GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH
UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

Early Edition NEWSLETTER

November 2026

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Greater Than I Imagined

by Rev. James Parks, Upper Midwest Conference Superintendent

On November 1, 2026, our Upper Midwest Conference of the Global Methodist Church will celebrate its third anniversary. It is amazing to think that we are only three years into our existence. And in those three years, we have already held two General Conferences to help establish the foundation of the Global Methodist Church.

As I reflect on our most recent General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, I find myself even more excited about the future of our denomination than I was when it first began. General Conference is where we consider our Book of Doctrine and Discipline (BDD), making updates, adjustments, and clarifications to guide us in our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

One of the things that encouraged me most in Johannesburg was the desire to become a truly global denomination. That meant taking a hard look at portions of our BDD that reflected how churches and conferences are organized in the United States. If we are going to be a global church, we cannot assume that every church and conference around the world should function like those in America.

That required listening to our brothers and sisters from around the world. As I sat in my legislative committee hearing multiple languages being spoken, I was reminded that God's work is much bigger than my own experiences and perspectives. We have much to learn from one another.

I believe we have established a strong foundation in our Articles of Religion and Social Witness, rooted in Scripture and our Wesleyan heritage. At the same time, we are recognizing the need for flexibility in how we organize and carry out ministry. After all, making disciples in South Africa may look different than making disciples in Slovakia or South Dakota. Our mission and beliefs unite us, even when our methods and structures differ.

Recently, a conversation with my son helped me appreciate just how far we have come. My son recently graduated from college and is moving to Chicago. While attending college, he worshiped at a GMC congregation near Peoria, Illinois. As he prepared for his move, he asked his pastor about finding a GMC church in Chicago. Unfortunately, he learned there were not many options.

He decided to explore other churches but first wanted to understand the differences between the United Methodist Church and the Global Methodist Church. He found some comparisons online and began reading.

As he shared what he discovered, he admitted that I had probably told him much of this before. (Which I had, if only he had been listening!) But this time, as he studied the differences for himself, he realized they mattered to him. He told me he really wanted to find a GMC congregation to attend.

As we talked, I realized that some of the comparisons he was reading were written before the GMC officially existed. They were describing what we hoped the Global Methodist Church would become.

That gave me an opportunity to tell him something I have been realizing myself: The foundation of the Global Methodist Church is even better than I originally imagined it could be.

When the GMC was formed, I had high hopes. But I was also realistic. I knew it would be difficult to accomplish everything we envisioned. And certainly, we still have plenty of room to grow. We are far from perfect. Yet, three years into this journey, I believe God is building something greater than I could have imagined. I am proud to be part of a scriptural, Wesleyan, missional, global, connectional, and Spirit-empowered movement of God called the Global Methodist Church.

Watching men and women from around the world gather in Johannesburg, worship together, listen to one another, wrestle with difficult decisions, and remain unified in our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ was something I once struggled to imagine. Yet there we were, experiencing it together.

Now comes the exciting part. We get to live into what God is building!

With six years until our next General Conference, we have an opportunity to put our Book of Doctrine and Discipline into practice. It provides guidance and alignment, but it is not the goal. The goal is making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

The real measure of our success will not be how well we have written our Book of Doctrine and Discipline, but how faithfully we live out our calling in our churches and communities. We have been given a wonderful foundation. Now it is time to build upon it, reaching at least one more person with the good news of Jesus Christ.

May God continue to lead us, empower us through His Spirit, and make us fruitful for His Kingdom!

If you missed the General Conference Recap livestream, it's okay, you can watch it here: https://youtu.be/IuYHDt_dpGs



The Campus is Claimed! Fuel the Vision through Prayer and Giving!

One of the most thrilling highlights of our Annual Conference 2026 was the explosive report from Rev. Jonathan Lee's Campus Ministry at the University of Minnesota—a massive mission field of over 56,000 students. Launched on September 26, 2025, with just 7 people, this Christ-centered, Spirit-filled ministry has already surged to over 25 active students! They are rapidly outgrowing their current space and urgently need a larger facility to accommodate this momentum. Praise the Lord for what He is multiplying!

