

November 2014



# CB NORTH CENTRAL

*Connecting Churches Who Love God and the Gospel*

## THE CENTRAL CONNECTION



### From the Director

#### *"Thankfulness As An Attitude"*

A famous British poet by the name of Rudyard Kipling made a great deal of money as a writer. A newspaper reporter came up to him once and said, "Mr. Kipling, I just read that somebody calculated that the money you make from your writings amounts to over one hundred dollars a word." Mr. Kipling raised his eyebrows and said, "Really, I certainly wasn't aware of that." The reporter cynically reached into his pocket and pulled out a one hundred dollar bill and gave it to Kipling and said, "Here's a one hundred dollar bill, Mr. Kipling. Now you give me one of your one-hundred-dollar words." Rudyard Kipling looked at that piece of currency for a



moment. He took it, folded it up and put it in his pocket. He said in one word, "Thanks."

The word thanks is certainly more than a one-hundred-dollar word, wouldn't you agree? It is more like a million-dollar word. It is a word that is too seldom heard and nearly forgotten in our society today. King David spoke very clearly of "attitude" when it came to a particular culture about saying thanks. "One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness." (Psalm 145:4,7) If any people ought to be thankful, it should be Christians. Why? Because we know that we do not deserve anything.

So often we see a different kind of attitude in the world around us and that is, "entitlement". Just ride around in rush hour traffic for a few minutes or notice people at the local mall as they are already shopping for Christmas. It is like people are crying out, "Hey, you owe me!" This attitude of gratitude that I speak of should be an expression of our love to Him in our personal relationship, to each other in the church and to the "curiosity-seekers" in the world.

Dr. Nick Stinnett of the University of Nebraska conducted a recent study to discover what characteristics were common in strong families. He discovered six qualities. The first quality and one of the most important to be found was that of appreciation. He concluded that strong families expressed appreciation for what each member did and for who they are. It is true.

In just a few weeks, we will be celebrating a traditional holiday that has been in our country for hundreds of years. Take time this Thanksgiving or should I say, "Thanks Living", to express your gratitude to the One who truly deserves it (besides the cook). Don't get so busy and hurried that you don't pause to praise God for all He has done, is doing and will do in our life. Isn't this the real purpose of Thanksgiving?

I will leave you with some encouraging words from a wise man that had a real "attitude" in life. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3: 16,17)

Let's serve with "attitude" this Thanksgiving.

*Pat Phinney, Regional Director*

*Pastor's Wives. . . Just for You*

*"I'm Thankful to Be Thankful"*



Here we are in November. The month we think of turkey, cranberries, pumpkin

pie and giving thanks. Thankfulness should not be seasonal of course! As we reflect over the past year I'm sure we all have lots to be thankful for. I know I do! I thought it would be fun to find out what our four grandchildren are thankful for. My question to each of them was "Tell me four things that you are thankful for." Here is what they said .....

Gabe (age 10) - "I'm thankful for my family, our house, my friends and that I'm good at drawing" (Just so you know - he was drawing at the time and he is very good at it.)

Nora (age 8) - "I'm thankful for Minnesota, my family, a good budget and that I'm thankful." (Just so you know - Nora and her family moved this summer from Oregon to Minnesota.)

Anna (age 7) - "I'm thankful for my family, Kudos, you and Grandpa and my cousins." (Just so you know - Kudos is their dog.)

Lincoln (age 5) - "I'm thankful for my bedroom, our house, the laundry chute and Gabe and Anna." (Just so you know - Lincoln and his family just moved into their new house and he and Nora have their own bedrooms for the first time. The house also has a laundry chute which as you can imagine is really fun for a five year old.")

What a good reminder to me from the four of them that we should be thankful for everything we have. Even if that means something as simple as a laundry chute. I like what Nora said "I'm thankful for being thankful." Now that's being filled with Thanksgiving!

This month as we pray for our husbands let's focus on praying for their faith to grow (and ours too!) Here are some verses to get you started .....

*"I pray that You, Lord, will increase my husband's faith." Luke 17:5*

*"I pray that my husband will have a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith."*

*1 Timothy*

*1:5*

*"I pray that my husband will always remember that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."*

*Hebrews*

*11:1*

*"I pray that my husband will fight the good fight; that he will finish the race; and that he will keep the faith."*

*2 Timothy*

*4:7*

Last month I suggested that we share some recipes that we especially enjoy making during this time of the year. Thank you to all of you who contributed. You will find a variety of things to try. Have fun!

Cranberry Fruit Salad  
Party Potatoes  
Scalloped Corn  
Popcorn Bars  
Twix Bars  
Chocolate Pecan Caramels  
Almond Butter Crunch



[\*Click Here for Recipes\*](#)

*Karen Phinney, Wife of Regional Director*

# PASTORS'

## CONFERENCE



MAY 18-21, 2015 · CHICAGO

It's time to start planning for the next Moody Pastor's Conference. Yes it's a few months away, but before you know it you'll be wishing you had registered early!

