



GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Update

July, 2026

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AI and Identity Theft

Rev. Ross Reinhiller, Upper Midwest Conference Vice Superintendent

In a world where people can choose their own reality, faith and truth must stand. The tools of Artificial Intelligence may enhance our abilities to share the gospel, or they may lead us into the oldest of sin. Like the fruit on the tree of good and evil, it can be used in the hands of evil to deceive us into believing truth is whatever we want to make it.

Alan Campbell, our Conference Lay Leader has wise words of advice and guidance. Let's hear him in his own words.

We live in a fast-paced world that was inconceivable, not so long ago. Disruption and distractions are the norm. With today's connectivity to the internet there is no need to rely on maps, the yellow pages, or a phone book (if you can locate one of them). Functions have been consolidated and streamlined, such that shopping of all types has been transformed.

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When Google was created, one of the underlying foundations was distraction. Search engine design includes continuous learning about consumer preferences to sell advertising and products, along with monetizing the associated data. Keeping one's attention was paramount. Fast forward to today, digital priorities for our attention is juggled at dizzying speed.

Can you imagine forgetting a personal belonging such as your Bible, purse, phone, or wallet in a public place like an airport? The likelihood of any of the items being returned without tampering is small. Each is part of your identity and if not recovered, might leave you anxious and lost.

Making a connection involves communication, understanding, mutual respect, trust, and is foundational for building relationships. We are complex human beings, striving to be like Jesus. As believers, we have an ongoing personal relationship with our Savior. In our lives we pray to the living God, who offers us, grace, healing, mercy, and eternal life with him in Heaven. He hears and leads us by the power of The Holy Spirit and through His Word, to confess and repent of our sins, receive forgiveness, live lives of dependence as His followers in this world. In brief, we live to serve and glorify God.

Artificial Intelligence introduces complexity to our notions of life and personal relationship. In our faith journey. New terminology, and deployment of programs to our mobile devices, automobiles, appliances in our homes and businesses, have given us the convenience of speedy choices without thoughtful deliberation or evaluation.

Digital tools such as the variety of Bible apps, commentaries and summaries, present us with added ease of access on the one hand, but the absence of rigorous vetting on the other. The rise of deep-fakes and video impostors challenges us to be discerning. For example, with just 3 seconds of video, a digital representation of a person can be constructed and distributed on the Internet with impunity. Recently, a pastor in Duluth, MN was a victim of digital mischief, when a fake sermon was created and published on the web. While it has since been repudiated, it is not an isolated instance. It is a caution for us to keep alert.

Even more concerning is the rise of chatbots that purport to be the teachings of Jesus, while simultaneously monetizing the advice being dispensed. As anxiety and uncertainty increase in daily life, individuals are flocking to these tools seeking comfort, connection, and truth. Interactive conversation with a chatbot is disarming. The engagement appears to feel genuine, however a chatbot is only a program devoid of any human, moral, or spiritual attributes. The goals are unrelenting dependence, monetary gain for its owner, surrender of one's identity, and critical thinking skills.

We know there are all kinds of temptations to look for easy answers in our daily lives. While there are digital tools that make living productive and entertaining, when it comes to faith, we must discern which tools can be used and establish recommendations to guard our hearts and minds as we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the world.

Blessings,
Alan Campbell

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you!



There are times in the life of the Church when the path before us is comfortable and familiar. And then there are times when God simply says, “Trust Me. Take the next step.” The formation of our Conference was certainly one of those times.

From the very beginning, we were stepping into something new. There were questions to answer, decisions to make, relationships to build, and new ways of doing ministry to discover. We trusted in God's grace, leaned upon one another, and prayerfully began the work of becoming the Conference God was calling us to be. And from those very early days, our outgoing Chair of the Board of Ministry, Valerie Reinhill, has been a faithful part of that journey.

Through meetings, conversations, prayerful discernment, difficult decisions, and more emails and details than anyone probably wants to count, she has faithfully given her time, wisdom, experience, and heart to the work of the Church.

So much of ministry happens quietly and behind the scenes. Sometimes faithful service simply looks like showing up, listening, praying, encouraging, asking the hard questions, and being willing to say, “Here I am, Lord. Use me.” Val has done all of those things.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I thank my God every time I remember you” (Philippians 1:3). Those words beautifully express our gratitude to Val. We thank God for her willingness to say yes when our Conference was just beginning. We thank God for her wisdom, patience, leadership, and the grace she has shared along the way.

As Wesleyan people, we believe deeply in God's grace—grace that goes before us, grace that meets us where we are, and grace that continues shaping us into the people God calls us to be. Looking back, we can see God's grace woven throughout the story of our Conference and working through faithful people willing to offer their gifts in service to Christ and His Church. Val has been one of those faithful people.

Even though her time as Chair of the Board of Ministry has ended, the seeds she helped plant will continue to grow, and the foundation she helped establish will continue to be built upon.

So, with grateful hearts, we simply say **thank you, Val!** Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your servant's heart. Thank you for your patience, wisdom, and faithfulness. And thank you for walking with us from the very beginning.