However, the urgency before us could not be clearer or more sobering. Recent studies by Lifeway Research reveal that roughly 70% of young adults who attend church as teenagers drop out during their college years. According to NCES's data, nearly 750,000 and 840,000 students on campuses across our conference represent a massive, urgent mission field right in our backyard that our 190 churches must boldly claim through prayer and action. Rev. Lee cannot stand on this battlefield alone. We cannot afford to sit on the sidelines.

As the African proverb reminds us, "It takes a village to raise a child." It's time for our entire Conference of 190 churches to become the village that raises, protects, and equips these students. Together, we can build a spiritual army, forge bold disciples of Jesus, and launch kingdom leaders into every sector of society. "Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

We invite you and your church to anchor this movement with your Prayer Shield. Let's unite in prayer, carrying these strategic battle points directly into our church prayer closets.

For the Leadership: Rev. Jonathan Lee

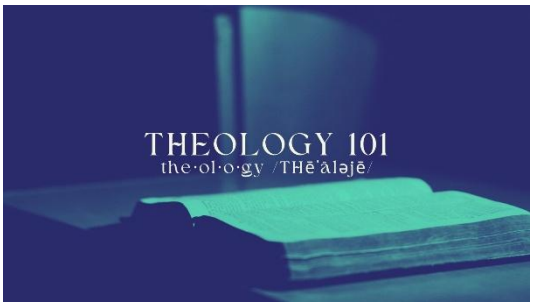
- Divine Empowerment: Pray for an outpouring of supernatural wisdom, physical and spiritual stamina, and a dedicated team of co-laborers to join his side.
- Financial Breakthrough: Pray for immediate, abundant funding to secure a larger gathering space and resources for outreach, retreats, and community meals.

For the Students

- Supernatural Favor: Pray for open doors and exceptional favor with university officials, professors, and student government leaders.
- A Massive Spiritual Awakening: Pray that students root their identity, security, and destiny firmly in God.
- Authentic Community: Pray that every student finds a true spiritual home marked by biblical truth, fierce accountability, and deep support.
- Spiritual Resilience: Pray for unshakeable strength to overcome temptation, mental stress, anxiety, and cultural distractions.
- Bold Witness: Pray that students, fully secure in God's love, share Christ confidently and courageously with their peers.

Can we count on you to stand in the gap? We cannot leave the campus battleground to a single leader. Fulfilling the Great Commission requires our intense prayers and our radical, sacrificial giving. Together, as one body, we can spark a historic campus revival across Minnesota and our entire Conference.

“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known” (Jeremiah 33:3)



Laying Down Our Sin

One of the doctrines that is distinct in the Wesleyan tradition is the doctrine of Christian Perfection or Entire Sanctification. It has not always been claimed as fully as it might have been over the years, but it was characteristic of Wesley’s teaching and the theological legacy he left to the early Methodists. It is important to make sure it is clear, though, that Wesley did not invent this doctrine. He argued that it was to be found taught in the New Testament in many places, and it would not be hard to point to early theologians who taught something that was not all that far from Wesley’s doctrine, even if he went further in his emphasis.

I remember sitting in a class in seminary when we were covering this aspect of Wesley’s theology. The professor knew that not everyone would be on board with it, at least not at first. He made the theological case as clearly as possible and connected it with Wesley’s larger perspective and did all those things that you would hope and expect a theology professor in the Wesleyan heritage to do. Then, he did something else. He made an appeal on a holistic and emotional level. He addressed himself to those in the room who may have lingering doubts about it and asked them if they don’t yearn for something like that doctrine to be true and wouldn’t it be better to strive to be made perfect in love, even if it were impossible in this life?

