

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Early Edition

November 2025

What's In This Issue:

Articles:

[Upper Midwest Missions: Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth by Rev. James Parks](#)
[Kids Can Pray, Too! Amen! by Pastor Jen Zoller](#)
[Theology 101: Baptism - The Claim of God on Us by Rev. Dr. Travis Stevick](#)
[Established Steps: Preparing for the Episcopal Election by Andrea Schadel](#)

Upper Midwest Announcements:

[Celebrating 2 Years of the Upper Midwest Conference!](#)
[Congratulations! New Appointments, Assignments and Moving to Senior Status](#)

Global Methodist Church Announcements:

[General Conference 2026 Information](#)
[An Assembly of Bishops Video Series: Spirit-Fill Methodism](#)

More Information:

[Upper Midwest and Global Methodist Newsletters Sign Ups](#)
[Important Dates To Remember](#)
[Upper Midwest Prayer Opportunities](#)

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENT

As we look ahead to the 2026 Global Methodist Church General Conference, you won't want to miss the latest updates and resources being shared! The **Beauty of Holiness 2026** website is your go-to destination for news, event details, registration information, and insights to help you prepare for this historic gathering of Methodists from around the world. Visit www.beautyofholiness2026.org to stay informed, get inspired, and join the movement of spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.





Upper Midwest Missions: Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

by Rev. James Parks,

A mission team from the Upper Midwest will be heading to Limpopo, South Africa, from November 6–18, to serve with **Blessman International**, a ministry that provides food, health care, and spiritual support to children and families. Please join me in

praying for the **15 missionaries** going to represent Christ and share His love through both word and action. This trip reminds me of the exciting work happening through our newly forming **Conference Missions Team**. Ten people have already joined, and there's room for more! The team, chaired by **Norma Morrison**, can be reached at missions@uppermidwestgmc.org. You can also find that email on our Conference Leadership page.

The Missions Team is shaped by **Acts 1:8**, where Jesus calls us to be His witnesses "*in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"

We see this as three levels of mission focus:

- **Jerusalem:** Local ministries in your own community
- **Judea and Samaria:** Regional or national outreach
- **Ends of the Earth:** International missions

□ **Please take a moment to fill out our [short survey](#).** Your responses will help the Missions Team celebrate what God is doing across the Upper Midwest and find ways to strengthen and connect mission efforts.

I am thankful that at Marion Methodist, the church I serve, we see these three layers of mission in action:

–**Jerusalem (Local):** One of our ministries, *Feeding Lunch to Youth (FLY)*, provides 400–500 meals every weekday during spring break and summer months when school lunches aren't available. Meals are distributed to local neighborhoods and apartment complexes to help children and families in need.

–**Judea and Samaria (National):** Our teams regularly serve in disaster response. After major flooding in North Carolina last year, we partnered with *Just Help One* to bring relief and rebuilding. We're currently preparing to send another team to Texas following the floods there this year.

–**Ends of the Earth (Global):** Marion Methodist partners with *Projecto Alas (Project Wings)* in Honduras, a ministry that provides food, education, and the gospel to children in one of the country's poorest areas. Several of our members have served there personally, and the missionary has even joined us here in Iowa.

We are grateful for how God keeps expanding our reach — and we know He's doing the same across the Upper Midwest. I look forward to hearing about the missions God has placed on your church's heart.

Let's continue to be His witnesses — **in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**

Survey can be found at <https://docs.google.com/forms/e///d/e/1FAIpQLSezRt7cIMJCEAQRxN4fPh8MGxIhwTCalzYfN-vaUKbg8JArQQ/viewform>



Kids Can Pray, Too! Amen!

by Pastor Jen Zoller, Conference Prayer Team

Christian parents often pray with their children, but are we teaching them to pray on their own? Do you have hope for our upcoming generations to be leaders of the Church? Not only do we need well-equipped leaders to lead, plant, and grow churches now, but we also need them in the future. As adults, we participate in, serve, and lead our newly formed denomination, hoping to thrive not just for today, but for generations to come. Let's equip our children to be the faith leaders the world and the Church need!

