



November 2016

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I am deeply grateful for the partnership we share as *churches working together to transform lives and communities by starting new churches, strengthening existing churches, and developing missional leaders*. We continue to see evidence of God's great work and the faithfulness of his people as Midwest Conference churches live into this shared mission.

This summer we had the joy of partnering with central Kansas churches to plant New Life Covenant Church in Wichita. In addition, we launched two enhanced, six-month church planting residencies in partnership with two of our Regional Church Planting Groups—one at Celebration Covenant Church in Omaha, Nebraska, in preparation for planting a bilingual church in Omaha, and one at Grace Place in Berthoud, Colorado, in preparation for planting in Erie, a fast-growing community north of Denver. Through this model of establishing partnerships between church planters and thriving churches, these residencies will help propel new churches in a healthy direction as they leverage the leadership culture and ministry systems of healthy, missional churches. In addition, a church planting couple out of Parker, Colorado, was approved and began their training with an anticipated covenant agreement in early 2017. We have been blessed with a diverse group of church planters who join our existing churches to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ!

Midwest Conference staff, pastors, and lay leaders have been working together to strengthen and resource our churches through a variety of learning opportunities, including conversations on race, leadership development workshops, Latino leadership gatherings, a preaching cohort, think tanks, etc. This year we introduced the Ministry Development Workshop in partnership with Freedom Fire Ministries and the Evangelical Covenant Church. This workshop helps church planters and organizations in under-resourced communities find alternative pathways to sustainability by learning how to develop relationships with granting agencies. Be on the lookout for additional offerings of this workshop in 2017!

None of this would be possible without your encouragement, perseverance in prayer, and generous partnership. I invite you to join us at the Annual Ministry Celebration to be held at Community Covenant Church in Lenexa, Kansas, on April 28-29, 2017, where we will highlight all of this and more as we celebrate another year of shared ministry. We look forward to joining you in praising God for the work he is doing throughout our conference and beyond!

As your congregation gathers for its own Annual Meeting, I pray that it, too, will be a celebration of all that God is doing within your local context. Thank you for the privilege of serving alongside you in ministry. We pray for you and give gratitude to God for the difference you are making across the MWC region.

To God be the glory!

Tammy Swanson-Draheim
Superintendent