

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

August 2025

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How Is It With Your Rest?

by Rev. James Parks,

Upper Midwest Conference Superintendent

I had a unique "vacation" recently.

I married into a wonderful family from Tennessee, and each year they gather for an old Methodist tradition: **camp meeting**. My wife's family traces their roots back to an ancestor who was converted by Francis Asbury and began hosting camp meetings in 1826 just outside Brownsville, Tennessee. (Next year will mark the 200th anniversary!)

Camp meeting is a week filled with family milestones and deep spiritual rhythms. We baptize new babies, celebrate recent weddings, and remember those who have joined the church triumphant. We worship twice a day, and it's often a time of renewal for me.

This year was different.

Instead of simply receiving, I was invited to pour out. I served as the preacher for the week—twice a day, every day. I believe it was the first time a family member (even an “in-law” like me!) had been asked to fill that role. It was an incredible blessing... and also deeply exhausting. For this introvert, it was not quite the restful week I'd anticipated.

This experience reminded me of something I heard often during my preparation for ministry: *pastors aren't always great at resting*. I've found that to be true. Leading a church can make it hard to unplug—we feel the constant pull to be available, responsive, and always doing more. And boundaries? Well, they're not always clearly kept, by us or by others.

That's why we have to be intentional about building in rest—both vacation time and a regular sabbath rhythm. While vacations are valuable, the most meaningful practice for me is my weekly Sabbath. Every Friday, I set aside time to be in God's presence. I try to stay off email and slow down on checking my phone. Instead, I read, listen to a podcast, nap, shoot some hoops, or go for a bike ride. When I'm faithful to this rhythm, I notice I'm more grounded and need fewer extended getaways to feel refreshed.

I want to encourage every pastor and church in our conference to develop a shared plan for pastoral rest. Talk about it. Write it down. Clarify vacation days and Sabbath expectations. Communicate the plan with the congregation and support one another in honoring it.

Currently, the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church doesn't offer specific guidance on this topic, so it's up to each local church to decide. It might be helpful for our conference to offer a recommendation or model policy. If you have ideas or input, I'd love to hear them. Email me your suggestions, and the Cabinet and Leadership Council can begin working toward a shared recommendation.

In the meantime, here's a sample policy from another conference that could serve as a conversation starter. It's not official for us—just a helpful starting point:

Sample Recommendation:

While vacation policies should be set by the local congregation and negotiated between the clergy and the PPR, the Annual Conference values rest and refreshment for all clergy.

Recommended Minimum:

- 4 weeks of vacation, including 4 Sundays
- 1 week annually for Sabbatical/Continuing Education
- 1–3 months of Sabbatical every 4 years

Let's care well for one another by encouraging rhythms of rest. Pastors, we have the opportunity to model Sabbath living and remind our congregations that God's design—to rest one day in seven—is not a burden but a gift.

Exodus 20:11

“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Let's be intentional about rest—because a rested leader is a more faithful, fruitful one.



MULTIPLICATION TEAM UPDATE

Worship, Fasting, and Discerning Prayer: Fueling a Multiplication Culture

by Rev. Zach Kingery

As we continue pursuing the vision of becoming a Conference where Every Church Plants, it's tempting to focus first on strategies, systems, and structure. And while these are important, we must remember: evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication begin with **spiritual alignment**, not organizational efficiency.

In Acts 13, the early church at Antioch was not in a strategic planning session or developing a marketing campaign when Holy Spirit said to set aside and send out Barnabas and Saul. And I think clarity is important here: Holy Spirit said to set apart and send and the church heard and obeyed.

Are we as clergy, local leadership, and congregations in a practiced posture of submission so that when the Lord speaks, we are able to hear and obey? Are we intentionally spending time listening for God's will in worship, fasting, and prayer?

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:2-3

This is a clear reminder: **Our mission does not begin with us; it begins with God.**

The command (because it is a direct command: Mt 28:18-20) to multiply disciples, which results in birthing new congregations, comes from the Holy Spirit, not spreadsheets.

Is structure and developing proper processes needed? Absolutely. But they must be the result of our connection to God, not a replacement for Him.

