

# Upper Midwest GMC Newsletter

## Ninth Edition - December 5, 2023

Connecting for passionate worship, extravagant love, and bold witness

### Reaching Souls with Soles: Connecting in Mission

By: Keith Pitts, Delhi MC

“Find a mission that our churches can do together that doesn’t involve collecting money, as an alternative to ingathering.” That was the direction given by Rev. Mike Morgan (Marion Methodist), to a younger, overly zealous, former youth pastor, with a little bit of ADD and ADHD, who wanted to get going in mission as soon as July 1, 2023 came. It was April and I had roughly two months to pull out a miracle.

I can be a lot, but I have a deep and passionate love for evangelism and missions and the excitement around being part of a new global movement of methodism really got me excited, even if a little too excited, sorry Mike. Wow a mission that doesn’t involve money, that’s a tough one, but not impossible. It was just two years ago when we connected churches and fire departments to collect over \$1 million dollars in used fire equipment to send to Guatemala. God was in this and I trusted that God would provide an answer.



Pastor Keith Pitts and his wife, Emily, are from Delhi, Iowa.

Knowing that I had a project but no idea how to pull it off, I went to a few members of our little church in Delhi, Iowa and said, “I need your help.” That’s when Sheryl the chairperson of our Delhi Thrift Store and Food Pantry said, “Pastor, what about Soles4Souls?” “Who is that”, I replied. Sheryl told me they are an organization that collects slightly used shoes and sends them all over the world to those in need. All you do is pack up the shoes in boxes, download a free shipping label and call UPS to pick them up. It was in that moment my heart was strangely warmed and I said that’s it. I also saw it as an opportunity to clear out my lovely wife of 24 years excessive collection of shoes.

It was a short time later that I came across a verse out of Isaiah 52:7, “*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, Your God reigns!*” This same verse is repeated



in Romans 10:15, where Paul reminds us that we who believe are called to bring/walk/ or run the good news of Jesus Christ to all people.

The next day I reached out to Soles4Souls and the person on the phone was thrilled at what we wanted to do. They assigned us our own support person to help us pull this all off. Sydni was amazing and over the course of the next few weeks she and I worked together to get everything in place for an October shoe drive. After the special called Annual Conference in May I sent out a digital registration to the churches that were joining the GMC. As the churches registered, they were sent videos, bulletins, posters and instructions that the Delhi Missions Committee put together. By the second week of July eleven churches signed up.

The kick off for the drive was October 1<sup>st</sup> and we would run it for one month. What was funny was that one church was so excited that they started the drive in July. It was Pastor Steve Lamb of Prairie View Church that started that. When I talked to him he said, "People needed something to draw us all together." His church took the mission and ran with it and collected over 500 pairs of shoes.

Even after the event ended on October 31<sup>st</sup> another one of the churches Anchor Bible Church received over 100 pairs of additional shoes. Altogether 166 medium sized boxes of shoes were collected totaling just under 3,700 pairs of shoes to go to those in need. Some of



the churches left notes in the boxes offering a blessing, and others decorated the boxes with the good news.

I want to say thank you to the following churches for their faithfulness and hard work in coming together for this mission event. Anchor Bible Church, Beacon Church, Calvary Church Walcott, Christ Community, Delhi MC, First Methodist Marshalltown, Grandview Church, Hedrick Community, Manchester MC, Park View Church, and Wesley GMC. To God be the glory!



# Glorify The Lord...

*By: James Parks*

The season of Advent is a wonderful time in the church. The decorations, cookies, candles, gifts, music, more cookies, and all the other extras make for a special time of year. It also can be exhausting. My favorite moment is getting home after the Christmas



Eve Services and being able to just sit in silence. That evening and the next morning with my family gives me time to focus on my celebration of the Christ Child instead of

focusing on helping others experience the birth of Jesus.

This year is a little different as I think about all the pastors and churches in our Upper Midwest Conference. If I could do something to help all of you remember that unto us a child is born, I would do it.

As I read through Luke 1, preparing for this season, I was struck by Mary's visit to Elizabeth. You know the passage. Mary has been visited by the angel and told she will have a baby who will be the Son of the Most High. Then she goes to her older relative, who also is experiencing a miraculous pregnancy. Elizabeth greets Mary. She does not greet her with jealousy, even though it seems Mary may be stepping into what Elizabeth thought was her spotlight. No, Elizabeth greets her with great joy and a blessing.

This encouraged me to pray for a great blessing for every one of you this Advent Season. My prayer will be similar to Mary's response in Luke 1:46-55. I pray that your soul glorifies the Lord. I pray that God would meet you, humble servants, where you are, and that God will do great things. He will fill you with all that you need so that all will know Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. May God richly bless each of you as you tell his story this Christmas.

