

"Therefore, if anyone is in
Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away;
behold, the new has come."
2 Cor. 5:17



January 2017

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](#)

From The Director

"Big People - Big Dreams"

Four days since Christmas and still counting. Can't wait for 2017. We had the joy of having our four grandchildren over for sleepovers in two separate waves. Then it happened. I insulted my seven-year-old grandson at the table when it was time to pray. I said to Lincoln, "Would you like to pray little guy?" Have you ever got "the look" from a child? Quickly he said to me, "Grandpa, I am not little!" Busted! Lincoln is sensitive about his size and he was trying to communicate that he may be small in stature, but he definitely was not little. Oh there's a difference.

Being "little" implies much more than being short. It suggests being petty, lacking in vision, having a mind that is limited, suspicious, envious or even ungrateful. "Little"



people, regardless of their physical stature, find it difficult to applaud another's achievements, especially if they bear the marks of success.

All sorts and sizes of people will read this article. A few of you are "little" when it comes to believing God for what is impossible. Many more of you are "big". That means being a visionary, bold, courageous, secure, productive, unintimidated by the odds and ready to work hard.

As 2017 is looking us in the face, I wonder what kind of people (little or big) will lead God's church towards what is impossible. Will the growth of God's church and the desperate need to reach lost people with the Gospel be impacted by "little" leaders? Will "big" leaders in the church be ready to press on? Will they run hard, embrace quality and excellence? Will they strive for integrity and humility in order to accomplish the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ? I have been in more churches than I can count as the Regional Director since 2011. I have stood before hundreds and hundreds of church leaders (including pastors) and what I have seen is too many "little" people. This is so convicting to me because all too often, I think "little" thoughts when it comes to what I believe God will do.

" . . . thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 I will tell you this. Paul was not thinking of "little people" when he wrote to the believers in Corinth. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead, He absorbed death's sting making it powerless. In this song of triumph, death and the grave does not have the final victory over us. Paul's encouragement here is for "big people". People who are not afraid. People who will not quit. People who will claim their victory in Christ and do bold things for the kingdom.

The 2017 ministry theme for CB North Central is going to be, "Believing God for the Impossible". The emphasis will not be on "little" people, but on "big" thinkers. Will I believe God to provide an additional \$30,000 to assist in the startup of 3 new churches? Will I believe God to save 200 lost people throughout our churches and communities? Will I believe God for 300 new baptisms in our churches? Will I believe God to give 15 churches who will be committed to greater church health through coaching and assessments? Will I believe God that He will provide 150 new church leaders who will commit to leadership training and development? Will I believe God that He will raise up 3 new Learning Communities (Cluster Groups) that will bring greater connection among our regional churches? Will I believe God to provide an additional \$25,000 of yearly financial support from our churches?

In the coming 2017 newsletters, I want to highlight a number of "heroes of the faith" or "big people" that were able to believe God for ministry challenges that were seemingly impossible. Will you join me? Regardless of your stature, in spite of your current



circumstances, age, years of ministry, location, limitations, or background, let us aim high this new year. Paul said clearly in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Our mission at CB North Central is to nurture and connect churches who desire to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We cannot do it without you. Just a reminder, little people don't go anywhere!

Pat Phinney
CB North Central Regional Director



**2017
MOODY PASTOR'S
CONFERENCE**

May 22-25, 2017

*More information coming
soon*

Moody Bible Institute's Pastors' Conference 2017 will feature messages from Erwin Lutzer, Crawford Loritts, Derwin Gray, and many others. [Visit website](#)



Also, during a break-out session, those with CB North Central will enjoy time with Andy Meverden, Director of Chaplaincy, CBAmerica and Doug Custer, Vice President of Mobilization Ministries for WorldVenture.

God has blessed CB North Central with a very nice gift and we would like to use it to help some pastors get to the conference.

Please contact us immediately
if you are in need of funding to attend this year's
2017 Moody Pastor's Conference.

Pastor's Wives . . . Just For You
"Have You Been Given the Green Light?"

It's the beginning of a new year and the word that is on my mind is "waiting". It seems like we are always waiting for something. What we are waiting for varies from time to time and person to person. Right now I am waiting for prayers to be answered concerning extended family problems. I am also waiting for Spring to arrive (I am not a winter person). We are planning to do some remodeling in our kitchen, living room, family room area in the next few months. As you can imagine, I am waiting for the finished result to see if reality matches what is in my imagination.