Fasting and prayer position us to hear clearly - personally and as a congregation. They silence the noise of our preferences, our busyness, and even our fear. Through spiritual disciplines, we learn to trust God with every part of the process and follow His lead. (*To hear more check out Ep.07 of the Multiplication Minute with Cam Scott who is planting 1927 Church in Des Moines, IA: youtube.com/@UpperMidwestMultiplicationTeam*) One of the overlooked truths in Acts 13 is that the discernment didn't come to Paul and Barnabas alone, but it came in the context of prayer, fasting, and worship within a local church. Multiplying churches are praying churches, and multiplying leaders are discerning leaders.

You might be asking, **What Does This Look Like for My Congregation?**

1. Establish a Spiritual Development calendar.

An intentional rhythm of corporate discerning prayer, worship, and fasting results in a culture that listens for and obeys the will of the Lord. It also results in identifying and developing leaders who grow in spiritual maturity. Congregation → Leaders → Core Spiritual Leaders

2. Form a Discernment Group.

- As the rhythm of spiritual disciplines is established, curate a group of spiritual leaders who regularly seek God's direction in the mission of your local church.

3. Surrender, Ask, Listen, Obey

- Surrender. As you draw closer to the Lord, learn to surrender your preferences to Him and to one another: confess your preferences when discerning direction on decisions and learn to truly trust.
- Ask. Inquire of the Lord “Who are we not seeing in our community?” “Where are you sending us?” “What needs to be released in us so we can better hear and obey?” “Lord, what question should we actually be asking?”
- Listen. If we ask a question we must listen for the answer. Learn to be in silence as a group and listen. After a time of silence, ask if someone heard a word from the Lord. Did a verse come to mind, or a particular instance from our history as a church, or did a deeper question surface, etc.?
- Obey. The reason we surrender first is so that we can better obey. Too often we inquire of the Lord without first surrendering and when we sense a direction we then negotiate. We learn the voice of our Great Shepherd (Jn 10:27) so we can know Him and follow His commands (1 Jn 2:3). A choice of partial obedience is disobedience.

Start small. Start now. Stay consistent. Dream big.

This is a step your leadership and congregation must take. Don’t wait.

And if you sense your congregation is ready to step deeper into this, begin praying about implementing a church-wide Spiritual Development Calendar in January 2026.

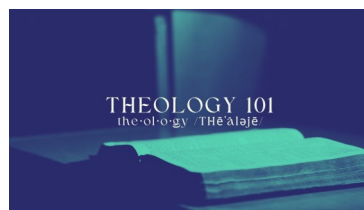
Reach out to us at multiplicationteam@uppermidwestgmc.org for tools, coaching, and support as we move together toward becoming a conference where Every Church Plants.

Join the Monthly Multiplier Zoom Call (Third Saturday, 10 AM CST) to connect with other leaders.

(Zoom link found on our [event calendar](#))

❓ Want encouragement in launching an active discipleship culture in your church? Reach out to the Multiplication Team!

Email us at multiplicationteam@uppermidwestgmc.org



Nobody's Perfect

by Rev. Dr. Travis Stevick

Pastor, Grace Methodist Church, Marcus, IA

[YouTube.com/tstevick1](https://www.youtube.com/tstevick1)

Email questions or topics to pastortravis@marcusgrace.com

Every time someone joins the church where I serve, I always try to explain a bit about what makes Methodism distinct. Sometimes, people grew up in a Methodist Church but, as often, they had an experience in a different tradition or else no church background at all and I want them to know what this is all about. I always share, like in my first article for this newsletter, that Methodism, at its core, just wants to be about making faithful Christians. However, I also talk about places where Methodists put a lot of weight where other traditions don't.

(Cont. on next page)

One of those things is a doctrine that Wesley taught which he called "Christian Perfection." In my experience, people don't like that name at *all*. People often have an instinctive rejection of anything with the word "perfect" in it. One of the ways that we in the GMC have tried to avoid that reaction is by using the phrase "entire sanctification" as a synonym. In fact, you find "entire sanctification" more often in our *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* than "Christian perfection," although all our historic questions for ordinands use the language of perfection.