May God richly bless you in this next season, and may you always know that your faithful service has made a difference! Val, we thank God for you!

Introducing the Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church Conference Vimeo Channel!

We are excited to announce the launch of the **Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church Conference Vimeo Channel!**

This new platform gives us another way to share the life and ministry of our Conference through high-quality videos, including conference sessions, training resources, worship services, special events, testimonies, and other ministry content.

Conference Venmo Channel, cont.

Why Vimeo?

While many of us are familiar with YouTube, Vimeo offers several advantages that make it an excellent home for our Conference videos:

- **A cleaner viewing experience** with minimal distractions and no recommended videos pulling viewers away from the content.
- **Higher video quality**, making presentations, worship services, and training resources look and sound their best.
- **A more professional platform** designed for organizations that want to organize and present content in a polished way.
- **Greater control over privacy and sharing**, allowing us to make videos available in ways that best serve our churches and ministry partners.

Our YouTube presence has served us well, and Vimeo complements it by providing an enhanced experience for many of our educational and ministry resources.

We invite you to explore the new channel, follow us, and share it with others throughout the Conference. As we continue to grow this library, you'll find valuable resources to encourage, equip, and connect churches across the Upper Midwest.

Visit our Vimeo Channel here:

<https://vimeo.com/user260011650>

Thank you for being part of what God is doing across the Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church Conference. We look forward to sharing many more inspiring stories and ministry resources with you through this exciting new platform!



2026 Annual Conference Recap Offering Update - \$174,090.12

We are thrilled to share that as a conference, we have raised over \$170,000 to dig wells in South Africa. This will not only complete our goal of 3 wells...it will allow us to dig 13 wells to help people have access to clean water. Thank you to all who gave!



Annual Conference Survey

We value your feedback and want your help to enhance future gatherings. Please take a minute to help us grow and to be able to serve you better by filling out the 2026 Annual Conference Survey.

Go to : [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecx47hVZhBLqQtBF6j73RIGLgnluGDSQvTVsYQw2KIMEKBxQ/viewform)

[e/1FAIpQLSecx47hVZhBLqQtBF6j73RIGLgnluGDSQvTVsYQw2KIMEKBxQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecx47hVZhBLqQtBF6j73RIGLgnluGDSQvTVsYQw2KIMEKBxQ/viewform)



ANNUAL CONFERENCE WORSHIP

Did you miss one of our Annual Conference worship moments? Did you want to share a meaningful moment from the conference with someone in your local church? Did you want to relive, review, and be re-energized by a particular song or preaching? Visit our YouTube Channel or our NEW Vimeo Channel to watch & worship with these services again.

Go to **Upper Midwest Conference YouTube** or **Upper Midwest Conference Venmo**



Front Row (L-R): Luann Benge (Board of Ministry Chair), Erin Wetzel, Stephenie Henson, Tracy Winters, Christy Ehrle
Back Row (L-R): James Parks (Conference Superintendent), Ross Reinhiller (Vice Conference Superintendent), Sedar Shako, David Wittman Jacob Yochum, Jen Zoller, Mike Jones, Bishop Mark Webb

2026 Ordination

A highlight of every time we gather for conference is the opportunity to affirm & celebrate those being ordained to pastoral ministry. This year we celebrate the ordination of three Elders and six Deacons. As you see these friends & fellow pastors, continue to express your excitement for how God's working in their lives and help support them in this new time of ministry.



Leadership Encounter - A Blessed Success

Eighty-one pastors and lay delegates participated in the Leadership Encounter preceding our Annual Conference in Sioux City.

The originating purpose of the event was for pastors and laity in our large geographic area to begin to know each other at deeper levels so that we might truly become a Conference of Methodists. From that important intention, two other purposes emerged: to worship and experience the presence of God together and begin building a ministry expertise collective (aka find out in our Conference who is good at what).

It was a wonderful time together, and you are encouraged to participate if there is a later iteration of similar purpose.

Profound thanks and kudos to Pastor Scott Squires and the Wesley Global Methodist Church, who hosted us and provided one of the richest blessings of the Conference, "Clergy/Spouse Appreciation Banquet."



Certified Lay Ministry Information

The Upper Midwest Conference's Certified Lay Ministry (CLM) program has open enrollment to join at any time during the year. This program is for professing members (for at least 2 years) who are in lay leadership within their church, leading a church as a lay person, or are called to further their calling to join in leadership.

You will learn more about your calling, understanding the church, Bible study, mission, evangelism, and more! Each class is 1 day and may include pre-work before or homework after the conclusion of the class. Upon completion of the coursework and other requirements, you would be commissioned as a CLM at the next Upper Midwest Annual Conference.

You'll find more information about the program and the registration form here: <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/certified-lay-ministry>

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the CLM Committee here: certifiedlayministry@uppermidwestgmc.org

Disaster Response Information:

Nahunta, Georgia

Right now, families in Nahunta, Georgia are trying to figure out what comes next after devastating wildfires tore through South Georgia and destroyed more than 100 homes and residential structures. Many families lost everything in a matter of hours including their homes, belongings, vehicles, and sense of stability. Most did not have homeowner's insurance, and federal aid may not be available.