[Read more](#)



[Click here](#) to print this month's recipe.

Praying that 2017 will be a year filled with God's best for you as you wait on Him!

*Karen Phinney
Wife of Regional Director*

The winner of the December Newsletter challenge is . . .

In the December Newsletter Regional Director Pat Phinney talked about "braking for Christmas" and we challenged readers to find one additional reference to brakes in the newsletter. Thank you to those who responded. The reference was at the very end of the newsletter as a portion of our Christmas greeting to everyone.

*"Enjoy this season of Christmas
don't forget to **'pump the brakes'** when things get busy
and remember . . . Jesus, just Jesus."*

The winner was to be the fifth person to respond with the correct answer, but since it was a busy season, three people responded. So, we did the biblical thing and drew lots! The winner is **Pastor Kevin Schumann of First Baptist Church in Taylors Falls, MN.**

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

FOR THE RURAL AND
SMALL TOWN CHURCH

GROW!

Saturday, March 11, 2017

8:30am to 3:30pm

Cornerstone Church, Litchfield, MN

[\(brochure\)](#)

Do you want to minister effectively and impact your community for the Kingdom of God? You won't want to miss this conference. You'll hear keynote speaker, Leith Anderson. You'll hear from rural/small town experts such as Marti Giese, Ken Polley, Chad Hunt and many more. CB North Central is partnering with Cornerstone Church in Litchfield, MN in a leadership conference for churches in rural areas and small towns.

The cost? Can you believe it's only \$34 for early bird registration through Feb. 1st, \$29 if you bring three others from your church? Check it out and respond quickly.

We are happy to partner with Cornerstone Church for this event. If you have further questions or would like to register for this event please go to www.growmn.org or call 320- 593- 7971.



The HENRY C. SPICER SCHOLARSHIP is awarded each year to high school seniors planning to attend college in the Fall.



To qualify, an applicant must be a committed Christian and a regular attender of a CBNC affiliated church.

For more information and an application, visit our [website](#). More questions? Contact the CB North Central office by phone 763-205-9330 or email wendyj@cbnorthcentral.org. Applications must be postmarked no later than April 1st.



COMPASSION FUNDS -

Did you know that CB North Central has a Compassion Fund? What's that?

There are times when pastors and their families experience illnesses or other special needs that create a deficit in personal/family finances. The local church's sacrificial giving may not always be able to meet the need. When this happens it's a great opportunity for CB North Central's wider family to help. CB North Central has an established compassion fund to assist pastors and families in exceptional need.

If you, one of the pastor's of the CB North Central Region, are in need of assistance please contact Regional Director, Pat Phinney at 952-322-7173 or email him at patp@cbnorthcentral.org.

If you would like to support this ministry, your prayers are needed. Secondly you can support financially. If you choose to support financially mail your check to:



CB North Central
Compassion Fund
PO Box 490441
Blaine, MN 55449



You can also give online through our [website](#) by clicking on the GIVE button. Please be sure to designate your gift for the Compassion Fund. We thank you for coming together to support those in need.

Table Talk From Cluster Groups



While there's nothing magical about beginning a new year, new month, new week or new day for that matter, often the New Year gives us opportunity to make some fresh beginnings. Whether it's a new beginning or an old habit, I'd like to encourage you to make a Pastor Cluster Group a part of your life and ministry this year.

Through relationships that have been built, it's good to know that these "brothers" in Christ are also just a call away.

[Click here](#) to read more

Pastor Kevin Schumann
First Baptist Church, Taylors Falls, MN

#GettingToKnowYou



Rob Buhl is the new pastor at First Baptist Church in Whitehall, WI. He began his ministry at FBC in September 2016. To get to know him a little better we have asked him to share some things about himself and his family.

In the beginning Rob was born in a little coastal town in Oregon called Gold Beach. However, his family moved from there before his first birthday.

Rob and his wife Robyn met at Corban University in Salem, Oregon and were married in

December 2001. A few months later, the week after graduation in May of 2002, they began working in the youth ministry of a CB church where they served for nearly 12 years. Rob & Robyn have three children. Their daughter Leeann is 13 and in seventh grade; their son, Titus, is 11 and attending fifth grade; and their new born son, Silas, was born November 10, 2016.

