



GLOBAL
METHODIST CHURCH
UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

Early Edition
NEWSLETTER

June 2025

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Jesus Is Greater

by Rev. James Parks,

Upper Midwest Conference Superintendent

The Upper Midwest Conference will gather later this month in Sioux City, Iowa, for our 2nd Annual Conference. This time together will offer us an opportunity to deepen our connections and put faces to names. As part of this, we'll be taking photos of those attending for our online database—helping us all know each other better.

Over the past year, we took a “snapshot” of our churches by submitting year-end statistics for the first time. These numbers give us a glimpse into each church's life at that moment. While they don't tell the full story, they offer valuable insight and, over time, will help us track the journey of our churches.

Here's a summary of the statistics we've gathered:

- **Total Members:** 20,985
- **Average Worship Attendance:** 9,580
- **Average Online Attendance:** 3,236
- **Total Giving:** \$22,486,233
- **2024 Baptisms:** 430
- **2024 Professions of Faith:** 479

These numbers are interesting because they reflect the makeup of our conference and offer a snapshot of our collective ministry. But behind every number is a story.

One story not yet captured in the statistics is of a young mom who was searching for God. She didn't grow up in church but felt drawn to know Him. One night, she woke up at 3:30 a.m. convinced that God was speaking to her. She looked online and found John 3:30: “He must become greater; I must become less.” This verse led her to the church I serve, where she was baptized in May. She's now the newest member of our church family.

When next year's statistics include her story, it won't just be a number—it will represent a life where Jesus is becoming greater.

As we come to the Annual Conference, let's carry John 3:30 in our hearts. Let's come ready to become less, so that Jesus becomes more. Together, we can magnify and glorify His name—both as a conference and in each of our local churches.

I'm praying that God will bring us together for His great purposes and send us back into our communities to share the love and grace of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet.

I look forward to seeing you in Sioux City.



Church Planting? Why Pray?

I am Jen Zoller, Grand View Methodist Church Children's and Member Care Pastor, 'church' planter, joined the prayer team not only because my district needed a representative but also because I was/am compelled to pray for those who have not yet heard the Good Shepherd's voice.

Remembering how Jesus felt in Matthew 9:35-37, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd," I look at my own community and it hits me hard. A great number of people right outside our doors, maybe inside them, too, are probably like this.

How do we reach them for Christ? How do we reach family that fell away from church or never really had their faith bloom? How do we mend the bridges of those who have experienced 'church hurt'? How do we invite to the table those who don't feel comfortable inside the walls of a church? It all seems like an overwhelming problem that we feel under-equipped for – like it's a mountain that needs to move, and only five people have shovels.

But...I know and YOU know the Mountain Mover, and I have seen mountains move. You probably have, too, if you think about your faith journey. I believe this mountain can move, and that journey starts with and is empowered by prayer.

I invite you to join me in praying for

- 1) The laborers who hear and obey God's voice, and that churches are planted in every community and neighborhood.
- 2) Greater discipleship and holiness among our members that our hearts and purposes might align with God's, wherever that leads.
- 3) The Holy Spirit may touch the hearts of people powerfully for the Gospel, in and outside the church.
- 4) God's provision for emotional, spiritual, financial, and physical strength to the church planners in our conference and Global Methodist Church,
- 5) God empower all churches that would commit to fulfilling the Great Commission.

I would appreciate it if you could share this prayer request with your church prayer group or bible study group. May God bless you and answer your prayers.

"Again, I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 18:19.

—Pastor Jen Zoller

Please contact: prayer@uppermidwestgmc.org if you want to get involved!



Women's Ministry in the Upper Midwest

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

*You are invited to the Women's Ministry Breakout, "Centered and Equipped," at Annual Conference 2025 in Sioux City. Join us and bring your friends as Pastor Melody Williams helps us kick off a meaningful and spirit-led time together. **Rejoice!** EARLY BIRD BREAKOUT: FRIDAY, JUNE 13 AT 1:30PM!*

Our time together will be a time where we remember our roots while we look to the future as a people of God called Global Methodists. As a part of the conversation, we will delve into tools we can bring back to our local communities to help us grow in depth and reach. Breakout participants will have some time to experience a form of a Discovery Bible small group, a small group format that is meaningful to people with all levels of Biblical understanding. You will leave with all you need to start and equip small groups in your community.