I understand the desire to avoid using a term with such baggage, but I wonder if we miss the beauty that Wesley was getting at.

Let's step back from the language for a moment and ask some practical questions. Which do you believe is the more powerful force? Sin or grace? Put that way, it is hard for a Christian to say anything but grace. How about this question? In which part of your life do you think that sin is more powerful than God's grace? In which part of your life do you think God either doesn't *want* you to be redeemed or else is not *able* to redeem you?

In the end, all Christian Perfection is really saying is that grace is stronger than sin, that God wants to save *all* of ourselves, even where we are most broken. It is a conviction that redemption starts in *this* life and continues to grow and that we never get to the point in our lives where we can say that God is done working in us and we just are stuck in our sin.

Now, that being said, I wonder if sometimes we want to resist a doctrine of Christian Perfection because we secretly don't *want* every aspect of our lives to be redeemed. Perhaps we have areas of our lives where we kind of *like* to keep God out of it. Maybe we even have sins in our lives that we quietly nourish and enjoy and we don't like the idea of having to turn that part of our lives over to God. If that is the case, then our problem isn't with Christian Perfection, it is with God, because God has made it clear that he wants us to turn our whole hearts to Him.

Whether you call it Christian Perfection, Entire Sanctification, or even just the goal of being a Christian in general, this is a precious treasure of our theological heritage. Let us keep it and preserve it, even when it is hard.



The Upper Midwest Conference Missions Team Needs You!

by Norma Morrison

Upper Midwest Conference Missions Team Leader

Do you have a heart for missions? A burden for the lost? Is God calling you to share that passion by serving our Conference and churches? We are excited to announce that we now have a Missions Team for this focus, both within our Conference area and also across the globe!

As Global Methodists leaning into our Wesleyan distinctives, we answer the question "What is missions?" as **both/and** people: **both** 'evangelism and disciple-making' **and** 'mercy/justice ministries' (such as providing education, food and shelter, health services, and caring for orphans). We're not an '**either/or**' people, but a '**both/and**' people. That is what it means to be "in mission" as biblical, Wesleyan-Christians in the Global Methodist Church!

The Upper Midwest Conference Missions Team Needs You! *by Norma Morrison, cont.*

If you would like to serve on the Missions Team (meetings via Zoom) please email us at missions@uppermidwestgmc.org. We plan to have 3 sub-groups to do our work so if you have a preference, include that in your email.

They are:

1. Mission Opportunities within the Conference
2. Mission Opportunities outside the Conference
3. South Africa Partnerships including Blessman International

You can make a world of difference!

**Here is one way you can help make a difference:
2025 Upper Midwest Conference Mission Trip**

One of our priorities for 2025 is to Grow Global. As followers of Christ, our faith is not just personal—it's deeply communal. Growing global means serving not only those in our towns, cities, and counties but also our brothers and sisters across the globe. As a conference, we've decided to focus our global efforts on partnering with the church in South Africa.

We're thrilled about our first mission trip opportunity through the Upper Midwest Conference partnership with South Africa. From November 6-18, 2025, we'll send a team to South Africa in collaboration with Blessman International.

Please pray for discernment and for the team to be blessed as they connect with and serve the people of South Africa.

If you're interested in joining the team, you can:

- Learn more about joining Blessman International on a mission trip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqzEAT6WFgE>
- Sign up here: <https://blessmaninternational.servicereef.com/events/blessman-international/open-8>
- ***Application deadline is August 9, 2025***

Missions...They May Be More Than What You Think!

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



BISHOP'S GATHERING

A Day with Bishop Mark J. Webb
In the Upper Midwest

Mark Your Calendar for Bishop Webb's Visit to the Upper Midwest in September!

