

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK



HEARTLAND  
MINISTRY COHORTS

AARON HOUSEHOLDER, AMS

The Monday Morning phone call. The church had split three years prior. Most of the rascals that caused the split were still members. And I was their new, young pastor. It seemed I couldn't help but offend people no matter how hard I tried not to. Every Sunday.

So, every Monday, I'd call Milton Ertelt. Milton was the Director of Missions in my local Baptist association. He was a friend to pastors. He'd listen, question, counsel, encourage, pray, and coach. I don't know that I would have made it without Milton.

"No one should pastor alone," says Dr. John Shields, our KNCSB Leadership Health Director. Since those days with Milton and the pastors I began to rely on, it has been one of the great privileges of my life to be in a relationship with other pastors. *Pastors need pastors. We need someone to shepherd our souls. We also need peers. We need one another.*

But, it's not just pastors. Lay leaders need such relationships too. God made us for relationships. We all need one another. We are made for one another in the body of Christ. We could all benefit from sharing with other like-ministry leaders.

A cohort is defined as "A group or company. A companion or associate." We're creating ministry cohorts. We're connecting children's ministry leaders from one church with like-minded leaders from other churches. We're rejoicing that pastor's wives might get together as often as their husbands do. We're thrilled that tech ministry people will be sharing time and ideas and help regularly. You get the idea. That's just three.

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Would you like to join a ministry cohort? Cohorts work well with 3-6 people. They'll meet monthly, every other month, or quarterly for an hour or more. You decide; it's your cohort. Cohorts might read a book together, they might watch a video, they might just talk. They might meet face-to-face, they might meet on Zoom, they might do both.

We've got a handful of new ministry cohorts coming out of Pivot this year: pastor's wives, adult discipleship, children's ministry, and tech ministry. We have more interested in women's, men's, deacon, and collegiate ministry. Maybe a few more pastor's cohorts as well.

What's your heart? Where's your passion? What's your ministry? Would you benefit from joining a ministry cohort?

I'd love to help you find one! Contact me, [aaron@heartlandchurchnetwork.org](mailto:aaron@heartlandchurchnetwork.org) or 402-770-7291, and I'll get you connected with others who share your ministry. HCN exists to start, connect, and support churches. My job is to serve you. I'd love to see you in a ministry cohort.

# START

## RENEWED HOPE NEW CHURCH ON THE BLOCK

HALEY LESTER

As churches, we oftentimes pray for God to move, for Him to be evident, and to bring about growth and change. This last season has been the answer to that prayer for both Renewed Hope Church (RHC) as well as Cornerstone Church, both churches that are part of the Heartland Church Network.

On September 25th, Renewed Hope Church celebrated "New Church on the Block"; a community launch event where they opened their doors to their new community of La Vista, inviting everyone in for lunch, fun, and the Kona Ice truck. This event took place outside on the grounds of their new location at 9505 Harrison Street; seeing people from the church and the community come together for a backyard barbeque. It was a day where God began new relationships, as well as deepened the bond between church-family as they celebrated God's provision and faithfulness.



You may ask, how does Cornerstone Church fit into a Renewed Hope Church event? Well, the work of a mighty God, of course! Taking the stories of Cornerstone, a well-established church with a legacy of steadfastness that had been residing in La Vista for almost 40 years; and intertwining it with RHC, a young church just getting started, who had been meeting in Omaha at the Heartland Church Network building.

He had been working in the heart of the Cornerstone family to seek to continue gospel work as they came to the end of a long season of ministry, while at the same time across town He had brought Renewed Hope to a place where they were needing a different space to support

growing ministry. Each in very different seasons, each praying for God to use them and show them where He was leading.

In a way and timing only He could orchestrate, Cornerstone would choose to see past their own congregants and have the heart to see gospel-centered work continue, even if that meant it was thru a sister church. Renewed Hope would choose to take a step of faith not only for the provision of a building but for new brothers and sisters in Christ to come alongside of as they continued to make much of Jesus.

There have been many steps, and much change; but in all of it God's grace has abounded as Cornerstone closed its doors for a final time in June, and RHC began to try and steward well the gift that had so graciously been given as well as love those that came with it.

Many times in the Old Testament, God's people would take time to stop and build an altar as a reminder of His provision and care for them. Although September 25th was an exciting event, the truth is, it served much the same purpose. A time to stop and remember the gracious work God had done, as well as celebrate the work He is doing. It marked new life being breathed into a place where God had been moving all along, as He has brought many new faces, and an abundance of little feet to begin a new season of ministry in a place where He just completed one.