I think that this kind of approach can be helpful. I even made it myself in the earliest of these articles. I have raised the question as to what must be the case if we reject a doctrine of Christian Perfection. At least one of the things that it means is that we do not really believe in the power of grace over sin, since sin must always remain, even in the face of the transforming power of God. One of the most persuasive things we can do is present an understanding of the perfecting power of grace as a liberating doctrine, as teaching us that we may lay our burdens down, lay down our imperfections, lay down our disobedience, with the hope and assurance that God will, in fact, deal with them.

I want to suggest, though, that the Wesleyan perspective is far more radical than that. The promise of grace is indeed a liberating doctrine. We should cling to that, we should cherish it, and we should proclaim it as a liberating doctrine, but there is a call implied in our understanding of grace that goes further and deeper than we may realize.

In Wesley's sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," he famously argues two points: "First, God works; therefore you can work. Secondly, God works, therefore you must work" (III.2). On the surface, this may seem like it is nothing more than an argument against the Calvinistic doctrine of Double Predestination, where God saves us, or rejects us, with no reference to anything that we do or believe and therefore all working is pointless. Whereas the Calvinists put a stress on the idea that "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure," and concluded that we could do nothing at all, Wesley points out that Paul's argument is better understood as saying that, because God is already at work, we are able to do what Paul tells us to do and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."

Prevenient or preventing grace certainly does mean that we have power and agency restored to us that we simply would not have had without God's grace in our lives. It is also true that it means that we can do what we otherwise could not do. The call of God, though, is not indifferent to the choices that we make. God is not content merely with us receiving prevenient grace so that we can choose God. The call of the gospel means that we must use that freedom to choose God. It is not a coercive "must," but it is, in fact, the only faithful choice. To use that freedom to reject the giver of that freedom is a fundamentally unfaithful act.

One of the things that Wesley taught with some frequency (although he is sometimes more nuanced) is that the moment we give our lives to Christ, we are no longer bound to commit willful transgressions against the known laws of God. That is not to say that we will, in fact, live into that possibility, but when Jesus is our Lord, we are no longer free to be indifferent to the sin in our lives. Someone who is merely justified but not already involved in the pathway toward sanctification is a theoretical category. It could only be truly fulfilled by someone who dies the instant they come to faith. Everyone else continues to have time and opportunity to manifest the transformation of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We are free to wage war against sin or to not to, but only one of them is a faithful response.

The promise of Christian Perfection, of Entire Sanctification, is that we can have our hearts ruled with love for God and neighbor. We may not be free of ignorance, we may not be free from mistake, we may not be free from the weakness of the flesh (though this must not be used to excuse what we might otherwise call "little sins"), but we go from moment to moment shaped by the love of God we have seen in Christ and received through the Holy Spirit. Again, this is a liberating conviction, but it is also a challenging one.

If it is really true that God wants us to be made perfect in love in this life, if it is really true that this is God's desire, then we must seek it. To be clear, we cannot force it, but we should also not imagine that God is less willing to give that gift of grace than we are to receive it
In the concluding paragraph of his sermon on "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Wesley makes essentially the same argument as I shared that my professor made (surely he got it from Wesley). He argues that, even if our hopes are disappointed, we haven't lost anything. He follows that up immediately. "But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look

for it then every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, I must first be or do thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; and expect it now."

The promise of entire sanctification is a promise that we may lay down our sin, but it is more than that. It is a call that, if we wish to be faithful, we must lay down our sin. We do not get to cling to it. By handing it over to Jesus, we have renounced our ownership of it. By submitting to the lordship of Christ, we have been released from the lordship of sin. God is not indifferent to whether we let go of our sin or if we cling to it. Only one of those is a faithful response to the gospel. The trouble is that we often do not hate our sin as much as we should. We often cling to it because it can feel like a comfort, even as it destroys us from the inside.

If you are still unsure of the fullness of the promise of Grace, then receive the Wesleyan emphasis on Entire Sanctification or Christian Perfection, not as a burden, but as the liberating truth that it is. If you have received it as a liberating truth, and one rooted in Scripture, make sure you hear its challenge in its full force. There is no sin in your life that is more powerful than the grace of God. You are not just free to lay it down; as a disciple of Jesus, you must do so.

