

# Upper Midwest GMC Newsletter #3

## May 1, 2023

Connecting for passionate worship, extravagant love, and bold witness!

### NEW HOPE CONFERENCE!



The Upper Midwest Provisional Conference is off and running with last week's New Hope Conference held in Fargo, ND. Global Methodist Church representatives from disaffiliating churches in the Upper Midwest joined together April 20-21 at Calvary Fargo in Fargo, ND. They met for worship, fellowship, inspiration, and learning as part of the continuing process of organizing into the Upper Midwest Conference of the GMC.

Conference attendees were inspired by messages from Rev. Henry Jenkins, Rev. Phil Schmidt, and Bishop Mark Webb, our new bishop and the event's keynote speaker. You will find articles about them and their message in this newsletter.

A big thank you to Calvary Fargo for hosting and providing music for worship.

Workshops were held on the disaffiliation process, youth and camping, mission opportunities, and the path to ordained ministry. Seedbed provided resources. It was a very uplifting and inspiring conference as reflected in the comments below:

**What a blessing the New Hope Conference was! I felt like I was encased in a cocoon of love.**

**It was a blessed time!**

**I came home saying it was the most uplifting church event I had attended in many years!  
Thank you to all of you who spent so much time planning and making it happen!**

**I was literally bouncing when I preached Sunday!**

The following pages include articles on:

- Bishop Mark Webb
- Rev. Phil Schmidt
- Missions by Rev. Gwen Mader
- A Reflection on the Conference Theme by Jeff Pospisil
- Camping
- Disaffiliating Churches
- Other news on upcoming events related to the Upper Midwest Conference

# Meet Bishop Mark Webb

Bishop Mark Webb spoke twice at the New Hope Conference held on April 21-22 in Fargo, ND.

Webb, who is from Lancaster, PA, spoke on the necessity for people to be intentional in following Christ, becoming a true disciple and encouraging other to do the same.

Mark J. Webb currently serves as a bishop in The Global Methodist Church.

He was elected a bishop in The United Methodist Church and consecrated on July 20, 2012, at the Northeast Jurisdictional Conference. Mark served as the episcopal leader of the Upper New York Area of the United Methodist Church from September 1, 2012, until December 31, 2022. On January 2, 2023, he was received as an elder and bishop in The Global Methodist Church.

Mark holds a M. Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Shippensburg University. He also holds a graduate certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Connecticut.

He served pastorates at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg, Pa. from 1994-2007, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Wormleysburg, Pa. from 1991-1994, and Linglestown United

Methodist Church from 1989-1991. He served as District Superintendent of the York District of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church from 2007-2012.

Mark currently serves as a Trustee of United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio

He received the Harry Denman Evangelism Award in 2002 and in 2018, was named as one of the top 100 leaders by the John C. Maxwell Transformational Leadership Award.

Mark encourages clergy and laity to work together in the development of discipleship pathways that will point people to Jesus Christ and bear fruit for the kingdom of God. He has a passion for Christ-following leadership development, new faith communities and ensuring existing congregations grow in vitality and fulfill the mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly".

He is a native of Williamsport, PA and is married to Jodi. Mark and Jodi live in Lititz, PA and have two sons, Tyler, who is married to Lyndsay and Benjamin, who is married to Mary.



## God is Moving in Mesa AZ

Imagine what it would be like to be a winter visitor to the Phoenix AZ area and not have a place to go for a traditional Wesleyan worship experience in a Global Methodist Church. One of our own Dakotas Global Methodist pastors is planting a church in Mesa AZ so there will be one there when you arrive next year.

The Phoenix metropolitan area, also known as the Valley of the Sun, is home to 4.85 million people as of 2020, making it the 11<sup>th</sup> largest by population in the United States. The area has grown 22.4% since 2020. It is a mission field ripe for harvesting.

Of all the United Methodist churches in the area, not a single church will disaffiliate. The Desert Southwest United Methodist Conference and the Western Jurisdiction made disaffiliation financially impossible, even if a church wanted to. Therefore, the only opportunity there is to extend the traditional hand is to begin new places of ministry across the "Wild West".

If you or your church would like to become a prayer partner with the new Mesa church plant, please do so by sending your name and email address to [revgmader@gmail.com](mailto:revgmader@gmail.com). You will be sent regular prayer updates. It has been suggested that those churches who have members who winter in the southwest consider tithing 10% of the giving of their snowbirds to help begin the Mesa church.

