

[3StrandStrong.info](http://3StrandStrong.info)



Congregation.  
Conference.  
Covenant.

# 3StrandStrong

**Imagine.** Your congregation is thriving, carrying out meaningful and life-changing ministry. And, as part of the Covenant and the Great Lakes Conference, your ministry reverberates throughout the region, across the country, and around the world.

We believe in the power of partnership. Our name underscores it. The Covenant is indeed a covenant—a partnership, a robust fellowship—drawn together to spur one another to go deeper in Christ and further in mission.

But we all know the incline for ministry is only getting steeper. We need each other more than ever just as the world needs Christ as much as ever. That is what 3StrandStrong is all about.

The book of Ecclesiastes says a cord of three strands is not easily broken. We are indeed a cord of three

strands: more than 850 local congregations, each of our 11 regional conferences, and the Covenant as a whole. Congregation. Conference. Covenant. These are the three strands that woven together give all parts strength to be faithful and fruitful living with God and for God.

The Covenant is a growing, multiethnic, multigenerational mosaic of churches impacting more lives in more ways in more places than at any point since our founding in 1885. But we never have and never will believe the work of your congregation, the Great Lakes Conference, and the Covenant is easy. It requires the very best effort and very deepest commitment from every strand. On our own, we are less than we can be. But woven together, a hopeful and fruitful future awaits.



# The Opportunity

The overarching mission of the Covenant is to partner together to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. To accomplish that, we pursue five mission priorities: start and strengthen churches, make and deepen disciples, develop leaders, love mercy do justice, and serve globally. In the Great Lakes Conference, we give particular attention to strengthening existing churches, starting new churches, developing leaders, and church outreach.

*We believe the local church is God's basic strategy for reaching the world. And so the aim of the Great Lakes Conference and Covenant is clear: to serve our churches and unite our churches in service together.*



**GARTH MCGRATH**  
Superintendent



**GARY WALTER**  
President



## You help us serve every church, including your own, through:

- Vitality resources to evaluate and plan for a healthy, missional future
- Clergy who are continually growing as competent servant leaders
- Events and resources for the discipleship of children, youth, and adults
- Resources and training for impacting your community through evangelism and community transformation
- Consultation to navigate important processes such as pastoral searches
- Practical resources for church management
- Employee benefit programs
- Loan programs for land and facility projects

## You help us unite every church in service together, including your own, through:

- International partnerships in 40 countries around the world, where we work alongside national leaders to advance our shared mission priorities globally
- Church planting throughout the United States and Canada
- Community transformation ministries in affordable housing, low-income medical clinics, immigration services, senior housing, and group homes for adults with developmental disabilities and more



## As a result of this partnership, in the next five years we envision:

- Sending 50 new missionaries
- 125 new congregations in the United States and Canada, of which 12 will be in our conference
- 50,000 new followers of Christ, of which 5,000 will be in our conference
- 500 newly credentialed clergy
- 125 neighborhood transformation initiatives in local churches and communities
- Every congregation walking toward a healthy, missional future
- Every pastor engaged in personal and professional pathways of healthy missional leadership
- Every lay leader resourced with accessible materials and training events

# Steps Toward Investing

Congregations often ask for practical advice on how to be supportive of our common mission. These four simple principles can help.

## Stage 1: Percentage Giving

Percentage giving is the biblical principle of proportionality. This first step is to convert your current Covenant and conference giving to their respective percentages relative to your general fund income. For example, if your total current church budget is \$250,000 and you give \$10,000 to the mission and ministry of the Covenant and \$5,000 to your region, your respective percentages calculate to be 4% to the Covenant, and 2% to your conference. Use your calculated percentages as the beginning point going forward.

## Stage 2: Progressive Giving

This is the biblical principle of increased faithfulness over time. Our hope is that every congregation would advance its percentages over time to both the Covenant and conference toward the combined 10% (6.5% Covenant, 3.5% conference) or beyond as together we pursue God-orchestrated opportunities to do kingdom work. This might take multiple steps

## THE INVITATION

Our hope is for each congregation to devote a combined tithe of its general fund income to its partnership with the Covenant and the Great Lakes Conference, suggested at

6.5%  
TO THE  
COVENANT

3.5%  
TO THE  
CONFERENCE

over multiple years. For example, consider moving up one combined percentage point per year until reaching these benchmarks or beyond.

## Stage 3: Priority Giving

This is the biblical principle of giving to God from the first fruits of the harvest. We encourage forwarding the determined percentage amount to both the Covenant and conference on a monthly basis, calculated from the previous month's income.

## Stage 4: Pacesetter Giving

This is the biblical principle of exemplary stewardship that goes beyond the expected, as modeled by the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians. Many congregations are already pacesetters who give beyond the recommended guidelines. This is both appreciated and needed. Being a pacesetter congregation not only amplifies your congregation's missional impact, it serves as an aspirational example for others.