The First Step for Missions in Your Local Church May Surprise You (or not)!

by Norma Morrison, Missions Team Leader

Are missions an important part of YOUR church? Whether it's in service to your community, somewhere in the US or world, or even to unreached people groups, is God calling you to something different or to more? If so, how do you know what that next step might be? It may not be what you think! Jesus gives us a simple answer.

> *"Then He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" Matthew 9:37-38 ESV*

It doesn't matter how big or small your church is. The first step is not to plan, to strategize, to raise money, or even to recruit laborers. The first step is to pray, and not just to pray but to pray earnestly!

We in the church are good at praying. However, most of those prayers are often directed to and for us. It's time to do more than tell the congregation they should engage in prayer for missions. We need to regularly incorporate prayer specifically for missional discernment, for laborers to be called to the harvest fields, for the lost in our

communities, and for those unreached with the gospel around the world. Put a "Call to Prayer for Missions" in every bulletin, newsletter, and on your website!

The Global Methodist Church Commission on Kingdom Advancement has developed helpful information for Mission Mobilization to use in local churches. In the next few months, we will be sharing some of those resources with you here. You can explore them online at: **https://kingdomadvancement.globalmethodist.org/missions-mobilization**.

God WILL honor and answer those sincere prayers for where and what He is calling your church to next… so pray!

"But (we) will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon (us).
And (we) will be (His) witnesses, telling people about (Him) everywhere– in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Missions Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2013769506210046

Give to Conference Missions: https://uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/giving

Email the Missions Team: missions@uppermidwestgmc.org

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



Happy Birthday, Upper Midwest Conference!

God continues to be present and bless our Upper Midwest Conference. As we pause this November to look back at the past three years of shared ministry, we also look forward to what God will continue to do. Thank you to all for being a part of our work together. And may God continue to be proclaimed throughout our Conference.



Our 2027 Annual Conference will be June 11–13 in Sioux City.

Annual Conference is a time when we can come together, worship, encourage one another, conduct the business of the Conference, and celebrate what God is doing among us. Save the Date to join us!

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Choir & Worship Team Invitation
2027 Annual Conference

The Upper Midwest Conference is inviting clergy and laity to help lead worship at our 2027 Annual Conference in Sioux City, Iowa! Whether you enjoy singing in a choir or have gifts as a musician or worship leader, we would love for you to participate.

Conference Choir

Love to sing? Express your interest in joining the conference choir by completing the **Choir Interest Form**. ***Please respond by December 15, 2026***, to assist with planning. Additional sign-ups will be accepted during Annual Conference registration.

Worship Team Auditions

We are seeking additional vocalists, musicians, and worship leaders to join our existing worship team. Interested individuals should complete the **Worship Team Audition Form** and submit a video showcasing their gifts. Audition deadline: December 15, 2026. Selected participants will be notified by January 1, 2027.

Prayerfully consider sharing your gifts as we gather to worship Jesus together!

2026 Charge Conference Forms Are Now Available!



Good News! The forms for this year's Charge Conference are now available online. You can find them at: https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/charge-conference

Please download the forms you need, and **SINCE IT IS A YEAR OF GENERAL CONFERENCE AND WE WANT TO VERIFY ALL INFORMATION, PLEASE FILL IN ALL FORMS COMPLETELY** and submit them within a week after your Charge Conference. Schedule your Charge Conference with your Presiding Elder by the end of November. If you have any questions or need assistance, your Presiding Elder can assist you.

Thank you for your leadership and faithful service as we prepare for this important work together.