Gwen Mader

# Why Should A Church Leave The UMC?



## REDEEMING GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Due to divergence regarding the traditional doctrinal positions of the Bible and the United Methodist (UMC) denomination versus the liberal/progressive element in the UMC, especially the Minnesota Conference, Lake City United Methodist Church (now Redeeming Grace Community Church) used this process of determining if, when and how to separate from the UMC.

The UMC's governing document is the Book of Discipline and confirms the Biblical basis of our beliefs as a church. Primary areas of divergence are:

### Authority of Scripture

#### Traditional Position.

The Bible is self-proving of its authority as the Word of God. We believe the authority of the Bible is supreme—above everything, because it is from our creator God.

#### Liberal UMC view.

Scripture is a dynamic document that should be modified due to cultural changes, even if conflicts with Scriptural truths. The Bible is a man-made document and not divinely inspired.

### Divinity of Christ and the Doctrine of Salvation

#### Traditional Position.

Jesus is the Son of God, part of the Trinity, who became a man and died as atonement for our sins. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

#### Liberal UMC view.

Many believe Christ is not Divine. The story of Christ life, death and resurrection is a myth. There are many ways to God apart from Jesus.

### Sin and Holiness

#### Traditional Position.

Is there a difference between Sin and Holiness; Good and Evil; Right or Wrong. We believe that God is the arbiter of what is Sin and Holiness; Good and Evil; Right or Wrong; it is not up to us; God told us what is good and evil.

#### Liberal UMC view.

The world would say it is all relative. You have your truth and I have my truth. No truth is more important than anyone else's truth. If you believe it with all your heart it is true – for you.

### Ethics Considerations

Many Annual Conferences in the UMC including the Minnesota Annual Conference have been in open rebellion against the General Conference's will found in the Book of Discipline.

# For Such a Time as This?

At the recent New Hope Conference held at Calvary Fargo Church, attendees heard Phil Schmidt preach from the book of Esther. Phil is the pastor of Redeeming Grace Community Church in Lake City, Minnesota. Reflecting on Esther 4:14 (And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?), he made the point that, **for Esther, this was a time to possibly save the lives of a whole lot of people at the risk of her own life. Is this any different for church leaders in our time?**

**United Methodist churches have been dying at an alarming rate for decades.** The chart shows the decline in the number of United Methodist churches in the Dakotas from 345 to 225 congregations. At the same time, the number of people who describe themselves as United Methodist went from 6.1% of the population to 2.7% of the population. Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri likely have similar trends.

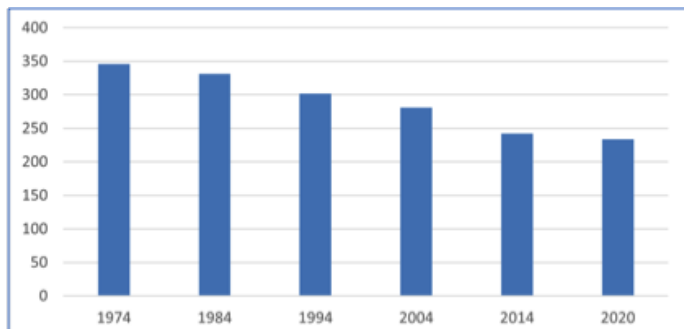


Figure 1: Number of United Methodist churches in Dakotas

Is this slow death of Methodist churches inevitable, or is there the possibility to save the lives of a whole lot of churches? For many churches that have disaffiliated and joined the Global Methodist denomination, they are experiencing a time of blessing and new life (new believers, increased attendance and offerings, and a spirit of unity). **For many of these churches, they disaffiliated because one person stepped forward risking much.** Many have risked careers, reputations, relationships, finances, and so much more to possibly save the life of their church. They have taken up their cross and followed Jesus (Matthew 16:24).

My belief is that the LORD is using this season of disaffiliation to remind Methodists of the courage and sacrifice that is needed to follow Christ and to train us for greater service in His Kingdom. I am thankful for and continue to pray for those that are risking much.

-Jeff Pospisil

## Lay Ministry School!

The Dakotas GMC Leadership Team is sponsoring a Lay Ministry School this year. The school is for people who are looking to be Certified Lay, Lay Supply Pastors, or beginning the steps toward ordination as they fill a pulpit.