*For more information about speakers, musicians and the 2015 schedule [click on the picture above](#) to go directly to the site.*

Register by **February 28, 2015** through **CBNC** for the Early Bird discount.

### Conference Registration

\$200 per person. Includes all sessions and breakout sessions.  
Early Bird through Moody is \$230.

### Conference Registration with Meals

\$300 per person. Includes all sessions and breakout sessions and 10 meals and evening snacks.  
Early Bird through Moody is \$330.

### Conference Registration with Housing and Meals

\$400 per person (double or triple occupancy). Includes all sessions and breakout sessions, a four-night stay in campus housing and 10 meals plus evening snacks.  
Early Bird through Moody is \$430. Single occupancy is \$480.

As this event is designed for men in the pastorate, registration for housing and meals are available only to men. Pastors' wives may attend the general sessions (not breakout sessions) without charge or registration.

## Thoughts From a Cluster Leader

### *"Gratitude is the Forgotten Factor"*

*Scientists have been doing research on gratitude. According to the "Greater Good" website of Berkeley.edu, they are "finding that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits:*

- Stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure;*
- Higher levels of positive emotions;*
- More joy, optimism, and happiness;*
- Acting with more generosity and compassion;*
- Feeling less lonely and isolated."*

*According to Robert Emmons, professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis, one of the foremost authorities on the topic of gratitude in North America, gratitude can give life meaning. "It is a 'chosen attitude.'" He says. "We must be willing to recognize and acknowledge that we are the recipients of an unearned benefit. "*

*On the website "gratitudepower.net," it summarized the highlights from the research program on gratitude and thankfulness and found that "gratitude is the 'forgotten factor' in happiness research... Scientists are latecomers to the concept of gratitude. Religions and philosophies have long embraced gratitude as an indispensable manifestation of virtue, and an integral component of health, wholeness, and well-being. Through conducting highly focused, cutting-edge studies on the nature of gratitude, its causes, and its consequences, we hope to shed important scientific light on this important concept." Better late than never! Science gives us more reasons to be people of gratitude.*

*We will express thanksgiving for all the reasons, and to all the others, that people do, plus one. We, as followers of Jesus Christ will give thanks to and for our God. We don't give thanks because of all the personal benefits it might bring to the thanks-givers. We give thanks because God is worthy and He has done great things! Fortunately personal benefits come to us as thanks-givers as a by-product of our gratitude to our Savior and Redeemer.*

*As the recipients of God's grace, who have been adopted into God's family through the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we "give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for (us) in Christ Jesus."*

*Give thanks to the Lord! Do you want to have better mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health? Give Thanks. Do you want to have meaning to life and greater joy? Give thanks to the Lord. Do you want to bring glory and honor to God? Then count your blessings from Him. Let us, regardless of our circumstances or situation give praise to our God and King.*

*Like the prophet Habakkuk, let us say, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights..." Habakkuk 3:17-19*

*Pastor Wade Duroe  
Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI*

**#SPOTLIGHT**



## Getting to Know You-

### *"An Interview With Pastor Nate Wagner"*

Nate was born in upstate New York in a little town called Lowville. When he was three his family moved to Salem County, New Jersey where he grew up and moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan for college. He has been married to his amazing wife Karla for 17 years. They have three children, 15 year old daughter Brienna, 14 year old son Gabriel, and 11 year old daughter Kylee.



Nate likes to spend time with his wife and kids after a long day. They like to debrief their day and spend time laughing together as they share. For Nate time outdoors is also a good way to unwind. He and Karla enjoy going on walks around downtown Grand Rapids. Nate also likes to play football, ultimate Frisbee and basketball with his kids and the kids in the neighborhood. Other activities that he enjoys are cooking, great conversations with family and

friends, and spending time with his best friend and love of his life debriefing, dreaming and praying.

Though Nate grew up in a Christian family, he had a highly dysfunctional relationship with his father due to his addiction to anger and rage. Nate had the opportunity to see God do an incredible work of grace and restoration in his father's life and in their relationship during his college years. This firsthand experience of seeing God's work in this powerful way continues to have a significant influence on Nate's life and career path.

Growing up, Nate attended a Fundamental Baptist Church where they taught the principles and truths of the Bible explicitly, though the legalist culture and implicit messages led to some confusion and spiritual resistance during his later years of high school and early college. Out of that grew a love for Scripture, as well as a passion to be a part of a community of faith where it could be wrestled with and brought to bear in a grace-based context.

In Nate's words, from the very beginning of his journey as an adult, God has seemingly put the next opportunity in front of him at every stage to lead him to the place he is in now. In many ways it seemed that all Nate had to do was follow His leading and trust Him as Nate walked toward the ambiguity. He has been humbled and privileged by the reality that His faithfulness has always trumped Nate's doubt, and his limitations and deficiencies have been overcome by God's gracious and patient providential orchestration that has led Nate to this point in his journey. Nate has been a pastor for 17 years, 14 as an associate and 3 as a senior pastor.

