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May...A Month of Celebration and Kingdom Advancement

by Rev. James Parks, Upper Midwest Conference Superintendent

May is a significant month for the Global Methodist Church. On May 1, we celebrated our third anniversary as a denomination. In just three years, God has led us through many milestones. We held our first General Conference, where we adopted our official *Book of Doctrine and Discipline*. We elected new bishops and welcomed new conferences into our growing global connection. Since then, even more conferences and mission areas have joined the movement. It's hard to keep up with the pace of growth, but here's a glimpse: at our last General Conference, 30 conferences sent official delegates. As of now, 57 conferences are preparing to send delegations to the 2026 General Conference. ([The dates and location for that gathering were recently announced.](#))

Here is the link: <https://uppermidwestgmc.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=64124f1d5b1170491dea9f3cf&id=308e0d4f08&e=7daaa18dbb>

This month, the Commission on Kingdom Advancement is inviting every local church to recognize May as [Kingdom Advancement Month](#). This is a time to focus on evangelism, church planting, mission mobilization, outreach to unreached people groups, and disaster response.

Here is the link: <https://globalmethodist.org/may-is-kingdom-advancement-month/>

We encourage you to engage your congregation and community in one or more of these areas. Consider emphasizing baptisms—calling people to baptism and inviting them to remember their own. Explore ways to participate in church multiplication. Share how your church is prepared to respond in times of disaster. However God leads you, let May be a time of active ministry and bold witness.

As a young denomination, it's easy to focus inward—to concentrate on structure, systems, and getting our house in order. Those are important. But we must also keep our eyes on the world that needs to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. We are called to shine His light.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:14–16:

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

This passage captures a holy tension: letting our light shine not for our own sake, but for the glory of God. We are not just building a conference—we are advancing the Kingdom of God as part of His mission in the world.

Join me and other Global Methodists as we pray and participate in God’s work around the globe. Our bishops have invited us to [40 days of prayer](#), running from April 30 to Pentecost Sunday, June 8. Let’s especially lift up the people of Africa, where many are facing hardship and violence.

Here is the link for that: <https://globalmethodist.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Assembly-of-Bishops-40-Days-of-Prayer-Letter.pdf>

Let’s celebrate what God has done—and commit to what He is still doing through us.



Prayers for Our Youth, the Future of the World

I am Heather Severance, a firm believer that the people you surround yourself with leave their mark on your life for the good or for the bad. Now, living in a very small and rural community and being naturally introverted does not make the best recipe for social and spiritual growth. But, God.

I have to admit that when the transition to GMC was taking place, my heart was very heavy. Not that I didn't agree with the changes, but I worried the church wouldn't remember its first love, Christ. I have seen congregations and pastors get so set on an agenda that church becomes a club of like-minded, social agenda-driven people. So when my pastor at the time, Mark Britton, asked the congregation for prayer team nominees, and I was nominated, I was hesitant, but it also felt like the right way to see what was behind the curtain. Another aspect also nagged me. What is a prayer team?! Am I even qualified?

I lead the local youth group and seek Jesus daily in my life through devotions, readings, and podcasts. But do I pray? The honest answer would be - not nearly as much as I should. The first meeting of the Conference Prayer Team was humbling and inspiring. Wow, did Christina Sung and the team really know how to pray and OUT LOUD! This Scandinavian, growing up Lutheran in a small town (less than 100 people) in North Dakota, did NOT know how to do this. The very real and tangible power of Jesus and prayer were so prevalent in the meeting, I knew deep down the GMC would be on the right track if we prayed fervently like we do every month. I also knew I wanted to grow in my prayer life personally and behold the absolute miracle of praying for others in the same way we do for the GMC.

I continue to grow in my prayer life, being inspired by the team every month. I hope to be more vocal in prayer, more open with others, and praying out loud with them so we become prayer warriors for each other and become an entire nation of praying churches. As a youth leader, I know our youth need our love, acceptance, guidance, attention, encouragement, and many more things, but most of all, they need our PRAYERS. **So, I humbly ask and challenge you to commit to praying for our Youth in and outside the church, near and far, who are the leaders of today and the future for Christ.** Let us pray that our Youth may have knowledge and an intimate relationship with God; know their worth is Jesus, and trust and confidence in Him, not the wisdom of this world, not give in to the pressure of the world but stand firm in the word of God living holy and righteous, be healthy emotionally, physical and spiritually in Him and find protection, blessing, and strength in the triune God, and more. My prayer is that our churches, districts, and Conferences grow in prayer team members and that we can be so interwoven in prayer and given divine strength that the gospel is heard exponentially. Please contact the Prayer Team at prayer@uppermidwestgmc.org if you want to get involved!