Kids sometimes get a bad rap because they have short attention spans and are easily distracted, can be moody, and don't have the skills to be 'adults' yet. Perhaps that describes some adults as well; I'm not sure. However, what I do know is that our children need to be disciples of Jesus, just like adults. Our children need to learn how to read and study the Bible so that it 'sticks.' They need to know how to pray. They need experience serving and to learn how much we need Jesus in our lives. So, let's teach them! Let's teach them the same things the adults are learning – because believe me, they can understand it, but we should gear it toward their level of maturity. Let us teach them to pray now so they will learn that God is real and develop a personal relationship with Him, who loves them, listens to their prayers, and answers them. Kids will also know that God forgives when they make a mistake.

As some of the Conference delegates may recall, our Conference Prayer team provided a Prayer Map from "EveryHome" at the Annual Conference last June. This map lists all the countries around the world where people may experience the Good News of Jesus Christ, despite the many barriers that may exist in their countries. Guess what? EveryHome (everyhome.org) has a prayer map for kids! One way we utilize it at Grand View Methodist in Dubuque is by using it during our Sunday School opening each week. We pray for the countries on the map for that day, so that other kids around the world might also be able to get to know Jesus. Not all kids are as fortunate as ours to have a nice place and the freedom to attend church and worship God. We also ensure that we practice various ways to pray during our faith formation times, hoping they will feel comfortable approaching God in prayer throughout their lives. If you need more information, please check out EveryHome [e\(veryhome.org\)](http://everyhome.org).

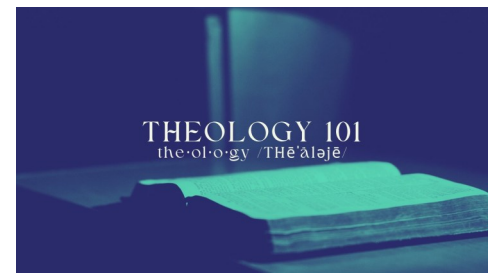
I agree with Janet Denison's writing, "Prayer is one of the best ways to introduce your toddler to God. A prayer-filled life will teach children to grow from a toddler relationship to a strong walk with God as their King. Our kids deserve the chance to become all that God has called them to be, and prayer is key to providing them that opportunity." Praying that we all see prayer as a necessity for our daily walk with Christ, and that we don't forget to teach it to others, of all ages!

Baptism – The Claim of God on Us

by Rev. Dr. Travis Stevick

Pastor, Grace Methodist Church, Marcus, IA

youtube.com/tstevick1 • traviststevick.substack.com



Last month, I offered a reflection on the nature of Communion and how it lies at the center of the Gospel. This month, I will direct some attention to the other sacrament recognized by the Global Methodist Church: Baptism.

Baptism is first and foremost something that Jesus did for us. When Jesus went to get baptized by John in the Jordan, Matthew tells us that John didn't want to do it. Jesus' response is remarkable: *"Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). This is especially noteworthy because we read that John's baptism was a *"baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"* (Luke 3:3). Since Jesus had no sins to repent of, what is going on? It is something worth taking a closer look at.

One aspect that is especially clear in Mark's account is that, after He was baptized, the Spirit *drove* Jesus into the wilderness (Mark 1:12). This may not seem so important except that this whole procedure is exactly parallel to what we read in the Old Testament in the ritual for the Day of Atonement. In Leviticus 16, we read about a ritual that involves two "sheep" or "goats." One is ritually sacrificed and its blood is applied to the "mercy seat," but the other one is the "scapegoat."

After sacrificing the other animal, the high priest comes out of the Holy of Holies and *"shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness..."* (Leviticus 16:21). While the offering of blood is crucially important, the Atonement ritual requires someone to be the sin bearer, to receive the transfer of the sins of the people, and then carry them away from them. This is exactly what we see happening in the baptism of Jesus. He does not confess His own sins, but the sins of humanity, and then bears them away for our deliverance.

Because of this, baptism isn't really about what we do at all, but about what God has done. The church has often, throughout history, seen baptism as parallel to the Old Testament practice of circumcision. In Jewish communities, young men are marked with the sign of the covenant long before they can ever choose whether to live consistently with that covenant or not. The church has traditionally felt that, if infants can receive the sign of the Old Covenant, they can receive the sign of the New Covenant. This is one key reason why the Global Methodist Church baptizes infants.

