



**VENTURE**  
CHURCH NETWORK MIDWEST



## **THE CENTRAL CONNECTION** **April 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](#)

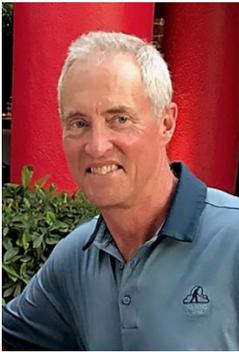
### **FROM THE DIRECTOR**

#### **Following Jesus By Choice or Crisis**

*As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air*

have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:57-62



**How easy it is to claim that we follow Jesus.** We have all said it, prayed it and made internal and possibly public commitments resolving that we will follow Jesus anywhere. Sometimes we find ourselves doing it daily as we try and keep our spiritual focus on what is truly important. We take that step to restore our passion, re-energize our discipline or faithfulness when we feel like we have drifted away, reduced our ‘commitment’ to lip service, or just become stagnant. It happens to everyone.

[Read More](#)

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



**Position Available:  
VCNMidwest Administrative Assistant**

Would you like to join the ministry of Venture Church Network Midwest? This is a half time position and can be done remotely if needed. [Click Here](#) for more detail about the position. Email [wendyj@vcnmidwest.org](mailto:wendyj@vcnmidwest.org) to inquire or send your resume.



**Tuesday, April 26, 9:00am (CT)**

with an alternative repeat session

**Wednesday, April 27, 3:00pm (CT)**

**WATCH FOR YOUR ZOOM INVITE COMING SOON!**

**The Purpose of ENGAGE** is to address gospel and missional critical issues and challenge our thinking related to pastoral ministry, leadership and the purpose of our churches.

**The Goal of ENGAGE** is to continue to become gospel-centered, grace driven, biblically anchored churches passionately committed to fulfill the mission of Christ.

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**FINAL DAY TO REGISTER**  
**Friday, April 15th!**

**Pastors Retreat**  
**Camp Lebanon, 1205 Acorn Rd, Burtrum, MN**  
**April 24-27, 2022**



**DON'T MISS THE FUN!**

This retreat is an opportunity for you to step away from daily demands and enjoy a time of relaxed fun, reflection and worship.

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Theme:

## Living in Light of Eternity

*"Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."  
Colossians 3:2*

**Who is invited to attend?** Senior Pastors, Lead Pastors, Associate Pastors, Interim Pastors, Youth Pastors, Worship Pastors and Church Leadership

**\*Cost:** \$113 That's approximately \$37 per night plus 7 meals! (additional \$10 fee for zipline & laser tag to be paid at the time of activity)

**Bedding:** Bedding is available through camp for an additional \$10. (included are a full set of towels, sheets, one blanket & one pillow) Please indicate if you would like this service when you register. You are also welcome to bring your own. Most beds are extra long singles with a few full size beds.

**Arrival Time:** Check in any time after 5pm Sunday, April 24. The first session begins at 7pm with Worship. NO evening meal is planned so please plan accordingly.

**Registration Deadline:** Final day to register Friday, April 15th

**To Register:** Email the Venture Church Network Midwest office at [wendyj@vcnmidwest.org](mailto:wendyj@vcnmidwest.org). Let us know that you're coming, if you would like linen service, and if you have any special dietary needs. (Camp Lebanon can accommodate many of your special needs.)

\*Camp Lebanon has given us a very generous discount to the usual fees, but even so, if cost is a barrier to attending this retreat, please contact us. VCNMidwest has funds to help you. We want you to have every opportunity to attend.

If you are interested in attending this retreat and haven't received an email with detailed information please contact the VCNMidwest office at [wendyj@vcnmidwest.org](mailto:wendyj@vcnmidwest.org).





One of the best pictures from the recent Artic Advance Retreat was inadvertently left out of the last newsletter. What a great group! A HUGE thanks to all who helped to organize this event! -VCNMidwest



This month I want to let all of you know about a great Christian band I have worked with in the past and am currently working with for an outreach concert late this summer. The band is called Winona Avenue and is made up of 2 brothers. I did an interview with them you can watch to find out more about them. I wanted to highlight Winona Avenue this month for any churches or youth groups looking for a great priced band that is passionate about Christ. Youth are constantly listening to music and are constantly on YouTube. I like to give my students music options to listen to that honor God and encourages them in their faith. See interview [HERE](#).