Heather Severance



Women's Ministry in the Upper Midwest

***"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
- Philippians 4:4 NIV***

This month, we're sharing about a successful recent gathering of Global Methodist Women. Is this a model your group can use? Also, we're giving a sneak peek of

our Women's Ministry Breakout at Annual Conference 2025 in Sioux City. Join us and bring your friends as Pastor Melody Williams helps us kick off a meaningful and spirit-led time together during our **EARLY BIRD BREAKOUT: FRIDAY, JUNE 13 AT 1:30!**

On Saturday, March 29, the Clarinda Methodist Women in Mission sponsored a Women's meeting "Anxiety and Self-Care." Pastor Carla Johnson from Watertown, South Dakota came to present the information. Thirty-nine women came, some from Global Methodist Churches nearby and others from different denominations in the area. There was a good group, and people were eager and willing to share their feelings about anxiety and self-care. We used a feelings wheel and learned that "fine" is not a feeling. Pastor Carla was a great speaker and had numerous stories to share. The meeting was enjoyed by all. Pastor Carla's presentation can be seen on the Clarinda Methodist Church Facebook page. It is great for the family of God to get together and share. I hope other women's groups in our Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church will have other meetings and gatherings so that we can share in ministry together.

Rejoice! is looking forward to a time to gather together at Annual Conference. During our gathering we will be looking at ways we can follow the Holy Spirit's guidance as we seek to participate in what God is doing in our communities. We look forward to sharing more in the next newsletter.

We also want to help promote YOUR events! Just send us your details, and we will publish them in the GMC Newsletter under Women's Ministries Rejoice!

Stay tuned for more details. Our goals are to connect and resource Women's Ministries across the Upper Midwest GMC. We are eager to hear your questions, dreams, hopes, and success stories of women's ministries in your setting. We'd love to hear from you!

Rejoice!

Becky Heeren,
Upper Midwest Conference Coordinator
for Global Methodist Women's Ministries
641-751-6024
womensministry@uppermidwestgmc.org

"We rejoice in whom God has made us!"

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



BLESSMAN

INTERNATIONAL Special Need

The health department in South Africa has stopped the delivery of 2 of our shipping containers. They have been held now for 3 weeks or so.

Some of our feeding hubs are down to less than a 30-day supply of food, while others are pretty much out of food. The situation is critical. As we have prayed, the Lord is providing. One of our donors has offered a matching gift of \$100,000 for this need. We are hoping to spread the word throughout the Global Methodist Church.

For more information: Go to YouTube: <https://www.blessmaninternational.org/> and find “Emergency Feeding Campaign 2025.”



General Conference Delegate Nominations

The 2026 General Conference of the Global Methodist Church will be held August 30 - September 5, 2026, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

As a conference, the Upper Midwest needs 5 laity delegates, 5 clergy delegates, 1 lay alternate delegate, and 1 clergy alternate delegate. These delegates are required to attend the General Conference and participate in pre-conference meetings. We are also encouraged to have reserve delegates who are willing to attend the conference, but are not required unless called upon to take the place of a delegate or alternate. We would like to have at least 3 lay and 3 clergy reserves.

If you are willing to serve and place your name into nomination, please fill out the [Nomination Form](#). **Please submit your form by May 10, 2025**, so that we may prepare the list of possible delegates for election at the Annual Conference this June.

Here is the link for the Nomination Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeVec7lr5YDr6-Pbc_z0rniGiBRoFJzot0wVcqLlilamKeUKg/viewform

The Upper Midwest Conference has budgeted funds to cover most of the costs of the delegation, but there may be some personal expenses as well.

Thank you for your willingness to serve our God. If you have questions, please contact [Rev. Ross Reinhill](#). 701-426-5296, rossr@uppermidwestgmc.org



Video Sermon Resource for June 15, 2025

With our Annual Conference happening on a Sunday, we know many local churches need to find creative ways to have a sermon with their pastor away. Bishop Webb has prepared a video sermon that is available for churches to use in place of a live message on Sunday, June 15. We hope your local congregations are blessed by this resource.