We will also learn about Sew Powerful, a ministry that empowers girls in South Africa by providing beautiful, practical purses for their hygiene supplies. We'll share patterns and display sample purses. Our breakout speaker, Melody Williams, grew up in a non-Christian home and finally recognized the God who pursued her when she was a young mother. She has her MDiv and DMin from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. She is a graduate of the Institution of Congregational Development and has spent years studying and mediating what it means for the church to live into its purpose. Melody's deep desire is for all to find their true identity in Christ. She's convinced that as believers abide in their relationship with God and one another, God will bless the church.

Rejoice! is looking forward to this time to gather together at Annual Conference. We will be identifying ways we can follow the Holy Spirit's guidance as we seek to participate in what God is doing in our communities and around the world.

May we help promote YOUR events? Just send us your details, and we will publish them in the Upper Midwest Newsletter under Women's Ministries Rejoice!

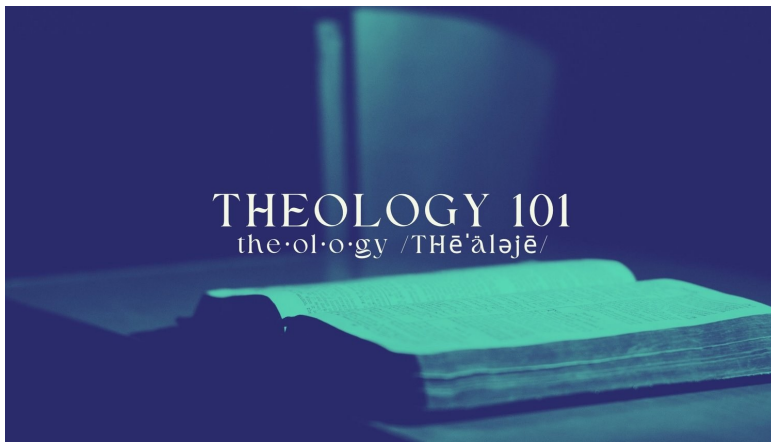
Our goals are to connect and resource Women's Ministries across the Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church. We are eager to engage with your questions, dreams, hopes, and success stories of women's ministries in your setting. We'd love to hear from you!

Rejoice!

Becky Heeren,

Upper Midwest Conference Coordinator
for Global Methodist Women's Ministries
womensministry@uppermidwestgmc.org

"We rejoice in whom God has made us!"



What is a Methodist?

Rev. Dr. Travis Stevick
Grace Methodist Church, Marcus, IA

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

Email Questions or Topics to:
pastortravis@marcusgrace.com

One of the things that I have heard in these early days of the Global Methodist Church is that we need to reclaim aspects of Methodism that we have forgotten. Amen to that! However, I wonder if we are all on the same page about what it means to be a Methodist in the first place. Judging from nineteen years as a pastor, I don't know that the average person in the pew knows very much about Methodism and what makes it a powerful voice for the gospel in our world.

I am not trying to give anyone a hard time, to be clear. To whatever degree that is true, it is a sign of a failure in leadership over decades. If pastors haven't been explaining the value of Methodism, how can we expect most folks to know it? Further, if our pastors haven't been taught it in seminary (and we all know that some seminaries *didn't* teach it) or learned it in other ways, how can we expect them to teach it? It is a difficult set of circumstances, but one that deserves our attention.

There are many things we could say about Methodism, but John Wesley wrote a short pamphlet called "The Character of a Methodist" that is worth considering. Surely John Wesley's understanding of Methodism should count for something.

