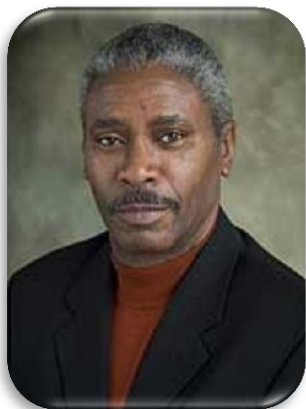




# central conference of the evangelical covenant church

July 2015

## From the Superintendent: "IS YOUR GOD TOO SMALL?"



J.B. Phillips, in his book, *Your God Is Too Small* observes, "No one is ever really at ease in facing what we call life and death without a religious faith. The trouble with many people is that they have not found a God big enough for modern needs." Many of us are still carrying around a nine or ten year old concept of God along with our adult understanding of history, science, and ourselves.

The reality is that we must have an adequate concept of God, if we are going to try and live in this modern world as Christians and have a strong and relevant faith. We must have a God big enough who can demand and capture our minds, our hearts and our lives; and can command our devotion and our commitment.

How do you know if your God is too small? If you see God as only a help in time of trouble and you only use him in times of emergencies or crisis, then your God is too small. If you worship a God who is your passport to heaven, and is not involved in your daily life, then your God is too small. If you see God as a badge of moral respectability and that you want to wear on your tee shirt or around your neck on a chain, then your God is too small. If you worship your grandmother's, mother's or father's God, that is just a hand-me-down God and you want a family heirloom God, then your God is too small. If you see your God just as a giver of all good gifts, and you don't know what you will do if you don't get what you want, then you need a heavenly Santa Claus or a Comic Bellhop, then your God is too small.

When I think of my concept of God, I'm reminded of an old gospel song entitled "He's Everything to Me." I think that I always believed that there was a God. In the stars I saw His handy work and in the wind He spoke with majesty. I was not surprised when I heard that He ruled over the land and sea, but I didn't know what that should mean to me. I was okay with celebrating the nativity because it had a place in history, and sure He came to set His children free, but what should that mean to me. And then, "One day by faith I met him face to face and felt the wonder of His grace. And then I knew that He was more than a God who didn't care, that lives way out there. Now he walks beside me day by day ever watching over me unless I stray, helping me to find a narrow way, He's everything to me."

If your God is too small I would like to introduce you to the God described in Psalm 139:1-6 which say: O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You now when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

God is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present. God knows us, God is with us, and his greatest gift is to allow us to know him.

By: Rev. Jerome Nelson



# central conference of the evangelical covenant church

**July 2015**

## **Graduation, Ordination and Anniversary**



On Sunday, June 7th, 2015, the Evangelical Covenant Church of Elgin celebrated several milestones. Pastor Jonathan Wilson received his PHD and Pastor Greg Johnson is being ordained at this year's annual meeting. These career milestones were achieved during the church's year-long 125th celebration that will culminate in November. The Central Conference Superintendent Rev. Jerome Nelson gave the homily and the German American Singers which Pastor Jonathan is a member sang. Pastor Jonathan and Pastor Greg are thanking God for the church's support during the past three very trying years. Their families and friends were there to encourage and celebrate with them.

What's a celebration without a picnic? There were lots of hot dogs, sloppy joes and of course cake. This day celebrated the Church coming together in brotherly love!

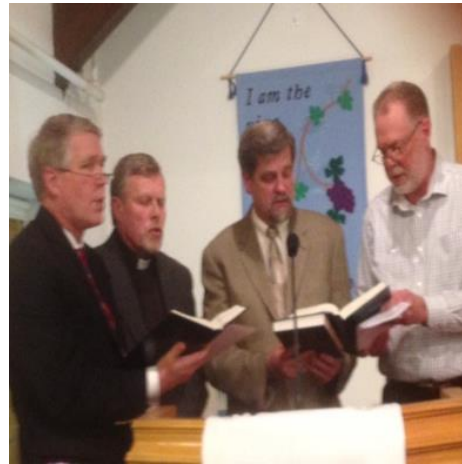
By: Joanne Nelson



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## "Celebrating God's Faithfulness"



The Evangelical Covenant Church of Villa Park (ECC of Villa Park) had a service of remembrance and celebration. Fifty-eight (58) years of faithfulness. Old and new members and friends gathered on June 14, 2015, Sunday at 4PM, to mark this time of the closing of the facility, as their place of worship. They remembered with thanksgiving the many ways in which God has blessed their ministry and their lives in that church.

The opening hymn was "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past." The history of ECC of Villa Park was given spanning from 1956 to 2015. There were special greetings by Superintendent Rev. Jerome Nelson of the Central Conference and Rev. Mike Langer, senior pastor of The Glen Ellyn Evangelical Covenant Church. Rev. Peter Sjoblom, Director of Church Vitality, for the Central Conference also gave remarks along with many current and past members who gave reflections of their experiences over the years at the ECC of Villa Park. Pastor Ken Johnson, senior pastor said, "It was a wonderful service. With lots of mixed emotions, but it was great to see old faces and some new faces too. It really was a celebratory kind of service of our past. We are looking forward to the future. And we are looking forward to seeing what God has in store next. We are just taking it one day at a time. I was also happy to have our guest speakers here to celebrate with us.

It was a bitter sweet time and end. Some tears, lots of laughter, joy, thanksgiving, anticipation for the future and lots of love, which has kept them together all these years. The service ended with their last Holy Communion together and afterwards they enjoyed a delicious meal which was served in the basement. They are looking forward to a new beginning and a new season in the life of the church. Evangelical Covenant Church of Villa Park has merged with Parkwood Community Church of Villa Park. Their new name is Christ Covenant Church of Villa Park. Temporarily all future worship services will be held at 350 N. Addison Road, Villa Park, IL where God is doing a new thing!

By: Joanne Nelson



# central conference of the evangelical covenant church

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**July 2015**

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## **CMJ Grants**

This year Compassion Mercy and Justice Grant requests totaled over \$26,000.00 from 13 Conference Churches. They are continuing to minister in their communities by hosting Outreach Picnics, Summer Camp, Mentor - Tutoring Programs, supporting Local Food Pantries and Community Back-to-School Fairs. Commission members were encouraged and excited to visit some of the ministry events. Grant funding will be forwarded to churches by July 7th. We will also make contact with funded churches to come and visit your CMJ outreach event. If you have any questions regarding CMJ Grants, please feel free to contact the conference office and ask for Debbie.

By: Debbie Griffith Samuels

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## **CHIC 2015 Transportation**



Chad Harris and Lars Stromberg have been hard at work making sure all aspects of Central Conference transportation to CHIC 2015 on July 12th in Tennessee is running smoothly. The bus routes have been selected and each church that has requested conference transportation has been added to the various buses and locations. This is a very demanding task with deadlines, dealing with safety issues, and contracts to sign in addition to the many responsibilities Chad and Lars are already responsible for in their local church. We are grateful to them for their commitment and dedication over the years to the Central Conference Churches and their heart as they serve the people of God.

By: Debbie Griffith Samuels

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