



North Central

Connecting Churches Who Love God and the Gospel



**November 2016**

## THE CENTRAL CONNECTION

*"We are an organization of churches that is committed to the mission of Christ to multiply disciple-making churches through evangelism, leadership training, and connection with other like-minded churches."*

[Visit Our Website](#)

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### **From The Director**

#### **"Asking the Right Question"**

Voltaire, a seventeenth century French writer and philosopher, once said, "It is easier to judge the mind of a man by his questions rather than his answers." A true statement perhaps? In my many years of leadership, I have observed that good questions are generally heart-felt and often demonstrate a person's true thoughts and convictions. Answers generally do not.

Not too long ago I was in a church doing some leadership training for key ministry leaders. With good intention, we began to discuss the topic of church growth within America. Then it happened again. A very distinguished looking lady asked, "In light of the church growth trends that you have shared today, could you tell us how we can increase our church attendance?" I could not believe what I heard. I looked at the lady

and quickly said, "If you truly want to measure the success of your church in light of today's world, then you have asked the wrong question."

I see this all the time. People sitting in the church pew somehow measure the success or failure of their church by how many people are attending a given worship service. Wrong! To me there is but one scriptural gauge to measure the spiritual health of the evangelical church. It is embarrassingly simple. It comes down to one question



really and it flows from the words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:18-20. Are we making disciples? More than I want to acknowledge, I hear too many churches saying how their church has grown in attendance. Are we just entertaining Christians transferring from other churches who may be discontent? Are we spending time trying to convince Christians who walk through the front door how our church is uniquely designed to meet their needs? Do we value the quality of discipleship over the quantity of attendance? I guess I am sharing a little bit out of disappointment as I hear this subtle message over and over. The measure of how we are doing in impacting our community is not with filling seats in the worship center, but whether we are seeing lives transformed into Christ-like followers of Jesus.

I know there are many other important ways to measure health in a church. Just read the books, right? Simply if the gospel is being shared in all venues, people are being saved, new reproductive disciples are being added, then the church is healthy and growing regardless of problems. Seriously! If quality disciples are being added to our churches, then is that not the fulfillment of the Great Commission? I was sharing this concept in a church recently during some training time. Someone stood up to ask a question for all to hear, "Why haven't we been taught this in the church?" I broke out in tears. My heart ached. I told them it is very simple really. If disciples are being trained and transformed by the power of God's Word, then the church will grow spiritually. The Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 will be fulfilled. I further said that if a church is not making these kind of transformed disciples, then it is declining, dying and failing. I asked, which will you choose to be?

We already know this, but the church in America is struggling. She is failing at the core command Jesus gave His followers and that is to make disciples. Did you know about 260,000 evangelical young people will walk away from Christianity each year? Most don't ever come back. Shockingly we are losing people from every generation in the church. The Christians that do remain in the church are not being reproductive in their living or transformed in their thinking for the future. We are not told to build a building, focus on programs or even offer the best worship service in town. We are told to make disciples who are being transformed by the power of His Word. We must step out in obedience and begin to prepare the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in this rapid changing culture.

After documenting the evangelical church for over twenty years, George Barna acknowledged something amazing in his book, "Revolution". He said, "One of the



greatest frustrations of my life has been the disconnection between what our research consistently shows about churched Christians and what the Bible calls us to be." I painfully understand this.

Let us partner together and remain obedient to the call to be a disciple-making church. A church that will reproduce meaningful relationships with God through Jesus Christ. The world is watching and waiting!

*Pat Phinney*  
*CB North Central Regional Director*

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## **Pastor's Wives . . . Just For You**

### **"There Is Just a Lot To Do"**

As I sit at my dining room table writing this article, I can look into the backyard and watch lots of yellow leaves gently falling to the ground. They are joining what is already a covering of mostly yellow on our lawn. I guess it's time to rake (again!). We have four very large maple trees in our backyard. We love them most of the year, but right now they are a lot of work. What is it about this season that seems to put all of our schedules into another speed? [Read More](#)

To print recipes shared by Karen, [click here](#).