# SUPPORT

## 2022 PIVOT ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

# Revitalization

*bringing your church back to life*



85% of churches are plateaued or declining. 10,000 churches close every year in the United States. Most churches needed revitalization. The sickest churches need replanting.

Revitalization: Bringing Your Church Back to Life was the theme of our annual leadership conference. Pivot 2022 was hosted at LifeSpring Church in Bellevue on Sunday, August 28th.

HCN exists to start, connect, and support churches. Each of those three purposes has a workgroup. The Support Work Group, led by Sherry Lust, plans Pivot annually. This year's event featured 10, varied breakout sessions designed to engage many ministries within our local churches. Leadership and teaching were featured as always. Deacons, students, children, technology, evangelism, and missions ministries each had a session.

Aaron Householder, our new Associational Mission Strategist, presented two plenary sessions for all attendees. His first session, *Your Church & Revitalization*, was designed to help us see that our churches are not as healthy as we imagine. Most every church needs revitalization. Some churches—those that will die within 5 years without significant change—need replanting. Aaron's second session, *You & Church Revitalization*, challenged us to consider how God has gifted and called each of us to participate in His Kingdom. This session also revealed Aaron's doctoral research into the characteristics of successful church replanters. Of replanting, Aaron said, "A dying church can not be managed to change. Dying churches demand leadership."

One anticipated outcome of Pivot 2022 was the creation of a handful of new ministry cohorts. These learning communities will meet together monthly or as they are able throughout the year.

Pivot 2023 is Sunday, August 27th at Heartland Church Network. We will continue to feature breakout sessions for many types of ministries. Our theme next year will be disciple-making.



# CONNECT

*the best  
is yet to come*

Sunday, September 25, 2022, marked the early retirement of Dr. Tim Johnson, Senior Pastor of our sister church New Covenant, Lincoln. Rapidly progressing Parkinson's led to this decision. We know you'll join us in praying for Pastor Tim, his wife, Karron, and New Cov in this unexpected transition to a new chapter of life.

The following article was written by Dr. Brett Yohn. Brett is the retired Founder and Director of Christian Challenge at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He continues to be active in ministry as a Collegiate Minister at Large and as a leader with New Covenant.

## NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY CHURCH

As Tim Johnson retires and moves into a new chapter in his life and ministry after twenty-two years at New Covenant Church Lincoln, I think of Ephesians 4:11-12. "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service..."

Tim and Karron are a gift to New Covenant that keeps on giving because he fulfilled his role as a leader by using his gifts to equip people for works of service. Because he was an equipper, New Covenant will continue in the way of Jesus in Lincoln and to the nations as a light to those living in darkness. Because of Tim, New Covenant is an outward-focused, service-oriented church.

Four qualities among many make Tim an equipper.

1. Trust- Tim, and Karron earned trust in the church. They trusted God in difficulties and trusted those around them.
2. Listener- Tim is an active listener. He leans forward to learn and understand. Though he may not agree with what is being said, he shows respect and gives honor to people.
3. Steady- Though others may freak out and cry "the sky is falling," Tim maintains steadiness regardless of the strong winds that might throw the church off course. His steadiness is rooted in God's Word and his own relationship with God. He "stands firm in the Lord" as Paul urged the Ephesians (6:10-12).
4. Love- Tim is not a backstabber nor is he passive-aggressive in his dealings with people. He truly wants what's best in Christ for every single person. When people disagreed with decisions or the direction of the church, Tim took it hard. He had no joy whatsoever in seeing people move on to another church. In fact, he kept the door open for people to return.

As the "founding pastor," I had a unique relationship with Tim. He invited me into various things that he felt were my strengths. He was not threatened by my being a leader in various ways in the church.

I am profoundly grateful to God for Tim and Karron. Their kindness and love have brought healing to my life. We join together in praying for Tim and Karron now to experience God's physical healing and his unconditional love for the next chapter of their ministry.



# DISASTER RELIEF



## BRINGING HELP, HOPE, AND HEALING SHERRY LUST, DR COORDINATOR

Several times a year Disaster Relief teams from Kansas and Nebraska are called out to HELP. In September Terry and I had the privilege to lead a Flood Recovery Team made up of volunteers from HCN and Kansas. We served in the St. Louis metro area, helping people whose homes sustained damage in the historic flash flooding on July 26th.

DR teams don't deploy just to clean out mud and wet, moldy belongings from homes ...we primarily go to help the homeowners to get through...what is likely the most difficult time of their lives. We come to listen to their stories, to share our faith, and leave them with HOPE...because now their home is clean and ready to be rebuilt...because they have heard and seen the love of Jesus through us, and hopefully...because they have come to know Jesus or have been connected with a local church.