*Chuck Babbitt, Youth Pastor, Bloomer Baptist Church*

## The Pastor & His Money

### Teaching My Kids About Money - *Vacations Edition*



More than once I've said, "I should have written a book on parenting when my teenagers were toddlers, because that's when I knew everything". But one thing I didn't know and one thing that everyone around me told me I was crazy for, was saying that my kids learn a lot of money lessons while on vacations. And not only that, but vacations at a Disney Park. [Read More](#)

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

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### PLEASE PRAY for the Following Churches in Transition:



First Baptist Church - Collinsville, IL  
First Baptist Church - Colfax, IA  
River of Life Church - Hastings, MN  
Faith Baptist Church - Kenmare, ND  
Calvary Community Church - Lancaster, WI



**Venture Church Network Chaplaincy**

## “Raise your Right Hand”: One Pastor’s Journey to Commissioning

Here is my journey:

When I was a kid, I always wanted to join the military. For various reasons, my parents convinced me not to join. So, I went to college instead, got married, and felt called into ministry. While in Seminary, a chaplain recruiter came to the campus. Excitedly, I told my wife and asked her if I should join? [Read More](#)

*-by Pastor Ryan Faust, Chaplain  
US Navy Reserve*



Rev. Randy L. Brandt, Chaplain, Colonel, USA Ret.  
Director of Chaplaincy, Venture Church Network  
[venturechurches.org/chaplaincy](http://venturechurches.org/chaplaincy)  
[r.brandt@venturechurchnetwork.org](mailto:r.brandt@venturechurchnetwork.org)  
Cell: 913-904-8746

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## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT. . .

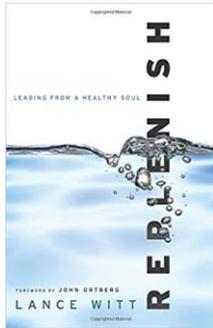


### Lance Witt: How to Handle the ‘Toughest Moment to Navigate Leadership in the Local Church’

“Pastors have never been this criticized and scrutinized. No matter what they say, it’s wrong, it’s upsetting. Somebody’s going to leave the church over it. So, yeah, I think this is at least in my lifetime, it has been the toughest moment to navigate leadership in the local church.” -Lance Witt [Read More & Listen to Podcast](#)

*-Article by Jessica Lea, Churchleaders.com*

### Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul



"Every leader functions on two stages--the front stage or public world, and the back stage or private world. One cannot lead successfully front stage when one is completely depleted back stage. In a time when pastors are leaving the ministry in record numbers due to cynicism, disillusionment, weariness, and personal scandals, there is an urgent need for soul care in the private lives of leaders." [See More Information](#) about Lance Witt's book, [Replenish](#).



### **Is a Paper Bible Better Than a Bible App? Pastor's Comment Provokes Discussion**

Is reading a paper Bible better than reading the Bible on a device such as an iPhone? An offhand comment by a pastor last week has generated some discussion around this topic, with another pastor explaining why he believes the remark, though well-intentioned, was "unwise." [Read More](#)  
-by Jessica Lea, [Churchleaders.com](#)

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## **Venture Church Network Midwest CLUSTER GROUPS**

### **Illinois**

To Be Decided

### **Iowa**

To Be Decided

*Jay Jentink, Calvary Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA*

319-396-3233 [office@calvarycr.org](mailto:office@calvarycr.org)

### **Michigan**

Thursday, May 12, 2pm (ET)

*Allen Grover, Ganson Street Baptist Church, Jackson, MI*

517-740-8961 [pastorallen@gansonstreet.org](mailto:pastorallen@gansonstreet.org)

### **Northern Minnesota/North Dakota**

To Be Decided

### **Central Minnesota**

Monday, April 18, 10am (CT)



Meeting at River of Life Church  
*Dan Vesta*  
651-468-1045 [dkvesta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dkvesta@sbcglobal.net)

### **Southern Minnesota**

Tuesday, May 3, 11:30-1pm (CT)  
Meeting at Pizza Ranch, Jackson, MN  
*Walt Moser, First Baptist Church, Luverne, MN*  
605-254-3092 [PastorWalt.Moser@gmail.com](mailto:PastorWalt.Moser@gmail.com)

### **Wisconsin**

To Be Decided  
*Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI*  
715-723-1054 [wljc12@hotmail.com](mailto:wljc12@hotmail.com)

### **VCNMidwest Youth Pastor Collaboration**

Thursday, April 21, 10am (CT)  
Meeting by Zoom  
*Chuck Babbitt, Bloomer Baptist Church, Bloomer, WI*  
515-230-0774 [youth@bloomerbaptistchurch.com](mailto:youth@bloomerbaptistchurch.com)

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## **NEED DIRECTION, NEED A RESOURCE???**

The [VCNMidwest website](#)  
has answers to many of your questions.  
Not finding what you need,  
contact the VCNMidwest Administrative Office or  
Regional Executive Director, Brad Little.



**Venture Church Network Midwest**  
PO Box 490441, Blaine, MN 55449

**Dr. Brad Little**  
**Regional Executive Director**  
[blittle@vcnmidwest.org](mailto:blittle@vcnmidwest.org)

763-350-4263

**Administrative Office**

Regular Hours: Tues. thru Fri. 8am - 1pm

Wendy Jonasen, Administrative Assistant

[wendyj@vcnmidwest.org](mailto:wendyj@vcnmidwest.org)

763-205-9330

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