We are excited to announce that Bishop Mark J. Webb will be visiting the Upper Midwest Conference **September 23-25, 2025!**

There will be **two opportunities** to join in on his visit:

- **Tuesday, September 23rd at First Church in Marshalltown, IA**
- **Thursday, September 25th at Aldersgate Church in Aberdeen, SD**

During each of those opportunities there will be **three Sessions:**

- **Meeting with Clergy from 1-4 PM**
- **Clergy Dinner (more info to come)**
- **Worship Service from 6:30-8:30 PM (open to everyone)**

Message: Mission of the Church, Music and Communion

Please let us know you will be attending by completing the registration form. Use the following address to access the registration form.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXU-1PS_88kwn8emAD1RtAKMaHy7rR1ThRjqQnG_qn-i_1Dg/viewform

Deadline to register is September 19th!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!!

ATTENTION! We Have A New Mailing Address



new mailing address
effective immediately

**Our new mailing address for the Upper Midwest Conference
including Connectional Funding payment mailings is:**

Upper Midwest Conference

PO Box 53

Watertown, SD 57201

Please begin using this address effective immediately. If you have mailed payments since June 1st to the old address and they have not cleared your bank yet it is probably due to the mail being forwarded. Our Finance team is working to post these payments as quickly as possible once they receive them.

**Please make sure the Treasurer of
your church has this information!**



Bringing New Room Conference to Your Church

by R. Andrew Maxwell

I am excited to announce that Seedbed has recently released the specifications and prices for churches and small groups to host a satellite site for this year's New Room Conference, titled, "Word + Spirit."

This year's Conference is being hosted by Frazer Church in Montgomery, Alabama, which is too far for many people to travel. Last year during the last session of the conference, I felt the Lord impressed me to promote the development of satellite sites so more people can be blessed by this conference.

This conference is designed to help people experience the fullness of God's presence and love found in Jesus Christ, then to go out and share it with others. Since we are trying to multiply our churches, this could be a wonderful event to help launch new churches.

I've been blessed to attend four of these conferences in person. And saw God move in powerful ways at them. They are tremendous times of spiritual renewal and refreshment. It is a great blessing that these conferences can be held in our homes and churches for a minimal cost.

As for specifics on hosting a satellite site, I can't say it any better than Anna Grace Legband from Seedbed who wrote:

"This year, you can fully participate in the New Room Conference, Sept. 17–19— from wherever you are.

Join us for a Local Gathering, our livestream experience hosted by J.D. Walt and friends from the Wake-Up Call.

Local Gatherings are designed for churches, small groups, ministry teams, and anyone longing for awakening who can't join us in person in Montgomery.

Whether you gather in a sanctuary, a living room, or anywhere in between, you'll worship, pray, and engage with powerful teaching—sowing seeds for awakening in your own context, alongside the New Room family.

Pricing:

Individual (though we recommend doing this with a group)

\$59 Full Conference

\$19 Evening sessions only (Wednesday & Thursday)

Group of 5–20

\$199 Full Conference

\$99 Evening sessions only (Wednesday & Thursday)

Group of 20 or more

\$399 Full Conference

\$199 Evening sessions only (Wednesday & Thursday)

Want to learn more? [register at:](https://my.seedbed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/nrc25-local-productimage-scaled.jpg) <https://my.seedbed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/nrc25-local-productimage-scaled.jpg>

and access the [local gathering information packet at:](https://my.seedbed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Local-Gathering-2025-Information-Packet.pdf?utm_source=Seedbed&utm_campaign=0730b5f5c2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_27_12_59_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-92167e2b75-118002164&mc_cid=0730b5f5c2&mc_eid=5c27f32839) [chrome-extension://](https://my.seedbed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Local-Gathering-2025-Information-Packet.pdf?utm_source=Seedbed&utm_campaign=0730b5f5c2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_27_12_59_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-92167e2b75-118002164&mc_cid=0730b5f5c2&mc_eid=5c27f32839)

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[118002164&mc_cid=0730b5f5c2&mc_eid=5c27f32839](https://my.seedbed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Local-Gathering-2025-Information-Packet.pdf?utm_source=Seedbed&utm_campaign=0730b5f5c2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_27_12_59_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-92167e2b75-118002164&mc_cid=0730b5f5c2&mc_eid=5c27f32839)

We'd love to host a meeting with God alongside you—let's sow for a Great Awakening in every heart, home, church, and city together.