You can access this resource on the Upper Midwest Conference YouTube Channel by following this link: <https://uppermidwestgmc.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=64124f1d5b1170491dea9f3cf&id=8a0374f541&e=7daaa18dbb>

***Please Note:** It is recommended that you please read the Scripture 2 Timothy 1:1-14 before viewing the Message.



2025 Annual Conference Friday - Sunday, June 13 - 15, 2025 at the Convention Center in Sioux City, IA

Annual Conference Webpage Link

<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/annual-conference-home>

Livestream

For those unable to join us in Sioux City, we're excited to announce that we'll be livestreaming the worship events from the Conference. Simply go to the Upper Midwest YouTube Channel by using the link below to join us for these special services. Different than last year, it will be at no cost.

Livestream link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeIUq0W7V_b9fGnG_MEMo0w

Ordination Service

All are welcome to attend the Upper Midwest Provisional Conference Ordination Service on Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 9:00 am at the Convention Center in Sioux City, IA. This will be an exciting event for our ordinands and the Annual Conference.

If you are an ordained Global Methodist Church Deacon or Elder and would like to process during the Ordination Service, please bring your robe and a red stole. The clergy will line up at 8:20 am in Meeting Rooms 1/2 on the Main floor.

Daily Schedule

A detailed daily schedule is available on the Annual Conference webpage.

Here is the link: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/daily-schedule>

Registration

Registration is open for the 2025 Annual Conference in Sioux City! The \$120 conference fee includes Saturday lunch and light snacks. Click the link below for more details and to secure your spot.

Young Adult/Youth Discount

For this year's conference, we will be offering a \$40 Discount Code available for our young adult and youth participants. If you are 40 years old or younger, apply the Code (YA40) before you complete your registration to receive the \$40 discount.

Here is the link: <https://uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2764326>

Hotel Accomodations

We are thrilled to announce that we've partnered with a selection of fantastic local hotels to offer you exclusive discounted rates for June.

For help making a reservation please contact the hotel directly using the phone number provided.

DoubleTree by Hilton Sioux City

(a few blocks from the Convention Center)

701 Gordon Dr., Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: (712) 717-6670

***NOTE:** After following the link to make your reservation please make sure to adjust reservation calendar to your dates before reserving.

[DoubleTree Room Block Link](#)

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/suxgodt-gmc-12c92445-b648-48f2-b3a2-e85ca4a33044/>

Rate for king: \$139 per night

Rate for double queen: \$139 per night

Avid Hotel

(3 blocks from convention center)

101 Court St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 1 877-666-3243

***NOTE:** After following the link to make your reservation please make sure to adjust reservation calendar to your dates before reserving.

Rate for king: \$130 per night

Rate for double queen: \$130 per night

[Avid Hotel Room Block Link](#)

[https://www.ihg.com/avidhotels/hotels/us/en/find-hotels/select-roomrate?fromRedi-rect=true&qSrt=sBR&qIta=99801505&icdv=99801505&qSIH=suxav&qCiD=12&qCiMy=052025&qCoD=15&qCoMy=052025&qGrpCd=pmg&qAAR=6CBARC&qRtP=6CBARC&setPMCookies=true&qSHBrC=VA&qDest=101%20Court%20Street,%20Sioux%20City,%20IA,%20US&srb_u=1&qChAge=&qRmFltr=](https://www.ihg.com/avidhotels/hotels/us/en/find-hotels/select-roomrate?fromRedirect=true&qSrt=sBR&qIta=99801505&icdv=99801505&qSIH=suxav&qCiD=12&qCiMy=052025&qCoD=15&qCoMy=052025&qGrpCd=pmg&qAAR=6CBARC&qRtP=6CBARC&setPMCookies=true&qSHBrC=VA&qDest=101%20Court%20Street,%20Sioux%20City,%20IA,%20US&srb_u=1&qChAge=&qRmFltr=)

South Sioux City Marriott Riverfront

(6 minutes from Convention Center)

101 Court St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 1 877-666-3243

***NOTE:** After following the link to make your reservation please make sure to adjust reservation calendar to your dates before reserving.