In CHRIST, James Parks





Val Reinhiller

*Moving to **Senior Status***

GLOBAL METHODIST ANNOUNCEMENTS



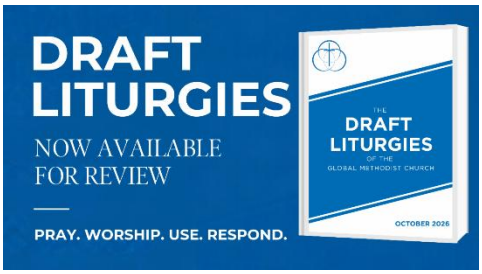
Beyond These Walls Conference

Our biannual gathering, inspiring and equipping church leaders in best-of-the-best mission practices, is just around the corner. Be sure to register by **November 15, 2026,** to take advantage of early bird pricing.

Register Here: https://us.list-manage.com/T_ooW543NeI?e=c034ddcc43&c2id=8dcdb9f0f4348ecfaa578bda30e36f7d

Download Flyer: https://mcusercontent.com/64124f1d5b1170491dea9f3cf/files/59f3cc22-2911-ad0d-fab7-54596abf9584/2027_Beyond_These_Walls_Flyer.pdf

Learn More: https://www.beyondthesewalls.com/



Draft Liturgies of the Global Methodist Church

The Global Methodist Church is excited to release the Draft Liturgies of the Global Methodist Church as a means of honoring Christ in our mission to spread scriptural holiness across the globe. Today officially begins a three-month review period to collect feedback from the general church. A final editing process will begin on January 1 with publication in 2027.

Feedback will be accepted through December 31, 2026.

Learn More Here: https://www.globalmethodist.org/draft-liturgies

Access the Draft Liturgies Here:
https://6x7ieqbbb.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001jKB9g5mLPFdYlQqfrBGhBrdPrnuueReRTHJSYJ45QLsKNeutRwLR5Q-XJPVU4Hqv7BAjguLmJALnjG-hpsjX9L8U1neuBcUzz1UQTCahYikPZzs6QUcRAmQbAsrLVkA_Yv_7QxDGN9KAGXqFVNqlwsbkpczsfDmcCUcw5eTwXeFojnJsTe9F2g==&c=CekBKUt6YILlPAhs9StNj9p-HG0B4s_bCha18_rduhsl_8GDPoijuQ==&ch=yN3xXUMWMJeaU5ZZthxVY0mtUyC8Dvmtzyc0LSAn0aP0YmGr80sJyg==

Submit Your Feedback Here:
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Subscribe to "Across the Globe: The Podcast"

Stay connected by tuning in to "Across the Globe: The Podcast"—a space to unify, inform, and tell the stories of God's work through the Global Methodist Church. Each episode is designed to encourage, equip, and connect us as one body as we continue to grow together.
If you haven't tuned in yet, these are conversations you don't want to miss.
Be sure to like, subscribe, and follow so you never miss an episode—and share with your community to help others stay connected.

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Watch on YouTube:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxzmHW4eeft7_8lsR70XJQZYaxn7VHZYE&si=IIRjNeBJFBHXESRE

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



Sign up for our Upper Midwest Newsletter

Subscribe here:
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

Subscribe here: https://globalmethodist.org/connect/

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

Important Dates



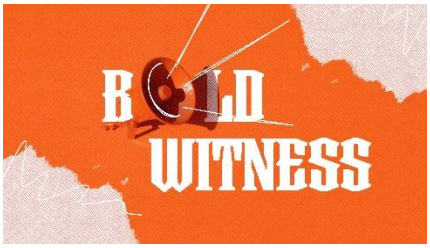
November 12-24, 2026

Conference Mission Trip to South Africa

View the Full Upper Midwest Conference Calendar here:

https://uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/calendar?view=list

Share Your Story



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 here: https://form.jotform.com/242467999461171 and we'll highlight these stories on social media for our Upper Midwest Conference.

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!



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)

Join the Noon Prayer or Request the Link to the Zoom Prayer Meeting here:

https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/prayer

Check Us Out, find More Information or Contact us:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560495272933

Website: https://uppermidwestgmc.org/

Email: contact@uppermidwestgmc.org

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCelUq0W7V_b9fGnG_MEMo0w

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH
UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

PO Box 113 I Enon, OH 45323

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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