He starts out by being clear about what are *not* distinguishing marks of Methodism. He says that being a Methodist isn't in "any particular set of notions." It also isn't in any "peculiar mode of speaking." He says you cannot tell a Methodist because they do certain special things. He also says that Methodists aren't so obsessed with just one aspect of the faith that they never want to talk about anything else.

He then goes on to define what he means by Methodist. "A Methodist is one, who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Spirit given unto him; one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength." Because of all of this, a Methodist is confident in God and is thankful for all that God has given. A Methodist prays, loves his neighbor, is pure in heart, and seeks to do the will of God. On top of that, a Methodist doesn't just *say* they do those things, they really *do* them and the world can see it because they are bearing fruit.

My favorite part of the pamphlet is after he lists all of these things and he imagines a response. Someone might say, "Why these are only the common, fundamental principles of Christianity." Wesley replies, essentially, "That is the point. All we really want to be are Christians."

If you are a little worried about all this talk about Wesley and Methodism, if you are nervous that this means that you need to accept some strange way of living so that we can reclaim our heritage, be at peace. To be a Methodist really means, at its core, to be a Christian and to seek to be one more and more. Now, it is true that the Wesleyan heritage emphasizes somethings that other Christians don't, but that is because Wesley wasn't satisfied with people just *knowing* the truth *about* God. He insisted that we must *live* the truth of God.

The world is often suspicious of denominations and large institutions. People may fear that our big goal is now to make a bunch of Methodists. The goal is not to make people loyal to Wesley, it is to make them loyal to Christ. If you can get on board with that, we can be of one mind. Everything we do has to be in service to that or else it is not true to Wesley's vision for Methodism. Let us follow Jesus together and make disciples of all nations!

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATE NOMINATION

2026 General Conference Delegate Nominees

by Rev. Ross Reinhiller, Upper Mid-
west Conference Vice Superintendent

The Nominations have been submitted, and the list of possible delegates for election to General Conference 2026 is below. We will be voting on the delegates on Saturday, June 14th at our Annual Conference. We will also be taking Nominations from the floor at Annual Conference.

As a conference, the Upper Midwest needs 5 laity delegates, 5 clergy delegates, 1 lay alternate delegate, and 1 clergy alternate delegate. These delegates are required to attend the General Conference and participate in pre-conference meetings.

We are also encouraged to have reserve delegates who are willing to attend the conference, but are not required unless called upon to take the place of a delegate.

You can learn a little more about the Delegate Nominees by reading their bios below.

Laity Nominees Biographies

Jamal Boma: I was a team leader at production worker for 4 years. And active members of Mabaan Global Methodist church in Des Moines Iowa. The journey was easy being a Christ followed. There are ups and downs but I am determined to serve my God. That's what I chose. **Daniel Evans:** I am the leader of A Few Good Men and Women International. We are a nondenominational, spirit filled ministry of men and women who are obedient to God. Our focus is expanding God's Kingdom by preaching and teaching the gospel to the nations. Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:19-20. We also support orphans, poor, homeless, and those in prison. Crusades, altar calls, and individual prayers result in many surrendering their minds, hearts, and souls to Jesus. I give all credit to Jesus, The Holy Spirit and our Father. There are many miracles, many are healed, demons cast out, and multiplication of food and Bibles for the new believers. The Holy Spirit have led us in selecting nations, running conferences and crusades in Liberia, Kenya twice, Uganda, India, Pakistan, USA, and Rwanda. I have been a Methodist for many years. I love the Global Methodists. I was saved and baptized in The Holy Spirit at my Walk to Emmaus. God call me to be a pastor, while I was taking classes in the UMC Lay Ministering Classes at Simpson College. The Holy Spirit has encouraged me to go to Living Faith GMC and teach on Evangelism. So my wife and I joined Living Faith GMC, and I am currently leading a Bible class on evangelism. Then, we will lead others to Christ and start a new Global Methodist Church in the Omaha area.