*Karen Phinney*  
*Wife of Regional Director, Pat Phinney*

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## **Looking for an Alternative to Traditional Health Insurance?**



[Medi-Share](#), an affordable, Biblical Healthcare, may be the answer for you. [Finances Made Simple, LLC](#) provides a look at this alternative to traditional health insurance and provides you [questions](#) to look at when considering this option.

[Medi-Share Brochure](#)  
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More Questions? Contact [Finances Made Simple LLC](#) 651-294-9322 ext 2.

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## Thoughts From A Cluster Leader

Let me tell you more of what I'm thankful for:

1. I'm thankful for my wife, the love of my life.
2. I'm thankful for my church, where the call is, put God first!
3. I'm thankful for CBNC, Wendy Jonasen and Pat Phinney.
4. I'm thankful for our cluster of pastors, a group of servants, not uppity masters.
5. I'm thankful for the Holy Bible, the number one best seller without rival.
6. I'm thankful for a big screen TV, to watch sports and an occasional movie.
7. I'm thankful I was raised in a small town, where in 15 minutes you can walk all around.
8. I'm thankful for my two sons. I'll be glad when their extended college years are done.
9. I'm thankful for health as I get up in age, glad I'm not on the obituary page.
10. I'm thankful for elections in a country free, but I've heard enough from Trump and Hillary.
11. I'm thankful for turkey, taters, and pie, and that my stomach is bigger than my eyes.
12. I'm thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior, Redeemer who has given me life.

Now that you've read this short thanksgiving list of mine, make up your own. It doesn't have to rhyme.

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

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## Pastor Appreciation



October was 'Pastor Appreciation' month and our hope is that you received some unexpected encouragement somewhere in your ministry recently. Thank you to each of you for giving so faithfully of yourselves and blessings to each of you as you serve and spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

We wanted to share a very sweet letter of encouragement that we received from an AWANA Sparky in one of our regional churches. Please enjoy this letter from this dear one, we did.

Dear Pat and Karen  
hi I'm ~~Layne~~  
Layne I am  
scif and Jesus pres.

I prayed for you.  
You guys keep  
spreading the ~~word~~  
of god and keep.  
~~on~~ on going.  
by Layne teller

## #GettingToKnowYou

### *An Interview With Pastor Joel van Loon*

Joel van Loon is the new pastor at First Baptist Church in Lake Crystal, MN. He began his ministry at FBC in August this year. To get to know him a little better we have asked him to share some things about himself and his family.



Joel moved to Lake Crystal from northern Saskatchewan in Canada, but was born in Mason City, IA. Interestingly, the home where he spent the first five years of his life was just a couple of miles from the spot where the music died in 1959. (Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper all died in a plane crash that year.)

Joel and his wife Kristin have been married for 7 years and they have two children: Kaylin age 6 and Benjamin age 4. He says that the picture here is not real current, but a very nice picture in either case. One of Joel's favorite things to do is to read. So even after a long day, he's likely to enjoy reading in his leisure as well as spending time with his family.

In high school, Joel had a strong impression that God would use him to teach/explain/proclaim His word to His people, to help His people understand what He has communicated in the Bible. He didn't then know precisely what that would look like, but God has given Joel both a passion for teaching and preaching His word, and a means to do that.

Prior to his recent move to Lake Crystal, Joel served in a church in Canada for nearly 5 years. During this time he and his family were 20 hours away from any of their family members. Since their move 2 months ago Joel & Kristin with their children have been much closer to both sides of their family and have enjoyed spending time with them.

Please pray for Joel & his family as well as other new pastors in the CB North Central region as they transition into their roles of ministry in their church and community.

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**#What'sYourStory?**

**Renewed Mission**



Here at The Heights Church, located in Saint Paul, MN, we are three years into a renewed mission to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ, building on the past grace of a one hundred year old church.