This emphasis, that baptism is primarily the act of God and not a human act, is largely why the Global Methodist Church does not baptize someone a second time (though there are opportunities to remember one's baptism). Because it is the act of God, no unworthiness or unpreparedness on our part can nullify or undo the work that God does through baptism, and, therefore, the work done in baptism never needs to be done again.

In some ancient cultures, those who entered military service received a mark in their flesh, whether through the imposition of branding or else a tattoo. So long as that person served with honor, that was their mark of pride, something that showed the whole world who they were and what they stood for. However, if that soldier were to desert their service, that *very same mark* became their mark of shame, the sign that they knew better and yet behaved with dishonor.

(Continued on the next page)

It is the same with baptism. It is given to us freely, but it does place an expectation on us that we will follow Christ in obedience. When someone lives a life that contradicts the promises made in baptism, it does not prove that baptism is useless (as if God's grace could ever be useless), but it goes from being what it *should* be, a sign that we belong to Christ, to being a mark of our shame, because we ought to have known better.

At the risk of making this reflection too long, it is worth noting that baptism is not designed to be done in private. In the normal course of events, baptisms should be done within the context of the congregation gathered for worship. This is, in part, because the congregation makes vows to the one being baptized, at the very least to surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, to live in such a way that they can grow in their understanding of God and their commitment to Christ.

We know that, sometimes, parents do not fulfill their promises. We trust that God *always* fulfills *his* promises. All too often, congregations have failed to keep *their* promises, forgetting to surround those baptized, especially those who are very young, with the community they promised, forgetting their role in shaping their faith and life, and neglecting the awesome responsibility for being the body of Christ for one another. The fact that some people do not engage in the sacrament of baptism in bad faith does not excuse the rest of us from holding up our end of the covenant. Every person baptized in our midst is both a call to live the life of discipleship ever more fully and a reminder that other people need us to be faithful in order to support them. May we never trivialize the sacraments with our actions!



Established Steps: Preparing for the Episcopal Election

by Andrea Schadel

As we prepare for the 2026 General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, we have begun the important and sacred work of listening, learning, and praying as we seek to serve Christ and the Global Methodist Church, in humility and the wisdom granted to us by the Holy Spirit. Our task is not a small one. It spans continents, cultures, and languages. The decisions made at the 2026 General Conference will potentially shape our denomination for generations to come. The work we have before us is weighty, but with the Holy Spirit's leading, it is possible and necessary. The Lord continues to equip us for what He has called us to.

As a delegation, we have adopted a covenant that speaks to the commitments we have made to Christ, the Upper Midwest Conference, and each other. Commitments to prayerfully approach all of our work, to honor one another and to respect each other's time, to be present, and to remember that we strive to glorify God in all that we do and to spread scriptural holiness across the globe!

As we reflect on our experiences at the Convening General Conference last year, we look toward the 2026 General Conference with hope and expectation as we begin our important work. The current issue at hand is the Episcopal Elections. Within that, we have been working to understand and make decisions on the Episcopal Area Committee and Episcopal Nominations. We have been discussing how best to represent the desires and concerns of the Upper Midwest Conference as we move forward in selecting nominees for the episcopacy.

(Continued from the previous page)

There is much to consider in the nomination of those we would like to see elected as Bishops. That they uphold Scriptural fidelity, are global-minded, and can manage the rigors of the Episcopal office, to name a few. There has been much discussion on how best to collect the needs and concerns of those within our conference. We believe we have found a path forward that would allow us to clearly hear your voice as we make our decisions. We hope to gather input from Annual Conference delegates to broaden our perspective. We also must discuss the Episcopal Area Committee, nominating two people we feel would be a good fit to help discern where the elected bishops will serve. We approach each part of this process with prayer and supplication, petitioning the Holy Spirit for wisdom and discernment.