Disaster Response, cont.

Georgia

But even in the middle of heartbreak, this community is showing incredible strength. Neighbors are taking in neighbors. Churches are stepping up. People are doing everything they can to help each other survive and rebuild. Our team is on the ground and committed to supporting these families over the next 12 months, not just in the immediate aftermath, but through the long road of recovery ahead.

Right now, the greatest need is financial support. If you wish to provide financial support here is the direct link to the Faith Responders: www.thefaithresponders.org

Venezuela

On June 24, 2026, two major earthquakes occurring less than a minute apart struck Morón, located on Venezuela’s Caribbean coast west of Caracas, with magnitudes of 7.2 and 7.5. Widespread damage has occurred, and the death toll is over 1500.

Rev. Warren Lathem, Conference Superintendent of the Venezuela Conference, has asked those wishing to support the earthquake response effort to send donations to Venezuela Now (www.venezuelanow.org) or via Zelle to CameronVNI@gmail.com.

We appreciate your support, prayers, and commitment to helping those affected by disasters. Our passion is sharing the love of God during times of crisis. God opens a door for volunteers and churches to share the light of Christ, hope, and healing with many who are lost, forgotten, isolated, or separated from the church - offering a future in the midst of chaos and uncertainty. We look forward to serving with you in the field!!

Louisiana

Faith Responders has partnered with the Trinity Conference of the GMC to provide relief, support, and long-term recovery to the survivors of Avoyelles Parish in Louisiana. Volunteers are needed to help with muck-outs and removal of debris. Housing is provided at David Haas Methodist Church in Bunkie, LA, and work orders are ready for teams.

Supplies of box fans, dehumidifiers, mops, and other items are needed. For more information, email Faith Responders at info@thefaithresponders.org or call 850-363-6799. Thank you!

Faith Responders has prepared the way and are asking for traveling teams of volunteers to respond to the floods in Louisiana. Just click this link to their website: www.thefaithresponders.org to check dates and make arrangements for your team and sign up to make a difference in the lives of those affected.

MORE INFORMATION



Sign up for our Upper Midwest Newsletter

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



Global Methodist Church

“Across the Globe” Newsletter

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



General Conference Website

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.

Prayer for General Conference 2026

During this season of prayer, you will join with a multitude of brothers and sisters across the Global Methodist Church, praying each day together. Though we may be separated by distance, we are united in purpose. And we hold onto this promise: "The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect" (James 5:16). We have collected 40 prayers from people all across the world who sense God calling them to be part of this movement of the Holy Spirit through the Global Methodist Church. It is our hope that you will not only use this **40 Days of Prayer Guide** personally, but also share it with friends, family, and fellow believers. As we prepare to gather for General Conference 2026, we pray that our hearts will already be united — covered in prayer before we ever arrive.

May these 40 days draw you closer to the Lord. May they unite us as one body. And may the Holy Spirit move in powerful ways as we prepare for what God has ahead.

40 Days of Prayer July 15th - August 23rd

Go to: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/4829cd2f/files/uploaded/GenCon2026-40Day+Prayer+Guide-EN-FORMATTED.pdf>

14 Days of Prayer August 24th - September 6th

John Wesley is often quoted as saying that "God does nothing but in answer to believing prayer." How crucial and vital it is, then, for us to lay a strong foundation of prayer cover during the Global Methodist Church's General Conference. What a historic and significant gathering this will be as GMC church leaders from all over the globe come together in Johannesburg, South Africa. How we need the Holy Spirit to empower and lead all who attend. Yet, according to Wesley, it all begins with prayer.

Therefore, we have prepared this 14-day Prayer Guide to encourage you to pray and to help you focus your prayers. It is our prayer that the Spirit will use this guide, along with the daily scriptures for each day, to inspire you to pray and to direct you when you are not sure how to pray. You are encouraged to read the scriptures from your preferred translation, and the adjoining prayers, out loud, if possible. We are confident that this will allow the Holy Spirit to direct you further as you join others from around the globe in praying for the 2026 General Conference. ~ Dr Stephen Seamands on behalf of GM Church Prayer Network.

go to: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/4829cd2f/files/uploaded/14DayPrayerGuide-ENGLISH-GC26.pdf>



August 30–September 5, 2026
General Conference, Johannesburg, S Africa

November 12–24, 2026
Conference Mission Trip to South Africa

Full Calendar can be viewed at: <https://uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/calendar?view=list>



We want to celebrate the great things happening throughout our conference. Whether it's happening in Districts, Conference-Wide, or in Local Churches - share how the Holy Spirit is moving in ministry around you. Fill out this simple form, and we'll highlight these stories on social media for our Upper Midwest Conference. Fill out the following form: <https://form.jotform.com/242467999461171>

Upper Midwest Prayer Opportunities



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

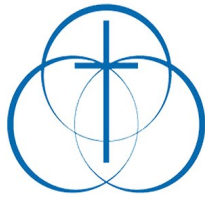
The Upper Midwest Conference Daily Noon Prayer

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

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



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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