



GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Early Edition

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Priority #1 Raising Next Gen Leaders

One of my favorite mission trip experiences was traveling to Tennessee with a group of youth to serve at a ministry that helped guide troubled boys toward a new path in life. One of our projects was remodeling an old shower house. It involved power tools, construction equipment, and a lot of skilled labor.

I was one of the adult leaders on the trip, but there was one small problem: I was a "city kid." Most of the students on our team grew up on farms, and many had taken shop class from the other adult leader who was with us. When it came time to organize the work, the shop teacher naturally took charge. He knew the abilities of every student, and he knew mine!

Before long, the students were confidently operating saws, drills, and other equipment while I became the official "gopher." If they needed another board, I would go for it. If they needed more screws or another tool, I would go for that too. The people with the greatest gifts for the task were leading, and I had the privilege of supporting them. By the end of the week, they had done incredible work.

That experience has stayed with me because it reminds me of one of our conference priorities: raising the next generation of leaders. Sometimes we unintentionally communicate that young people need to wait until they are older before they can make a meaningful contribution

(Continued on the next page....)

to the church. Yet Scripture reminds us that God gives gifts to every member of the body of Christ. Young people are not simply the future of the church, they are an important part of the church today.

Imagine what could happen if every congregation intentionally created space for young people to lead. They can serve on ministry teams, help shape worship, teach, lead mission projects, mentor younger students, and bring fresh ideas and energy to the life of the church. As adults, we still have wisdom to share, encouragement to give, and experience to offer. But sometimes our greatest leadership is found in being willing to be the "gopher." We can be cheering on, supporting, and equipping the leaders God is already raising up among us.

I want to encourage every church to identify the young people God has placed in your congregation. Learn their names. Discover their gifts. Give them meaningful opportunities to serve. Walk alongside them as mentors, coaches, and encouragers.

Take a moment this week to write down the names of a few young people you believe God is calling to lead. Pray for them regularly. Invest in them intentionally. And if no names come to mind, begin praying that God will bring those young leaders into your church and prepare your congregation to welcome them.

As we make room for the next generation, we are not simply building the future of the Global Methodist Church. We are joining God in raising up disciples and leaders who will serve His Kingdom for years to come.

Prefer to Watch Instead?

We're excited to offer a new way to experience Pastor James' newsletter article!

In addition to reading the article above, you can now watch him share a similar message in a video format. Whether you're on the go, prefer listening, or simply enjoy hearing the message directly from Rev. Parks, this new option makes it even easier to stay connected.

We hope this additional format helps you engage with the encouragement, vision, and updates shared each month. View on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctkPYoL4u1o>

Want to Share the Message With Your Congregation?

If you would like to share the video message with your congregation and prefer a cleaner viewing experience with minimal distractions check out the video on our NEW Vimeo Channel at

<https://vimeo.com/1215502879?fl=pl&fe=cm>.



PRAYERS for the General Conference of the GMC (August 30 to September 5, 2026)

Rev. Dr. Christina Sung, Conference Prayer Team leader
Time flies. Our denomination will hold its General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, under the theme 'The Beauty of Holiness.'

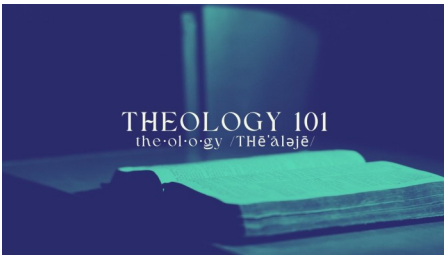
I thank Shanna Pinkerton for sending us the link to GMC's 40 Days of Prayer for the General Conference. In addition, our Conference Prayer Team has provided prayer points, prayers, and scripture on a single page so that we may pray together as one family.

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We pray for:

1. **Wisdom and Guidance:** Holy Spirit, please guide every delegate and give them Your wisdom to make the right decisions and pass the right petitions. Help them make every choice with honor, a clear heart, and keeping their focus on Your Word. "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault." (James 1:5)
2. **Daily Support and Safety:** Lord, provide the delegates everything they need to do Your work. We ask for safe travel, good health, and protection for all traveling to South Africa. "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." (Ps. 121:8)
3. **Election for the Godly Leaders:** Grant the delegates clear thinking, humility, and togetherness as they choose new bishops and leaders. Raise visionary leaders who will boldly love, guide, and challenge churches according to Your Word and Will. "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Eph. 4:2)
4. **Truth and Mission:** May every request and decision honor Jesus in biblical truth that would strengthen the GMC and its churches to fulfill the Great Commission all over the world. "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth." (John 17:17)
5. **Clear Understanding:** We pray for excellent and clear translations so that everyone can understand each other, no matter what language they speak. "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord." (Zeph. 3:9)
6. **Blessing on Everyone:** Let all delegates, helpers, visitors, and everyone watching the video feel connected as a family of GMC, experience Your love and goodness, and be deeply touched by You. "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him." (Psalm 34:8)
7. **Blessing on the Host Country:** We pray for all blessings, spiritual renewal, and shalom for South Africa as they host the GC. "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7)
8. **Powerful Prayer Movement within the GMC:** "Lord, please pour out the Holy Spirit on the GMC and all its churches. We pray for a great prayer movement in our hearts and in our churches, so that all GMC churches become a house of prayer and usher in revival. Give us a burden to pray for the lost souls and workers for the harvest to fulfill Your great commission. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

With a thankful heart, we ask all of these in the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.