The Delegation is actively taking steps to stay familiar with the Book of Doctrines and Disciplines, examining it, and scrutinizing it for clarity, practicality, and Scriptural integrity. We are also committed to representing the Upper Midwest Conference well. In these things, our hearts remain anchored in prayer, with our eyes fixed on Christ. We are asking the Lord for discernment, unity, and courage for the decisions ahead of us. We covet your prayers. Please lift up all of the delegations around the globe as we prepare for General Conference in Johannesburg in 2026. The work is plentiful, but it is so very necessary. We are equipped to answer the call He has put on each of us, to step boldly forward, saying, *"Here I am, Lord, send me!"* He is faithful and is establishing our steps.

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



Celebrating 2 Years of the Upper Midwest Conference

Happy 2nd Birthday to our Upper Midwest Conference of the Global Methodist Church!

We celebrate two years of faithfully living out our mission — to lovingly walk alongside laity and clergy as they make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe.



CONGRATULATIONS!

New Appointments, Assignments and Moving to Senior Status

Jaime Farias - Senior Status

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayer for General Conference 2026

Please pray the following prayer points for the 2026 General Conference gathering of the Global Methodist Church:

PLANNING FOR THE BEST USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES according to God's provision, wisdom, and stewardship.

"And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:19

DELEGATES in place and those who will be voted as delegates in the coming months.

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." –Colossians 3:17

Please click on the following to access the General Conference Prayer Guide:

https://irp.cdn-website.com/4829cd2f/files/uploaded/ENGLISH_NovDecPrayerPoints.pdf

Spirit-Filled Methodism

An Assembly of Bishops Video Series

The *Spirit-Filled Methodism* video series from the Assembly of Bishops of the Global Methodist Church is already over halfway complete — but it's not too late to join in! □ Each week, our bishops share powerful insights on what it means to live, lead, serve, and pray as Spirit-filled Methodists under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Catch up on past lessons and sign up to receive new releases straight to your inbox at the link below. Whether you're watching with your church, small group, or on your own, this series will deepen your understanding of the biblical call to Spirit-filled living, reveal the evidence of the Spirit's work through spiritual gifts, and offer practical reflection and prayer to help you grow in faith.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience renewal and unity in the Spirit

Lesson 4: Leading Under the Power of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Webb

Lesson 5: Teaching Under the Power of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Auta

(Just go to YouTube and type in 'Spirit-filled Methodism' and title of the lesson.)



This series can be found on Facebook, Instagram, social media sites. The following have been released:

Lesson 1: True holiness through surrender to the Spirit, Bishop Moore
https://youtu.be/Wxvib9P4_rs?si=9EEVrrxlXik86hIE

Lesson 2: Evidence of the Holy Spirit's Presence, Bishop Greenway

Lesson 3: Living Under the Power of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Livingston

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



Sign up for our Upper Midwest Newsletter

[Newsletter | UpperMidWestGMC](#)

Global Methodist Church Across the Globe Newsletter

<https://www.globalmethodist.org/connect>

****Note:** The Deadline for Newsletter Articles/Info is the 20th of the Month.

Don't miss out on the latest updates, inspiration, and more—delivered straight to your inbox. Sign up now!



November 6–18, 2025
Mission Trip to South Africa

June 19–21, 2026
Upper Midwest Annual Conference

August 30–September 5, 2026
General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa

View the full Upper Midwest Conference Calendar.

[Calendar - Upper Midwest Conference of the Global Methodist Church](#)

Upper Midwest Prayer Opportunities



The Upper Midwest Conference Daily Noon Prayer

Can you imagine what would happen in
the spiritual realm if we prayed the same
prayer together at noon daily?

Join Us and Let's Find Out!

<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/prayer>

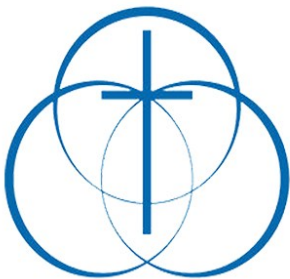


Scheduled Zoom Prayer Meetings

Please click the button below and let us
know that you would like to join and we
will send you the link.

**Monthly on the 3rd Tuesday
at 7:00 PM (CST)**

prayer@uppermidwestgmc.org



GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

Lovingly walk alongside laity and clergy as they make disciples of Jesus Christ
who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly.

Copyright (C) 2025 Upper Midwest Conference . All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Upper Midwest Conference

PO Box 113
Enon, OH 45323

[Add us to your address book](#)