[Marriott Riverfront Room Block Link](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?guestreslink2=true&id=1737571649989&key=GRP)

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?guestreslink2=true&id=1737571649989&key=GRP>

Rate for king: \$199 per night

Rate for double queen: \$199 per night

Other Helpful Annual Conference Links

Group Activities Link: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/group-activities>

Vendors/Exhibits Link: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/exhibits>

Breakout Sessions Link: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/breakout-sessions>

Area Restaurants Link: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/area-restaurants>

Planning Annual Conference Q & A

Our Session Team has been busy meeting and planning for this year's conference. We wanted to share some insight into our planning so you all know the heart and soul behind the planning of our Annual Conference.

You can take a look at the Q & A located at the end of this newsletter.

New Article Archive Page



Have you missed a past article in the newsletter or wanted to go back and read an update again? Now You Can! We have added a page on the Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church website for these past articles and more. Click the link below to go back and read news updates & inspiration from our conference leaders.

Link to Archive Page: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/articles-archive>

Appointments, Assignments and Moving to Senior Status

View the updated list of appointments and assignments, churches, and districts in the Upper Midwest conference in our Index of Churches.

Link to Index of Churches:

https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/_files/ugd/e430ce_9b6bd1391f1d46199c061c7888bff34a.pdf



NEW APPOINTMENT

Corey Jenkins

Bowman Church in Bowman, ND

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

3 YEARS OF MINISTRY TOGETHER



We couldn't let this pass without honoring the significance of May 1st

On this day in 2022, the Global Methodist Church officially launched. In just three years, we've witnessed the Spirit move in powerful ways-churches planted, lives transformed, and the Gospel shared across the globe.

All glory to God!



With great joy and gratitude, we are thrilled to announce that the **2026 General Conference of the Global Methodist Church will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 30 – September 5, 2026!** This marks the first time our denomination's General Conference will take place on the African continent—a powerful and visible expression of our identity as a truly global movement.

Link to General Conference: <https://globalmethodist.org/2026-general-conference-v2/>



Because We Believe in the Power of Prayer: A Call from the Assembly of Bishops

Dear Global Methodist Community,

Grace and peace to you from all of us who serve on the Assembly of Bishops.

We write today with hearts full—both in celebration and in sorrow. We celebrate the incredible harvest happening across the world as Methodist-minded people find a home in the Global Methodist Church. **It is a joy to share that more than 5,000 member churches have joined the GMC,** with new inquiries and affiliations arriving

daily from every corner of the globe.

At the same time, we carry a deep burden. Many in our connection are rejoicing, but others are suffering. As the Apostle Paul reminds us, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). And so, we are calling our global connection to pray.

This is a time to intercede—especially for our brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa.

Many are aware of the violent clashes between Methodist factions in Nigeria. Fewer may know of the broader unrest sweeping across the continent. From **Ethiopia to the Democratic Republic of Congo, from Mozambique and Nigeria to South Sudan, Sudan, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Niger, and Rwanda**—conflict, political instability, demonstrations, terrorist activity, and civil wars persist. While many of these struggles are not directly related to denominational matters, we know that violence breeds violence. And as followers of Christ, we are called to grieve with all who grieve.

In moments like these, prayer can feel ineffective—but we believe it is our most powerful response. In prayer, we cry out to the One who “tore down the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14). We intercede because we hear Paul’s warning to the Galatians: “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Galatians 5:15). We heed Abner’s ancient plea: “Must we always be fighting each other? Don’t you realize that bitterness is the only result?” (2 Samuel 2:26).

Through prayer, we are aligning our hearts with the Lord’s—hearts that beat for the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. And in prayer, we have been led to repentance, crying out for God to break our hearts for what breaks His.

Because we believe in the power of prayer, we are calling all Global Methodists to Forty Days of Prayer to Pentecost, beginning Wednesday, April 30, and ending on Pentecost Sunday, June 8.

We invite churches, annual conferences, and individual believers to find meaningful ways to pray—especially for Africa—during these forty days. We encourage you to search the Scriptures, follow global news, and pray as the Spirit leads. While we’ve highlighted regions experiencing active violence, we invite you to broaden your intercession across the continent and beyond.

In addition, we are working with the Prayer Network and the Global Methodist Church Communications Team to organize a **virtual Prayer Gathering**, providing a moment for our entire connection to gather online and pray as one body. We will share more details soon.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of prayer as we walk toward Pentecost.

