

# Upper Midwest GMC Newsletter

## Seventh Edition - October 1, 2023

Connecting for passionate worship, extravagant love, and bold witness

### James Parks Elected To Serve As President Pro-Tempore



James Parks is originally from Marion, Iowa. He attended Iowa Wesleyan College and received a BA in Business/Computer Science. Next, he attended Asbury Theological Seminary for his

MDIV. While at Asbury, he met his wife, Helen. She, too, received her MDIV from Asbury and is an ordained Deacon in the GMC.

They have two children. Jamison is in his second year of the Video Game Design Program at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. Their daughter, Hayden, will graduate from North High School in Davenport, Iowa in June.

James has served two congregations in almost 20 years. His first 13 years were in Williamsburg, Iowa. He says he learned a lot in this first appointment. God blessed their ministry there. The congregation grew from one service to three services. They built a new building and then an addition. This congregation became known as a church that cared for its community.

James' second and current appointment for the last six years is at

Christ Church in Davenport, Iowa. He says it has been an interesting six years with facing a pandemic and looking at disaffiliation. They were the first church in Iowa to disaffiliate and voted to affiliate with the GMC that same day.

I have always felt called to revitalization in the church. I never wanted to start from scratch. Many of you probably know that you should never tell God what you will never do. As I consider this position of president pro tem, it feels like starting from scratch. There is a lot of communication and structure needed to create our Upper Midwest Conference.

My hope is to help us create a conference that supports the local church. The local church is where disciples of Jesus are made and developed. The Upper Midwest Conference will shepherd and assist churches and pastors to serve their communities as they share the message of Jesus. We will be a conference that helps connect resources to the place of need so that God might be glorified. Then, we will grow strategically so that many more can join in the ministry God is giving to us.

I look forward to meeting and connecting with you as we serve God together and spread the love and grace of Jesus.

# Meet Ross Reinhiller Elected Vice President Pro Tempore

Ross is a native of the western Dakotas settling in Bowman, North Dakota. His call to ministry came six months after receiving Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior in his kindergarten year in Lemmon, South Dakota. He was active in the Dakotas United Methodist Conference from his first year of high school through this last year. He married Valerie while serving in Bogota, Colombia and they have ministered together ever since.

Ross has a Bachelor of Science degree from Dickinson State University, His Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry in the Beeson Pastors Program from Asbury Theological Seminary.

Ross states that since completing the Beeson Pastors Program, his ministry has concentrated on church turnaround or revitalization ministries in churches and a Christian school. He and Val work in multicultural ministries and provide support through outreach to those economically challenged, women with dependent children, feeding the hungry and providing season support on the Northern Plains.

His greatest joy is assisting people into a living faith in Jesus Christ and then seeing them grow deep as disciples. The

second greatest joy is helping people answer the call to ministry. At least

fifteen people are in Christian service that were part of the churches Valerie and he served, and we piloted a Licensing School in our local church as well as



investing our time and talents in the Dakotas Licensing School.

My passion is to see every person a believer and every believer a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The first challenge facing the Upper Midwest Conference is supporting existing churches and the second challenge is developing a general model for planting new faith communities. The third challenge in the next five years is setting benchmarks for the development of independent conferences out of the existing Upper Midwest Conference. We need to work as a whole and know clearly when it is time to birth new conferences from within our body.

## Thankful For Pastors

In 1992 Focus on the Family began promoting Clergy Appreciation Month as a national month of observance to celebrate clergy who play important roles in their churches. We hear Paul's words, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." (I Timothy 5:17)

Take time to honor a pastor this month in word or deed.



# The Mission Field Of Rural America

By: Rev. Zack Kingery

It was a Tuesday morning as I sat in a coffee shop in a rural South Dakota community of 750 people and reviewed my outline for the upcoming Sunday sermon when the editor of the local newspaper walked in. After she placed her order I started talking with her about the week and we commiserated over both having professions which have weekly pressure to be creative, adaptive, passionate, accurate, informative, and truthful and we shared a chuckle as we talked about how each of us desire to bring excellence to what we do. Because of this commonality I then probed deeper; I went beyond small talk and asked about what she did to rest and recharge. She shared with me about her spiritual practices of yoga and meditation and how she tried to stay centered in this loud and noisy world of headlines and 10 second sound-bites.

It was after that conversation that I began to earnestly and intentionally pray for this woman to come to know Jesus in such a way that He would become her center, her place of rest, and - above all - her Lord and Savior.

This was a step in her journey of life and faith that helped guide her to soon grow hungry for the truth of Scripture, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the Lordship of Christ in her life. I had the privilege of baptizing her and then 3 years later baptizing her son when he also confessed Jesus as Lord.

When considering the small town and rural places that make up the majority of the Upper Midwest area we should not and cannot make the inaccurate assumption that everyone is a follower of Christ and/or that rural churches are simply places to be “kept going” and served until they dwindle and close. Rural America is a mission field and our rural congregations are vital to advancing the Kingdom of God.

If you are part of a rural congregation or if you are serving a rural church and you know that what you need more than a change of name or denomination is a true spiritual revitalization then I want to encourage you to pray about



*Rev. Zach Kingery pastors at Cresbard & Tolstoy Methodist churches, is on staff at Aldersgate in Aberdeen and is also a Leadership Development Coach with Dirt Roads Network. [dirtroadsnetwork.com/team#zach](http://dirtroadsnetwork.com/team#zach)*

reaching out to me or to the TCAT leadership about rural church revitalization with Dirt Roads Network.