## Conference *Prayer*

***James and Ross will pray for each pastor and church starting in January 2024. They will pray for 4 churches each week and will go through the end of November. Shanna will reach out ahead of time for specific prayer requests. Be sure to check out our [Prayer Request Form](#) on our Upper Midwest GMC website. Please let us know how we can pray for you!***

*Prayer Requests*

# Advent Season Is Here

By: Ross Reinhilller

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
Because the LORD has anointed me  
To proclaim good news ...  
Isaiah 61:1*

the year of the LORD's favor! God's Spirit will bring the greatest gifts to a waiting world. Merry Christmas, bearers of God's Spirit! This will be a truly jolly Christmas this year!

Advent is here! In the joy of the Christmas season, it is easy to forget the most important gift we give. We are the proclaimers of good news! With every holiday song, every evening shopping trip we hear and see the message of what is expected of a generous spirit. In the hustle and bustle there is someone in our circle of family, friends, and acquaintances that does not need another thing to dust or another tie to tie but does need to hear that the Baby of Bethlehem is the one who binds up the brokenhearted, release from darkness and the year of the LORD's favor.

So, the next time we hear Burl Ives singing "Have a holly jolly Christmas" look around, open your hearts, and proclaim



The Convening Conference videos have been uploaded to the [Upper Midwest Youtube Channel](#) for anyone that would like to watch. Or click [here](#) to visit our Website and it will take you directly to the portion of the website where the videos are.



## Report on Men's Ministry Breakout Session

2023 Upper Midwest Global Methodist Conference

Facilitator: Wes Johnson, Living Hope Family Church, Sebeka, MN



We discussed three questions:

### **1. What role or roles should the Conference fulfill to encourage and empower Men's Ministries in local church settings?**

- To give guidance and helpful suggestions for currently formed Men's Ministries as well as helping churches that are wanting to start a Men's Ministry.
- To provide a hub for resource sharing (Ideas, Programs/Events, Speakers, etc.)
- To provide a hub for communication – possibly a Facebook page for churches to immediately share with one another.
- Any events should be more district based rather than conference based because of distances.

### **2. What Men's Ministries are currently bearing fruit for God's Kingdom?**

- Developed "vehicles" to grow men including studies and accountability groups.
- Groups for men to talk together in a safe environment.
- Provide ways for men to tell their stories.
- Give men reasons to come – Invite them to what will interest them.
- Develop mentorships, man-to-man.

### **3. What next step or steps are needed on the Conference level to encourage and empower Men's Ministries in the Conference churches?**

- Provide Resource Sharing Hub



#### **Three Volunteers to move this forward:**

Matthew Kearns (Marion, Iowa)

Michelle Gross (Clear Lake, SD)

Glen Flint (Omaha, NB)





Becky Heeren, Norma Morrison, Darcy Rubenking,  
 Upper Midwest GMC Women's Ministry Task Force  
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What does it mean that the Global Women's group will be an 'umbrella' organization?

I think the main point for the "umbrella" designation is that Women's Ministries in the GMC will not be a top-down structure asking for money like UMW, but instead, establish a network of local groups each doing what's best in their own setting. All Women's Ministries will be grounded in the core beliefs of the GMC. We will share resources and encourage women with what they need and want to pursue.

In the Upper Midwest, we have some groups that left UMW long ago and are going strong with new, creative ministries. Others are just now cutting UMW ties, and want more directions or guidance. We hope to find a balance in offering resources and connections.

-Becky Heeren, Upper Midwest GMC Women's Ministry Task Force



**To Be On The Mailing List**  
 Contact: Shanna Pinkerton  
 contact@uppermidwestgmc.org

**To Submit A Newsletter Article**  
 Contact:  
 John or Karen - kkcar56@gmail.com

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

<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gmcclergy>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/globalmethodistchurch>  
<https://globalmethodist.org>

## Check Out the OneMinuteGospel Blog

by Steve Todd

In September I started the blog, [OneMinuteGospel](#). My goal is to have “theologically orthodox, biblically centered Christian pastors and professors express their summary of the gospel” in (exactly or approximately) 100 words. The purpose is to engage readers and writers with the gospel, so we all can appreciate and understand it better.



### How did OMG get started?

In the spring the idea came to me (aka, the Holy Spirit prompted me) to do my best to [condense the gospel to 100 words](#). Because I could read it aloud in a minute, I called it the OneMinuteGospel and shared it with my congregation. Four of the first 26 posts have come from GMC pastors in Nebraska: Corey Jenkins, Jeff Thurman, Bob Wynn, and Jaime Farias. Thank you!

### Follow OMG

If you sign up as a follower on my blog, you'll have the option to receive a reminder email with a link each time a new OMG is posted (Tuesdays and Fridays). OMG currently has 21 followers and averages 35 readers per post.

### Send me your OMG



Pastors, please email me your summary of the gospel in 100 words ASAP: [stevenltodd@gmail.com](mailto:stevenltodd@gmail.com). Composing it will be a rewarding exercise for you. Sharing it with your congregation will be important for them. And it will bless many blog readers.

Steve Todd is a retired clergy in the GMC, residing in Omaha