For those who deploy on a DR team, it is a week away from our regular routines, and yes...it can be hard and yucky work. But for the people we help the people whose homes are filled with wet carpets, wet furniture, and moldy, unusable belongings, our coming is a life-changing event.

Yes, we are called to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, but we are also called to love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27) As in the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) ...we understand that our neighbor is the person in need, not necessarily the person we know, who lives close to us, or is like us...but a person who is at a crisis point in their lives. Disaster Relief is meeting the needs of the neighbor we don't yet know.

Really, Disaster Relief isn't about cleaning...it is about caring...it is about evangelism...it is a unique and very needed evangelistic opportunity that helps to bring HEALING to our neighbor.

If Disaster Relief is something you would like to get involved in, scan the QR code below to **Learn More** and connect with the DR Team.



# CHILDREN'S CAMP



Heartland Church Network's 2022 Children's Camp was held from 18 – 22 July at the Camp of the Good Shepherd outside of Louisville, Nebraska. There were around **55 campers and 30 full-time staff members** this year, along with numerous folks who came out during the day to help with various tasks.

**Camp Director, Sara Halmes**, started the attendees out in the chapel with opening ceremonies then off they went for a week of fun and learning.

**Camp Pastor, Shane Lester** from Renewed Hope, did an awesome job leading the campers and staff through a sermon series based on John 10:10 and living the best life on Earth. Crystal Beland, also from Renewed Hope, lead the Bible Study each morning and tied her lessons in with the sermons to help deliver an easy-to-understand picture of the gospel.

From Crafts to Missions and everything in between, the campers learned about how Jesus can work in their lives. God is so good, as throughout the week there were several children who came forward with decisions regarding salvation and recommitment.

If your church hasn't sent campers in the past, we would love to see you next summer! A typical day at camp includes the following:

Before the campers get up for the day, we start out with a Leader's Prayer Meeting. Then we all meet for a morning stretch and some silly songs at the flagpole before heading into the dining hall for a delicious breakfast.

After breakfast, the kids head off to their morning rotations of Missions Time, Crafts, Bible Study, and Recreation.

All of those activities help everyone build up a good appetite for another great meal. Once lunch is over, we enjoy a camp-wide Team Challenge followed by an afternoon of swimming, and free time to play games like Gaga Ball, and 9-Square.

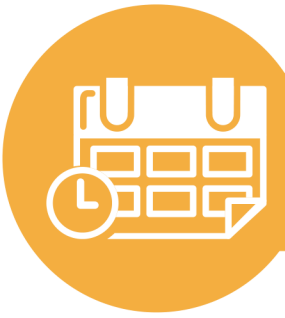
We cap off the fun-filled afternoon with popsicles and a half-hour rest period that we like to call B.L.O.B. (Body Laying On Bunk).

After B.L.O.B. everyone is recharged for dinner and an evening full of activities. First, we have Worship in the Chapel. Then each evening has its own activities. Tuesday is more swimming and our campfire. Wednesday is a Mystery Activity, and Thursday evening we do our annual Skit Night.

Rounding off the night with another snack, shower time, and cabin devotions makes for a fun-filled day!

Planning is just starting for next year's camp. Contact Dave Graves at the HCN office if you are interested in sending your kiddos or want to pitch in and help. 402-551-0608 or [dave@heartlandchurchnetwork.org](mailto:dave@heartlandchurchnetwork.org)





# LOOKING AHEAD

**EACH ONE, TEACH ONE**



**ANNUAL MEETING**



**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3**

Save the date! **Thursday, November 3** we will gather at **Living Water Church** 1623 S 15th St, Plattsmouth, Nebraska for Heartland Church Network's Annual Meeting. We will celebrate all God has done for and through our association and our churches during this past year, as we look forward to what lies ahead!

*Dinner served from 6-6:45 pm  
The meeting begins at 7 pm*

The 2023 Pastor and Staff Christmas Fellowship will be held on January 7 at Millard Social Hall. This is designed to be a time of fellowship and encouragement for pastors, staff (or volunteers in small churches), and their spouses.



**APRIL 28 - 29, 2023**  
**MINISTER & SPOUSE RETREAT**

The Arbor Day Lodge  
Nebraska City, NE

The 2023 Minister and Spouse Retreat will be held April 28 and 29 at Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, NE. This is a short time of restoration for ministers and their spouses and a chance to connect on a deeper level with other ministers in the network.



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