



## THE CENTRAL CONNECTION

December 2022

*"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



In the spirit of giving this Christmas, would you consider giving a year end gift to the ministry of Venture Church Network Midwest? We are thankful for your support. Thank you.

Your Gift





## **Multiplying - Equipping Churches To Reach More**



*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.*

*Colossians 1:3-8*

### **The very nature of the gospel is to produce life (v. 3-8).**

Something struck me the other day: responding to the gospel is not just adding another cultural responsibility or religious activity to our schedules. The gospel transfers us from death to life. We do not just add another resource to our repertoire of self-help tools so we can be successful in other areas of life.

The gospel transfers us from one mode of existence into another: one defined as being the Kingdom of His beloved Son. We have a whole new perspective on life, not just a portion of it. [Read More](#)

*Pastor Brad Little, Regional Executive Director  
Venture Church Network Midwest*



If ever there was a time to wrestle with the question of whether or not a church should invest time into forming a formal youth group, it is now. Students are turning their backs on the church in droves. Creating a place for students to connect to the church and grow in their faith is critical to the endurance of their faith post high school.

I encourage all churches to move forward in formalizing a youth ministry with as little as two students. Students desire a place they feel they belong, surrounded by people with whom they can be real. Equipping students to share their faith is the best way to reach other teens, but it doesn't solely depend on the students. We, the body of the church, need to be on-mission in our daily routine to reach out to students and form organic relationships with them so they see the church not as just a familiar building, but a family that is extending a welcoming hand to



### **'Cultivating Church Plants' - The Pastor and the Church's Money**

We think there are too many churches in our town. We think, it's too much competition. Or we think – let's keep it "small, pure, and manageable", and "those big churches must 'water it down' to get all those people, that's why we keep it small". Implying that the message of God's love, grace, and redemption through Jesus isn't attractive to the lost and dying.

What's real is it would take 20 churches the size of my church to have a seat for every citizen in my town on a Sunday morning. Yes, 20. Twenty churches in a town of 1645 people. That seems aggressive.

I know that my basic assumption is incorrect – *IF* there were an open chair in a church *THEN* every citizen would want to attend. But I

them.

*Chuck Babbitt, Youth Pastor  
Bloomer Baptist Church  
VCN Midwest Youth Ministries  
Director*

\*\*\*Click below to watch the video.\*\*\*



think we could eventually agree that more newer churches would mean more people attending church. Newer churches *usually* do a better job of reaching (evangelizing) people and of assimilating people into to their church. [Read More](#)

*Pastor Rob Buhl  
First Baptist Church, Whitehall, WI*



In early November, more than 20 VCN Midwest pastors gathered at Conference Point in beautiful Lake Geneva, WI for our annual retreat. We had a rich time of fellowship as we set our minds on things above (the theme of the retreat).

Our speakers (all VCN pastors from around the region) challenged and encouraged us right from the start. At our first session, we were asked a

simple question: Are you okay? For many of us, that elicits an unthinking response: "Of course, I'm okay!" But as pastors, living on the front lines of ministry, with an enemy seeking to destroy us and sheep more than willing to bite us, we need to pause and answer thoughtfully. Does anyone really know how we're doing? [Read More](#)

*Pastor Brandon Cooper  
Cityview Community Church, Elmhurst, IL  
VCN Midwest Board President*





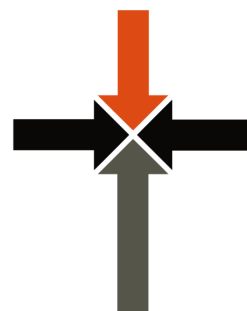
There will be  
**NO ENGAGE Forum in December**

This is a very busy time of year with holiday preparations for ministry and family. Blessings to each of you as you prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior. We look forward to connecting with you via the ENGAGE Forum in the new year!

**We'll re-ENGAGE in January 2023!**  
**Watch for more information.**



Venture Church Network Midwest  
**CLUSTER GROUPS**



**Iowa**

No Meeting in December  
*Jay Jentink, Calvary Baptist Church  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
319-396-3233  
[office@calvarycr.org](mailto:office@calvarycr.org)*

**Michigan/Ohio**

Thursday, December 15, 2:00 (EST)  
Meeting by Zoom  
*Allen Grover, Ganson Street Baptist  
Church, Jackson, MI  
517-740-8961  
[pastorallen@gansonstreet.org](mailto:pastorallen@gansonstreet.org)*

**Central Minnesota**

Monday, December 19, 10:00 (CT)  
Leader: Brad Little  
Location - River of Life Church,  
Hastings, MN  
Contact: Dan Vesta

**Southern Minnesota**

No Meeting in December  
*Walt Moser, First Baptist Church,  
Luverne, MN  
605-254-3092  
[PastorWalt.Moser@gmail.com](mailto:PastorWalt.Moser@gmail.com)*

**Wisconsin**

No Meeting in December  
*Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church,  
Chippewa Falls, WI  
715-723-1054  
[wjlc12@hotmail.com](mailto:wjlc12@hotmail.com)*

**VCN Midwest Youth Pastor  
Collaboration**

No Meeting in December  
Meeting by Zoom  
*Chuck Babbitt, Bloomer Baptist  
Church, Bloomer, WI*

651-468-1045  
[dkvesta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dkvesta@sbcglobal.net)

515-230-0774  
[youth@bloomerbaptistchurch.com](mailto:youth@bloomerbaptistchurch.com)

**To Be Decided**  
Illinois  
Northern Minnesota/North Dakota



**VENTURE**  
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*All articles and submissions are the view of the individual writer and are not necessarily the official position of Venture Church Network Midwest.*

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