[Read more from](#)

Pastor Weyland Leach

The Heights Church, St. Paul, MN



ROCKFORD AREA  
CITYCHURCH

## **Our Story: Rockford Area City Church**

The story of Rockford Area City Church is one of renewal: a renewal of vision, mission and ministry strategy. At the beginning of this renewal process, we asked ourselves several questions of assessment: Are we reaching our city for Jesus Christ? Are we established in the faith? Are our forms of church helping how we function as a church? Assessments are never easy, especially if you go about answering

them honestly. Renewal is never easy, either, but it's something we felt God was calling us to do. After years of trying new ministry fad after new ministry fad, our church wasn't becoming established in the faith or seeing unbelievers come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. We knew things had to change at a foundational level.

[Read more from](#)

*Pastor Verlyn Swanson*

*Rockford Area City Church, Loves Park, IL*

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**CBAmerica Chaplaincy**



## "Need for Family Enrichment Training and Funding"

"From 9 to 11 September 2016, the 52nd Strategic Signal Battalion Unit Ministry Team (UMT), stationed out of Stuttgart, Germany, hosted 14 Department of the Army Civilian Couples for a weekend marriage enrichment training at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany." -by *Chaplain (Captain) Daniel Werho*  
[Read more about the event.](#)

*Rev. Andy Meverden*  
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## Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition:



### *Senior Pastor*

Lakes Community Church, Clitherall, MN  
Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL  
Wildwood Baptist Church - East Moline, IL  
Oak Park Community - Blaine, MN  
First Baptist Church - Parkers Prairie, MN  
Bazetta Baptist Church - Warren, OH  
First Baptist Church - New Richmond, WI

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### **Don't Let Non-Christians Write Your Liturgy**

"It struck me, as I sat in his team's section, that they didn't really care how their particular rituals affected me, an outsider. They were simply proud of their team and wanted everyone, including me, to know it. This wasn't offensive; it was attractive." -by Daniel Darling, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

### **14 Ways Introverted Senior Pastors Can Be More Relational**

"One of the most common complaints I hear from churches is how they wish their introverted Senior Pastors were friendlier and more approachable." -by Brian Jones, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

### **3 Steps to Avoiding a Pastoral Energy Crisis**

"I had not realized that energy was just as important-if not more important-to steward as time." - James Roberson, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)



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## **CB North Central Cluster Groups**

### **North Dakota/Northern MN**

To be decided - watch for details.

Steve Daggett, Cavalier Baptist, Cavalier, ND  
701-265-8989

### **Central Minnesota**

Monday, November 14, 10am to Noon

We're reading: "Old Paths New Power", by Daniel Henderson.

Meeting at River of Life Church, Hastings, MN  
Steve Schoenwald, River of Life Church, Hastings, MN  
651-437-3965



### Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Cluster group held a successful men's retreat on October 7-9 at Arrowhead Bible Camp in New Auburn, WI with men attending from six different churches. The next meeting of the Western Wisconsin Cluster is TBA for January or February.

Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI 715-723-1054

Eldon Carlson, Bloomer Baptist, Bloomer, WI 715-568-1979

### Iowa

Tuesday, November 15, 12:00 noon

Meeting at Calvary Church, Muscatine, IA

Jay Jentink, Calvary Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA

(319) 668-2157

### Illinois

January 24th from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Meeting at Wildwood Baptist Church in Moline, IL

Art Georges, Living Hope Community Church, Bartonville, IL

309-633-0028 [art@livinghopecentral.org](mailto:art@livinghopecentral.org)

### Michigan

To be decided - watch for details.

Leo Cumings, Bethel Baptist Church, Jackson, MI

517-416-1247

For more information on a Cluster Group in your area please contact the CBNC office.

## **Remember Election Day, Tuesday, November 8th**

"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities,  
for there is no authority except that which God has established.  
The authorities that exist have been established by God." Romans 13:1



## CB North Central

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