Some of Rob's favorite things to do after a long day include taking a walk, watching a movie, football game, or an episode of 'Shark Tank'. Rob says he really doesn't have any hobbies, but as he has entered a new decade in life he feels it may important to take on some new hobbies. He has a goal of learning how to attract hummingbirds to their yard, including building bird houses. He also intends to learn how to snowshoe, shovel his driveway, and root for the Packers.

Rob has served in a paid, vocational role as a pastor for 12 years. Prior to that, he began serving in a ministry role at 15 years old. He served in elementary school ministry until he finished high school. Many things helped to confirm what God was doing to call Rob to ministry; serving in ministry as a high school student, participating in a 3 week long Mexico mission trip during that time, and encouragement from his youth pastors and youth leaders.

Prior to coming to Whitehall, Rob worked approximately 2 years for the state of Oregon. As opportunities to work in management began to emerge, the Lord was calling him to reconfirm his love for and his call for ministry. He says, "Ministry is hard work and it's the 'problems' of ministry that result in my greatest discouragement. During this time was able to see that the foundation of any job is solving problems. I had to decide if I wanted to solve problems for the state of Oregon or in a church. It became clear that my favorite problems to be involved with are church problems."

Recently as Rob and his family have been transitioning to First Baptist, Whitehall, he says they have been blessed to have received such a warm and receptive welcome from the church. In his words Rob says, "Whitehall First Baptist has a long history, and a long history of faithful pastors. Yet, they are at a place of wanting to strengthen and possibly even redefine their role in the community. This church is ready and open to the future that God has and believes that it means expanding the reach of the ministry into the lives of people who are far from God."

Please continue to pray for all of our pastors and churches, including those who are transitioning into new roles sometimes after moving their families many miles from their previous surroundings. Your prayer support is very important.

CBAmerica Chaplaincy

"Wolves, Sheep, and Sheep Dogs

-Current Challenges in Law Enforcement Ministry"

"All of our active duty LE members see themselves as targets for ambush and hate crime. Theirs is a thankless job too much of the time; but meanwhile they continue in the role of Sheep Dog."* *-by Pastor/Chaplain Jim Lightle with Chaplain Andy Meverden*

[Read more](#)

Rev. Andy Meverden
Director of Chaplaincy
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Longmont, CO 80504
ChapAndy@cbamerica.org



Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition:

Senior Pastor



Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL
Wildwood Baptist Church - East Moline, IL
Bethany Baptist Church, Jackson, MI
Oak Park Community - Blaine, MN
Bazetta Baptist Church - Warren, OH
Eureka Baptist Church - St Croix Falls, WI
First Baptist Church - New Richmond, WI



Theology Matters

"If we water down our faith in order to have it match the world's values and ideals, then we end up having nothing to offer the world that it does not already have." -by James Emery White, Church & Culture [Read More](#)

IRS Decreases 2017 Standard Mileage Rate

- ECFA 12-15-16 [Read More](#)

Five Keys to Better Blogging in 2017

"If you're considering blogging again in 2017 or are just looking to improve your current blogging, here are five tips to help you blog better in the new year." -by Jonathan Howe, ThomRainer.com [Read More](#)

Seven Most Common Mistakes Bloggers Make

"There's another end to the poor writing spectrum-overly theological or academic writing. If you're writing above the heads of your intended audience, it will turn readers away." - by Jonathan Howe, ThomRainer.com [Read More](#)

Don't Believe in Yourself

"Humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less." - C.S. Lewis
-by Marshall Segal, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

9 Things That Worked in the Church a Decade Ago That Don't Today

"What used to work, doesn't. Not anymore. The challenge is to know what's stopped working and what hasn't." - by Carey Nieuwhof, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

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, January 9, 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

Tuesday, January 10, 12 noon - 3 p.m.

Pastor Rob Buhl will be hosting at First Baptist, Whitehall, WI.

Pastors should bring or purchase their own lunch.

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

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

Iowa

To be decided - watch for details.

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

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.



CB North Central

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Stay Connected

www.cbnorthcentral.org



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