For the Awakening,

Anna Grace Legband"



CONGRATULATIONS!

New Appointments, Assignments
and Moving to Senior Status

July 1, 2025

Katie Cook Appointed to Coggon Parish,
in Coggon, IA

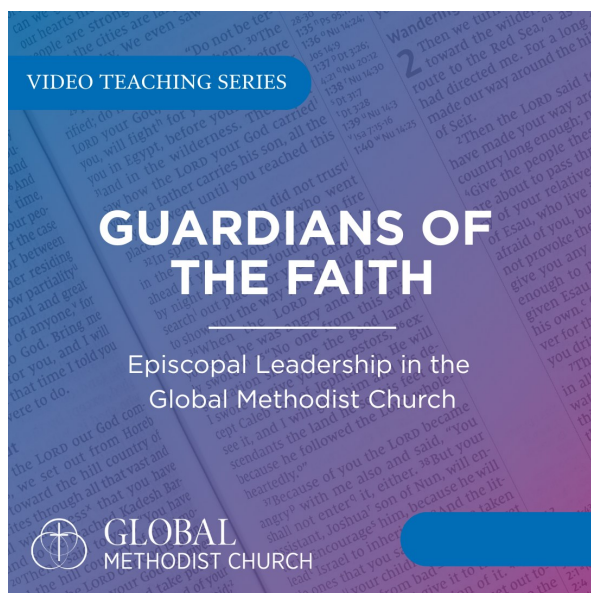
Sharon Andersen Moving to Senior Status

August 1, 2025

David St Aubin Appointed to Ashland/Cedar
Hill in Ashland, IA

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS



*Top Row: Mark J. Webb, Kimba Evariste,
Carolyn Moore, Kenneth Levingston.*

*Bottom Row: Leah Gregory, Jeff Greenway,
John Pena Auta, Scott Jones*

Building off the [Lessons in Scriptural Holiness](#), [Guardians of the Faith](#) is an 8-week video series from the Assembly of Bishops that explores the heart of episcopal leadership in the Global Methodist Church.

Each week, a new video with a reflection lesson will be released featuring one of our bishops. The video series focuses on themes like biblical faithfulness, spiritual depth, servant leadership, and global mission.

We encourage you to invite your community to join you on this journey. Set aside time each week for prayer and reflection as we seek to lead and live with integrity in the Spirit of Christ.

May this series encourage your heart, deepen your calling, and ground your leadership in the truth and love of Jesus Christ.

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENTS



General Conference 2026

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!

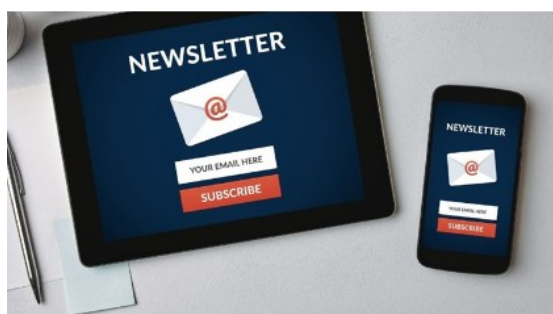
This marks the first time our denomination's General Conference will take place on the African continent—a powerful and visible expression of our identity as a truly global movement.

GO TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2026 WEB PAGE:

<https://globalmethodist.org/2026-general-conference-v2/>

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



Sign up for our Upper Midwest Newsletter

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

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



Global Methodist Church "Across the Globe Newsletter"

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

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



September 17-19, 2025

New Room Conference

September 25 -27, 2025

Nebraska GMC Gathering

September 22 -26, 2025

Bishop Webb visits the Upper Midwest

November 6-18, 2025

Mission Trip to South Africa

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!

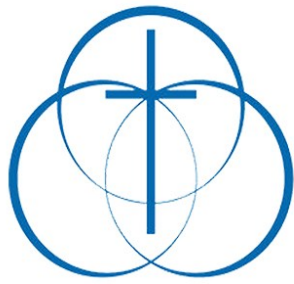
<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/prayer>

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.

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