At Sparta Baptist Church the teaching for a long time has been that whenever sin is revealed and confessed, God's grace abounds. As a church they believe that within a grace based context sin can be identified, dealt with, and a pathway of healing and restoration can be offered. They pray regularly that God would surface the sin in the lives of their people so that it no longer has power over them. During the last several months they have been seeing God surface long standing sin issues in people's lives and have had the privilege to watch God respond time and again with grace and restoration as a result. Nate

says he continues to be humbled and grateful as they are seeing marriages restored, addictions overcome, relationships reconciled, and God's glory being magnified in the lives of the people.

They have been praying and wrestling over the direction of their youth ministry as they have seen parents and teens seemingly grow further and further apart by the year. At Sparta they have recently made a shift toward a hybrid, more integrated model where parents and teens are being taught and shepherded together. In just a short time they have seen significant fruit from these initiatives and are excited about the level of connection and spiritual conversations that are happening in their homes. The parents being equipped and motivated to become the students' primary youth pastors is as exciting as anything else they see God accomplishing within the ministries at Sparta Baptist Church.

*Information submitted by Pastor Nate Wagner  
Sparta Baptist Church, Sparta, MI*

### *"How Has CBNC Helped Your Church?"*

As a young pastor entering his first senior pastorate 10 years ago, I was incredibly grateful for the help CBNC provided as I was learning on the fly.

Over the past 10 years, I have benefited tremendously from the support and encouragement of the two directors that have served our region during that time. Current director Pat Phinney and previous director Don Shaw have both been in our church to teach and also to provide some excellent training for our leadership team. Each man has also been a great source of personal encouragement as well as offering advice, counsel, and numerous pastoral resources to help in my continued growth and development.

The CB pastor's cluster that I have been part of has also been a source of great encouragement. I have had the privilege of developing some good friendships

as well as having the opportunity to gain wisdom and insight from some of the more experienced pastors in our cluster.

As a church, we have also utilized NCD (Natural Church Development). The survey results and the coaching we received helped us as a church become even more effective and intentional in reaching out to our community.

I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with other like-minded pastors in our state and region as we seek to make an impact for the Kingdom to the glory of God!!

*Blessings,*

*Pastor Mike Wetzig  
Ravenna Baptist Church, Ravenna, MI*

## **Church Law and Tax**



### **Building Your Leadership Team**

*Consider the pros and cons of cultivating staff from within your congregation.*

- by Karl Vaters [Read Article](#)

### **Many Churches Are Reaching Out To Illegal Immigrants**

*An immigration attorney sees no legal issues related to allowing undocumented immigrants in your services. - by Michelle Dowell*

[Read Article](#)

*Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition:*

SENIOR PASTOR

- Mason Township Baptist Church - Cassopolis, MI
- Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL
- First Baptist Church - Elmhurst, IL
- First Baptist Church - Whitehall, WI
- First Baptist Church - Long Prairie, MN
- First Baptist Church - Lake Crystal, MN
- First Baptist Church - Pekin, IL
- Palisade Baptist Church - Silver Bay, MN
- Monona Oaks Community Church - Madison, WI
- Cornerstone Community Church - Manchester, IA

STAFF POSITIONS

- First Baptist Church - Spring Lake, MI *Associate Pastor*
- First Baptist Church - Worthington, MN *Associate Pastor*

CB North Central Pastoral Cluster Groups

North Dakota/Northern Minnesota

Thursday, November 20, 10am - 12pm Skype  
*Steve Daggett, Cavalier Baptist Church, Cavalier,  
ND*  
701-265-8989

**Central Minnesota**

Monday, December 8, 10am - 12pm  
*Steve Schoenwald, River of Life Church, Hastings,  
MN*  
651-437-3965

**Southern Minnesota**

To Be Determined  
*Doug Noonkester, First Baptist Church, Sibley, IA*  
712-754-3310

**Wisconsin**

Thursday, December 11  
Skype meeting for all those signed up, led by John van Gorkom at Calvary  
*Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI*  
715-723-1054

**Iowa**

Tuesday, January 13th, noon  
Meeting at Calvary Church, 501 W Bypass 61, Muscatine, IA  
*Jay Jentink, Calvary Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA*  
319-396-3233

**Illinois**

Tuesday, January 27, 10:00 - 3:30  
Meeting at Bethany Baptist Church, 7422 North Heinz Ln, Edwards, IL  
*Art Georges, Living Hope Community Church, Bartonville, IL*  
309-633-0028 [art@livinghopecentral.org](mailto:art@livinghopecentral.org)

**Michigan**



To Be Determined

*Mike Wetzig, Ravenna Baptist Church, Ravenna, MI*

231-853-6021

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### **Pat Phinney, Regional Director**

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Stay Connected

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