The Wesleyan Understanding of Salvation, Part 7: Christian Perfection/Entire Sanctification

By Rev. Dr. Travis Stevick • Pastor, Grace Methodist Church, Marcus, IA
[YouTube.com/tstevick1](https://www.youtube.com/tstevick1) • travisstevick.substack.com

– Philippians 4:4 NIV

The first reaction almost everyone has to the fact that John Wesley taught a doctrine called "Christian Perfection" is to be upset about it. We wonder what he could possibly be thinking. After all, doesn't Paul say, in Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus?" If not even Paul can say that he is perfect, what hope do the rest of us have to be perfect?

This is a fascinating case of needing to make sure we understand the words being used because, if we aren't very careful, we will misunderstand. The first thing to notice is that, just three verses later in that same letter, Paul continues by saying, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude..." (Philippians 4:15). If Paul can say that he is both not-perfect and perfect in the same paragraph, there must be some sense in which we can be perfect and also a sense in which we are not able to be perfect that we must hold together. Wesley structures his whole sermon "On Christian Perfection" on that double reality.

We also need to realize that Wesley uses the term "perfect" somewhat differently than we may be used to. Again, in his sermon "On Christian Perfection," Wesley lays out a way in which no one is perfect. First, everyone is finite and so there will always be things that people do not know. Because of that, there will also always be things that people make mistakes about. A Wesleyan understanding of Christian Perfection does not mean a person doesn't make mistakes.

That being said, Wesley does, however, describe Christians as being able to become perfect in the sense that they no longer commit sins. That may feel like it is a contradiction. How can we still make mistakes and yet not commit sins? Wesley does not try to avoid this tension but addresses it head-on.

In his treatise, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," Wesley sketches out his position in five short points:

1.) Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin, improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. (2.) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. (3.) Therefore sinless perfection is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4.) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5.) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned." (§19)

To recap for clarity, Wesley distinguishes between two things we might mean by the word, "sin:" One is a deliberate violation of a known law of God, and the other is any unintentional violation of a law of God, whether the person knew it or not. Wesley is arguing that, while we need atonement for every way in which we fall short of God's perfect will, only the first of these two categories is "sin" in the sense the Bible usually talks about sin.

This distinction is going to rub some people the wrong way. After all, what Wesley describes as sin "improperly so called" is precisely what many Protestant theologians have made more or less the definition of sin. It is no wonder that Wesley has been misunderstood. The point for our purposes is that, if someone were to say, "Well, we can't be made perfect because, after all, we will always make mistakes," Wesley would agree that we make mistakes, but that those mistakes aren't what a Biblical notion of perfection is talking about.

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Something the Bible does that is often under-appreciated, is talk about righteousness in two distinct ways. One way is the way that people usually use it, where a person is more or less righteous and it makes sense to compare the relative righteousness of two people. The other way the Bible talks about it is when it compares all human beings with God. This is why we get declarations that some individuals, such as Job, are “righteous” (Job 1:8), and also that there are “none righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). When Wesley teaches that we can be made perfect in love, he is talking about attaining righteousness in the first sense, not the second.

Once we clarify that Wesley does not mean what we might think that he means, people sometimes still object to it, but it is worth noting what people might object to, and whether it is an appropriate response.

Setting the bar as high as Wesley does can seem to some people as if he is making Christianity too hard. Of course, we need to be clear about what we mean by that. Do we mean that being perfected in love is too hard for us to do, because we are weak and broken sinners? Of course it is, but then again, by the same logic, all of Christian faith is too hard for us. Don’t forget that Wesley doesn’t pull this doctrine out of thin air. It is based on everything that comes before it in our relationship with God. If we say that it is too hard, it means that we are saying that, even with the almighty power of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11), we cannot avoid doing things on purpose that we know are sins. Is that the kind of position that we want to take? Can we reconcile that with the gospel?