Together, we believe the Spirit will move in powerful ways. And when we look back, we will be able to say with the saints: “Thus far, the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

Until there is peace on earth, [**The Assembly of Bishops**](#), *The Global Methodist Church*

Kingdom ADVANCEMENT MONTH

The Kingdom of God is at Hand

By Dr. Wes Griffin

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel.” Jesus then calls His first disciples, drives out an unclean spirit, and heals many people of various diseases. Today, we are called to join Christ in the work of advancing the Kingdom of God around the world.

The GMC’s Commission on Kingdom Advancement

At the General Conference in Costa Rica, the Global Methodist Church formalized a Commission to focus on evangelism, church multiplication, mission mobilization, unreached people groups, and disaster response.



Today, this commission is known as the Commission on Kingdom Advancement, whose purpose is to mobilize the Global Methodist Church to advance the Kingdom of God as we “make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness around the globe.”

May is Kingdom Advancement Month

May is designated as Kingdom Advancement month, and for the next four weeks, we will celebrate the incredible achievements of the Global Methodist Church, and we will also share the excellent resources that are available to you as part of our global movement. The Global Methodist Church is to be a missional movement of people who are multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the earth who flourish in scriptural holiness as we worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly.

The Whole Counsel of God for All the Peoples of the World

The Global Methodist Church mobilizes the gifts and contributions of each part of the church, working as partners in the Gospel with equal voice and leadership. We are committed to spreading the Gospel where the Gospel is needed the most. One focus is the unreached people groups of the world where over 3 billion people live in more than 7000 people groups. We are committed to reaching the whole world for Christ.

Five Priorities

Five priorities define our unique witness to the world:

- **Baptisms:** Baptisms as a result of effectively reaching people with the Gospel
- **New Churches:** New churches planted as a result of church multiplication
- **Missions Mobilization:** Acts 1.8 congregations as a result of mission mobilization
- **Unreached People Groups:** Apostolic engagement as a result of outreach to Unreached People Groups
- **Disaster Response:** Vulnerable people served as a result of compassionate disaster response

Bishop Mark Webb explains, “The GMC was birthed through a unified, global commitment to spread the Gospel. Local churches and annual conferences are at the center of our world-wide ministry, and the Kingdom Advancement Commission exists to serve the denomination to help us discover, develop and deploy the gifts of all our members around the world so the Great Commission will be achieved.”

The Global Methodist Church officially began operations on May 1, 2022. Today, we are a growing global movement with almost **5000 congregations** in **24 Nations** organized through almost **40 annual conferences** with more annual conferences being developed.

The words of Jesus are just as relevant today as when He spoke them, “The Kingdom of God is at hand!”

As Global Methodists, will you commit to do your part to advance the Kingdom of God?

Dr. Wes Griffin is the Chair of the Kingdom Advancement Commission. He leads a global, world-class team of leaders who are focused on mobilizing the Global Methodist Church for missional excellence. Formerly, Wes led an organization for 25 years that equipped over 400,000 leaders in more than 150 nations. He was also the founding dean of the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



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

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

Ex. January 20th for February Newsletter, etc.



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

Important Dates to Remember



**More info about these and other events on the [Events page](#) of our Website.*

June 13-15, 2025

Annual Conference

September 17-19, 2025

New Room Conference

At Satellite locations

around the Conference.

More info coming soon!

September 22-26, 2025

Bishop Webb Visits the
Upper Midwest

September 25-27, 2025

Nebraska Gathering at Camp
Comeca

November 6-18, 2025

Mission Trip to South Africa

Upper Midwest Conference 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 the Noon Prayer](#) and Let's Find Out!

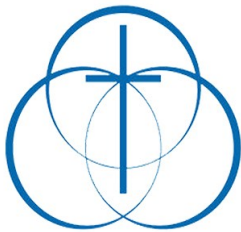


Scheduled Zoom Prayer Meetings

Please email us 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)



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.*

416 S. Minnesota St., Mitchell, SD 57301 | 605.299.1142 | contact@uppermidwestgmc.org | uppermidwestgmc.org

Planning Annual Conference

It feels like we just started 2025, but in a few months we will all gather again at our Upper Midwest Annual Conference in Sioux City, Iowa, on June 13-15.

Our Session Team has been busy meeting and planning for this year's conference. We wanted to share some insight into our planning, so you all know the heart and soul behind the planning of our Annual Conference.

How does the Sessions Team operate?