The Lay Ministry School will be held Thursday and Friday evenings and all-day Saturday of these weeks: June 15-17, August 3-5, and October 5-7. The course list includes: Bible, Preaching/Worship, Christian Education/Small Groups, Missions/Evangelism, Pastoral Care, Administration/Organization, and History/Dctrine of the Global Methodist Church. All classes will be on Zoom. The teaching staff are from North and South Dakota. Registration deadline is May 25.

For more information or registration, please contact  
Val Reinhiller: [vreinhiller@msn.com](mailto:vreinhiller@msn.com)

## Dakotas Annual Conference of the UMC, June 2023

We are asking all retirees, lay and clergy representatives who have a vote at the next Annual Conference to please make arrangements to **BE THERE** this year to represent the traditional vote. There are **important pieces of legislation** being voted on – disaffiliations, resolutions and general items of importance – that need your voice and vote. Several of the churches, clergy, and retirees left the denomination following the last conference and will not be present this year. Therefore, **your participation is crucial**.

**Two resolutions** will involve (1) **the clarification of health benefits** to retirees and continuation of the HRA to qualified retired clergy after retirement regardless of affiliation and (2) **a special annual conference** in September to allow all the churches who desire disaffiliation to do so before the end of the year. And, of course, those **churches who are being voted for disaffiliation will need your support**.

If these items pass, for some of you, this will be the last Annual Conference you will most likely attend in person with your colleagues. We want to continue our holy conferencing at our GMC Convening Annual Conference to come soon.

### Camps Available in the Upper Midwest GMC:

#### Red Rock in Paynesville, MN

They have a multi-generational camp available.

Check out their link: <https://redrockcamp.org/>

#### Prairie Bible Camp near Lehr, ND

Address: 7840 50th Ave SE, Lehr, ND 58460

Phone: (701) 378-2540

Check out camp pics at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ndsu-libraries-grhc/albums/72157695248533062/>

#### Camp Comeca near Cozad, Nebraska

Check out their link: <https://comeca.camp/>



## Churches and clergy can now apply online to become part of the GMC!

Go to the GMC website (<https://globalmethodist.org>).

Scroll down and click on the link: Clergy and Church Applications.

Pick “Clergy” or “Church” and enter your information.

# Disaffiliating Churches:

These are the churches that have been approved for disaffiliation by the Dakotas Annual Conference:

1. Ashley
2. Williston Faith
3. Stickney
4. Aberdeen First
5. Watertown Cornerstone
6. Fargo Calvary
7. Bowman
8. Lehr
9. Hitchcock
10. Eureka
11. Belle Fourche
12. Milbank Central
13. Elk Point United
14. Selby
15. Presho
16. Kennebec
17. Reliance
18. Arlington

These are the churches that have passed the Charge Conference vote and plan to be approved at Annual Conference this year:

1. Big Stone City
2. Bristol-Butler
3. Clear Lake
4. Gary
5. Dickey
6. Marion
7. Hazen
8. Medina
9. Mellette Northwestern
10. Milbank Parkview
11. Tappen

12. Tuttle
13. Webster
14. Winner
15. Geddes
16. Huron First
17. Mobridge
18. Oakes
19. Hecla
20. Kellerton
21. Walcott
22. Kindred

These are the churches that disaffiliated from the Minnesota Conference in 2022:

1. Crossroads
2. Redeeming Grace Community Church
3. Hillspring Church

These are the churches in Discernment for 2023 from the Minnesota Conference:

1. Windom UMC
2. Akeley UMC
3. Sebeka UMC
4. Villard UMC
5. Korean Evangelical UMC
6. Verndale UMC
7. Hewitt UMC
8. Central UMC
9. Menahga UMC
10. Olivet UMC
11. Hawick UMC
12. Pilgrim UMC
13. Ottertail UMC
14. Joyful Spirit UMC
15. Kasson UMC
16. Pleasant Corners UMC



## Check out:

The Upper Midwest GMC  
Dakotas Minnesota GMC Facebook  
GMC Clergy only Facebook  
Friends of the GMC Facebook  
The Global Methodist Church

[uppermidwestgmc.org](http://uppermidwestgmc.org)  
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<https://globalmethodist.org>