When we are confronted with a Wesleyan understanding of Christian Perfection, with all of the clarifications that we often need to make in order to understand it correctly, we can find that it functions in a prophetic way. It becomes the undoing of all of our excuses. Sometimes, we say “It is too hard,” when what we mean by that is, “I don’t want to give up the sin in my life,” or “I do not want to open myself up so completely to the will and the power of God that I stop committing sins,” or even “I kind of like some of the sin in my life and I do not want to give it up.” In that case, we have a different kind of problem; or perhaps, it is the same problem, only harder to ignore.

In the end, the conviction that Christians not only can be made perfect in love, but that they should be made perfect in love, and made perfect in this way in this life, is the necessary conclusion of every other aspect of a Wesleyan understanding of salvation. We cannot get rid of it without undoing every other aspect.

At its core, this key Wesleyan doctrine states that there is only one Christian answer to the question, “Which of my sins do I believe is more powerful than the grace of God,” and that is the answer “none of them.” Any other answer implies that some of our sin is too powerful, even for God. If God is more powerful than sin, we must affirm something like Wesley’s doctrine of Christian Perfection. We might use other terms, but the core of the conviction must remain, or else we confess that we are determined to be servants of sin all our lives.

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



Want to be a part of or access the Directory? Send us an email to: contact@uppermidwestgmc.org and let us know. We will then send you an invitation to access the Directory in the Church Center *[online](#) app or through the mobile app* where you can:

- Make your contact information available for those in our Conference to see. (You select what to share).
- View the contact information for those who have made their contact information available.

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Accessing the Directory – 2 ways: (You will be asked to log in to view the Directory).

1. Using the online app via a web browser at: uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/home Click on “More” and then click “Directory” to access.
2. Using your mobile device (phone, iPad, etc).

Getting the Mobile App and Setting it Up:

Go to the [App Store](#) or [Play Store](#) and search for “Church Center App” and download to your mobile device.

1. When setting up your Church Center App on your mobile device, use this link: <https://uppermidwestgmc.churchcenter.com/setup> or be sure to search for the Upper Midwest GMChurch using the zip code 52302.

To Log In:

Enter your phone number or email address (we must have one of these already on file). If you are not able to log in with either of these please contact us at: contact@uppermidwestgmc.org and we will be happy to help 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.

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.

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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!



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.



**Disaster Response Information:
Georgia, Venezuela & Louisiana
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.

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: <https://thefaithresponders.org/donate>

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).

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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.

Check out our Disaster Response website page for more information about these and other disasters we are supporting. <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/disaster-response>



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

Prayer has always been at the center of how God moves among His people. Scripture reminds us, "If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, pray and seek my face... then I will hear from heaven" (2 Chronicles 7:14). We believe that as we humble ourselves together in prayer, God will guide, renew, and strengthen His Church. We also see in the early church that before important decisions were made, believers gathered in prayer. "They all were continually united in prayer" (Acts 1:14). This is our hope as well — that long before General Conference begins, we will already be united in spirit, seeking God's heart together.

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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. Go to the following to access the 40 day Prayer guide:

[GenCon2026-40Day+Prayer+Guide+EN-FORMATTED.pdf](https://irp.cdn-website.com/4829cd2f/files/uploaded/GenCon2026-40Day+Prayer+Guide+EN-FORMATTED.pdf) 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. For the 14day prayer guide.....

go to: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/4829cd2f/files/uploaded/14DayPrayerGuide-ENGLISH-GC26.pdf>
~ Dr Stephen Seamands on behalf of the GM Church Prayer Network



Experience New Room Conference 2026

Looking for encouragement, practical discipleship, and a fresh encounter with God? Join thousands of believers for **New Room Conference 2026**, September 30–October 2 at Frazer Church in **Montgomery, Alabama**. This year's gathering features inspiring worship, dynamic teaching, practical labs, and speakers including J.D. Walt, Andy

Crouch, Amy Orr-Ewing, Luann Riley, and many others—all centered on helping followers of Jesus grow deeper in faith and mission.

Can't make the trip? You can still participate through the **New Room Livestream**. Individuals, discipleship bands, small groups, and churches can watch together from anywhere. Livestream registration includes the main sessions, select labs, a pre-conference session, and on-demand access to conference recordings after the event. New Room offers an opportunity to be refreshed, equipped, and encouraged. Learn more <https://seedbed.com/newroomconference2026> and <https://seedbed.com/nrc26-livestream>



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://www.globalmethodist.org/connect>

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



August 30–September 5, 2026
 General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa
November 12–24, 2026

Conference Mission Trip to South Africa
 View the full Upper Midwest Conference Calendar.

<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. Go to the following for the form to fill out: <https://form.jotform.com/242467999461171>



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>

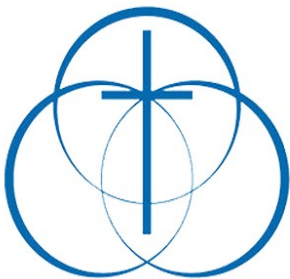


Scheduled Zoom Prayer Meetings

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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