Dirt Roads Network is an organization which believes that every small town and rural community deserves a life-giving, Bible-believing, community-transforming church; and their team is made of rural people who have a heart for rural people. As a GMC pastor serving a rural 2-point charge and as a leadership development coach with DRN it is my desire to see a change in the narrative of rural church decline and witness our longstanding, faithful rural congregations rediscover the pioneering, spirit-filled Methodist zeal which once spread the Gospel of Jesus across America and the globe.

The rural church matters and you matter to the Kingdom of God. Jesus told the Disciples “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matt. 9:38) May we in the rural church be so bold as to pray that prayer but then also declare “Here am I. Send me!” (Is. 6:8)

# Upper Midwest Global Methodist Gathering

November 2–4, Thursday eve.  
All day Friday, Saturday morning

Cornerstone Church  
1350 11th St NE  
Watertown, SD

Make plans now to attend! Go to  
<http://uppermidwestgmc.org> for  
the schedule of the conference and  
hotel information.



**Check out:**  
The Upper Midwest GMC  
GMC Clergy only Facebook  
Friends of the GMC Facebook  
The Global Methodist Church



Thursday evening  
Opening worship speaker  
President Pro-Tempore,  
James Parks , Davenport, Iowa

Friday Morning  
Worship speaker,  
Vice President  
Pro-Tempore  
Ross Reinhiller  
Williston, ND



Bishop Mark Webb will be officiating the  
Ordination Service Saturday morning.

***Want To Be On The  
Mailing List or Submit A  
Newsletter Article?***  
Contact:  
John or Karen -  
[kkcar56@gmail.com](mailto:kkcar56@gmail.com)

<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org>  
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# First Things First: Part One of the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline

By: The Rev. Walter Fenton  
Global Methodist Church's Deputy Connectional Officer

In just 16 pages, near the very front of its Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline, the Global Methodist Church states those things that are of first order to its very being. GM Church members and friends will find there what the Church considers are its core confessions and its distinctive Wesleyan expression of the Christian faith. These are matters all members should read, study, and regularly discuss with their sisters and brothers in the faith. They are intended to teach us who we are as God's people, and shape the way we live and bear witness to the transforming power of God's grace and love in our lives. It is no exaggeration to state that the health and vitality of the GM Church, indeed its very existence, depends on its people knowing and proclaiming what is contained in Part One of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

Today, we live in a world with thousands of Christian denominations; Global Methodists must know the basics of their history and be able to winsomely articulate it to others. In less than 750 words, the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* succinctly summarizes our history in a section entitled "Our Heritage of Faith." It clarifies our rootedness in the New Testament Church's claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of the God who is revealed in the Old Testament, and that Jesus is our Savior, and is the one Lord of the Church universal. The section teaches that we confess the Christian faith stated in the great creeds of the church catholic (or universal), the confessions Christians have proclaimed for nearly 2,000 years. From there, the opening section closes with a summation of Christian history and our place in it.

Since its founding, the Methodist movement emphasized that the gift of God's grace is available to all people. And the movement's founders, John and Charles Wesley,

clarified how God's grace works in our lives. So moved by God's grace, the former preached thousands of sermons, and the latter penned as many hymns testifying to the unfolding of that grace in a Christian's life. Their profound exposition of grace is commonly called the "Wesleyan Way of Salvation." A brief section warmly captures this essential teaching of our faith.

Under the heading, "Principles of Our Life Together," Part One also sets forth eight markers of what it means to be the Church in the world. Among other things, we are to be "rooted and grounded in the scriptures and the historic teachings of the Christian faith," be "committed to carry out the Great Commission . . . to make disciples of Christ teaching and baptizing in His name," to "model the love of God . . . with our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves," and to "display a 'catholic spirit' to the church universal, cherishing our place within the greater Body of Christ." Knowing ourselves as sinners in need of God's redeeming, we live out our faith together, guided by these and other principles.

And to remind us of the source of these principles, the *Doctrines and Discipline* dedicates a section of Part One to "Holy Scripture." It clearly states that the Bible is "the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured." This short section makes clear the Global Methodist Church's high regard for God's word.

Following on its strong statement about Scripture, Part One includes three "Foundational Documents for Our Doctrinal Standards." The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and the Definition of Chalcedon are printed so it is clear the Global Methodist Church is rooted in the classical confessions of Christian orthodoxy.

Its members are to regularly affirm the faith that Christ followers have proclaimed down through ages.

With other Christian denominations the Methodist movement traces its theological heritage all the way back to the New Testament. In a section called "Constitutive Standards," the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* includes the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, expressions of our theological heritage as Methodists. These documents clarify those teachings the Global Methodist Church shares with all orthodox Christians, and includes beliefs that demonstrate its close association with the Church of England of the 1700s, the communion in which Methodism had its origins.

Sections seven and eight of Part One are uniquely Methodist. The former is entitled "Normative Wesleyan Standards" citing key sermons by John Wesley, and the latter is named the "General Rules of the United Societies," a key document Wesley first created in 1738, and that was "subsequently adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church [in America] in 1785," one year after the Church's founding. These sections of Part One are historical documents and rich in wisdom and direction for the people called Methodists.

Finally, Part One closes with the short, but all important "Restrictive Rule." This rule states that "the governing body of the Global Methodist Church shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith, or establish any new standards of rules and doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine." The rule essentially fences off Scripture, the great teachings of the Church universal, and our Wesleyan expression of the Christian faith from any changes or modifications.