

MWC Ministerial Association

Annual Meeting – Chair Update

April 24, 2021



God wired us for community. Authentic community is vital for our spiritual, emotional, and mental health as pastors and leaders.

A recent Gallup poll compared the mental health of Americans in 2019 to 2020 (pandemic year). They discovered that those who committed to attending weekly religious services (virtually or in person) improved in their mental health by 4 percentage points, while those who never or sporadically attended declined in their mental health by 12-13 percentage points.

This past year has shaken us to the core because of the many unforeseen challenges thrust upon us – (be they ecclesial, political, racial, physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, or financial).

Understanding our need for support and connection, our Midwest Conference staff and Ministerial Association Executive Committee made it a priority this past year to offer a variety of online opportunities for our pastors and staff to connect. Some of these opportunities included training cohorts, a day of prayer, spiritual direction, and retreats for various groups.

I found it to be particularly lifegiving to connect online with my Midwest Covenant colleagues on a regular basis, even if it only meant staring at friendly faces, wondering about the drinks of choice, or rating church office spaces in my mind. But I especially appreciated times carved out for smaller breakout sessions of praying together, hearing from one another, and receiving much needed encouragement from each other. These times of connection made me a more effective pastor for my congregation. We are truly churches working (surviving) together.

Currently, the conference staff and ministerium are planning our 2021 Pastor/Staff Fall Retreats for the East and for the West. The Eastern Retreat will return to Carol Joy Holling Conference Center in Ashland, Nebraska, from November 2-4. The Western Retreat will gather together for one day at LifeSpring Covenant Church in Loveland, Colorado, on October 19.

Please make it a priority to continue to connect with your sisters and brothers for the sake of your ongoing spiritual, emotional, and mental health.

Jon Black, Chair
MWC Ministerial Association