-Our Session Team meets once a month. Within our Session Team, the team is split into Sub-committees: hospitality/registration, Clergy/Laity Sessions, worship/prayer/main sessions, vendors/displays, gathering or breakout times, and ordination service. For the sake of planning, we distribute the different planning details to these different sub-committees. Then once a month we gather as a Sessions Team to make sure we are all on the same page and to keep moving forward with planning decisions.

What things do we focus on as a Session Team while we are planning?

-First of all, we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our decision making and planning. With the new formation of our Upper Midwest Annual Conference last year, we wanted Annual Conference to be a time of worship, prayer, refreshment, learning, growth, and gathering together as the church body in the Upper Midwest. Yes, we have to do business, but we wanted Annual Conference to be more than just a time we meet for business.

From the worship services, prayer times, break-outs, meals, and other gatherings at Annual Conference, our goal is that everyone would leave feeling refreshed and having had a positive and filling time visiting and connecting with others across our conference.

Why did we switch from a Thursday, Friday, Saturday to a Friday, Saturday, Sunday?

-After prayer, discussion, and considering conversations with others at last year's conference, the Session Team wanted to have our Annual Conference be available not just for voting laity and voting clergy, but also to make it easier for other laity in the church and clergy spouses to get time off of work to be able to attend Annual Conference. We felt that if we are about resourcing the local church, we need to continue to build the laity.

-We also appreciate the idea of allowing clergy a Sunday away from leading worship. Our hope is that this will allow them to be more available to take in what God has for them at conference and not have their eyes on Sunday (which is always coming). We do know sometimes planning to be gone is more work than just doing it yourself, however, it is good to give the local church opportunities to lead on Sunday mornings. We also plan to offer a video message from Bishop Webb that churches could use if a local speaker is not available.

Why did we choose the theme this year of: "The Path Before Us: Walking Together in Faith"?

-Last year's conference focused on us becoming a conference and the excitement of new connections and gathering for the first time. This year, in 2025, we are now looking toward the future of what God has planned for our conference. We are moving forward "walking together" in faith. God has a planned "path" for us, and as a conference we are moving forward into all God has planned.

What caused the registration to go up from \$90 last year to \$120 per person this year?

-2024 was our first Annual Conference, so much of the planning was guestimates. We almost covered the cost of Annual Conference with registrations and funds from the budget. The cost of the convention center went up and the cost of food has gone up. Last year we were able to bring in all our own break-time treats. This year, the convention center is under new management, and we are no longer allowed to bring in our own food: all food must be purchased through the convention center. We think this fee will help us to offer a great conference.

When I make my hotel reservation from the hotel block link, it automatically comes up with Tuesday-Sunday, why is that?

-When we created the hotel blocks, there is a calendar on the link to let you choose your dates you wish to stay. With the distance some people in our conference have to travel, some come into town early. We want to provide the discounted rate for the dates that work best for you to come to annual conference. If you have questions about this, the hotel has been wonderful to work with on answering questions.

Will the Annual Conference always be held at the Sioux City, Iowa Convention Center?

-That is up for God's leading and guidance. We first chose Sioux City, Iowa, as the central location for a majority of the churches in our conference.

As a Session Team we wanted to create a stable foundation for our Annual Conference the first few years we meet. We wanted to have a few years of consistency and stability at one location as we gather together, grow, form as a conference, and get to know each other.

-We have been looking into and are discussing meeting in a church or a different location in 2026, that is still in the planning and God has not yet made it clear where our 2026 and 2027 Annual Conferences will be held, but the Session Team is open to having it wherever God leads.

If you have questions or concerns, please send me an email, sessions@uppermidwestgmc.org

Blessings,

Elizabeth Pierson

Session Team Chair

other laity in the church and clergy spouses to get time off of work to be able to attend Annual Conference. We felt that if we are about resourcing the local church, we need to continue to build the laity.

-We also appreciate the idea of allowing clergy a Sunday away from leading worship. Our hope is that this will allow them to be more available to take in what God has for them at conference and not have their eyes on Sunday (which is always coming). We do know sometimes planning to be gone is more work than just doing it yourself, however, it is good to give the local church opportunities to lead on Sunday mornings. We also plan to offer a video message from Bishop Webb that churches could use if a local speaker is not available.

Why did we choose the theme this year of: "The Path Before Us: Walking Together in Faith"?