Becky Heeren: My name is Becky Heeren. I'm a layperson from Toledo, Iowa. I'm a retired mental health therapist and have 4 grown children and 3 grandchildren. It would be an honor to serve at the 2026 General Conference. I have been a delegate to a couple of General Conferences in the past, as well as several Global Legislative Assemblies with the Wesleyan Covenant Association. I am familiar with the reading, studying, and many hours of prayer delegates need in order to be prepared to serve well. I enjoyed serving as a reserve delegate to the convening General Conference in 2024. Our Upper Midwest Conference is blessed with many talented and faithful members. Currently, I am the Conference Coordinator for Women's Ministries in the Upper Midwest (REJOICE!) We're working on connecting and resourcing women around the Conference to engage in ministries uniquely suited to women. I believe the Global Methodist Church has an opportunity to empower women (and all laity) in meaningful ways and would love to be a voice at the table where these ministries are crafted and perfected. These are exciting, yet challenging times. With God's help, the GMC is building on a firm foundation.

Matthew Kearns: I have been privileged to serve Marion Methodist as a committee member, lead Bible studies, and am currently elected as one of our Lay Delegates to the Annual Conference. I have served other churches as a supply pastor while they were seeking a replacement as well. I am also working with the conference's Men's Ministry and the committee overseeing the Certified Lay Ministry program, while looking to be commissioned as a CLM in June 2025. After taking many steps on the road to the GMC here, representing my church and conference at the GMC General Conference feels like a natural progression. I am anxious and encouraged to meet with the world-wide delegates, in effort to continue the work started in the inaugural General Conference. Only the Lord knows where this movement will go and I am excited to continue down this path.

Dave Mendyk: I am currently serving three small Churches as a Certified Lay Minister and have taken the online courses for CLM offered by the Upper Midwest Annual Conference. I attended the convening General Conference in Costa Rica and was blessed to be a part of those decisions made there. I have been a Lay Speaker since 1991 in the former denomination. I believe in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and hope to encourage others to ask for these Gifts. I am now seventy years old, and married to a retired Clergy Woman of the GMC for twenty-one years. I care about the future of our Global Methodist Church; that it continue as a movement, rather than fall into the rut of an institution.

Clarence Mittleider: This something that I feel called to do as I was an Alternate to the conference in Costa Rica and learned a lot about what to do and what was involved in being a delegate. The experience there was life changing for me as when I came back, I signed up to go take seminary classes. I also felt the Lord calling me to do more in December when I retired from my job. In January I took a three-point charge and am serving the churches and I was also asked to be on the Leadership and Development Committee of the Upper Midwest Conference where I am the Vice Chair. I think I would be very good as a delegate as I have a passion for serving God and believe strongly in the mission and the stance of the Global Methodist Church and am willing to share that with people and stand for its belief. Also, with experience of being at the convening conference I am able to understand what is going on and have connections that are valuable. I am looking forward to serving the conference in whatever way I can and no matter what I will be praying for all the delegates.

Norma Morrison: One year ago God gave me a clear purpose for this season of my life: the Global Methodist Church and South Africa. Soon after, I was elected head of the Upper Midwest delegation to General Conference in Costa Rica where I also served on the Petitions and Agenda Committees. I was elected by the General Conference to serve on the Commission on General Conference for 2026 where I now also serve on the Legislation sub-committee and as Chair of the Agenda sub-committee. In November I was privileged to represent the laity and the Upper Midwest Conference on a relationship-building trip to South Africa, our partner Conference. I spoke in the Laity Session and made many connections while there. This winter I was a short-term missionary with Blessman International in South Africa, helping with the initial work of setting up a child sponsorship program. In my local church I serve on the Leadership Board and am SPRC Chair, as well as being active in Sunday School, Bible study, prayer team, and teaching VBS. In the Upper Midwest

Conference I am on the Women's Ministry Team and the newly-formed Missions Team. I am passionate about these callings God has given me. I have the background (5time General Conference delegate), time, and stamina for the many hours required to make educated decisions to ensure the GMC is truly a Wesleyan global Church. I would be honored to represent you as a delegate! To God be the glory!

Andrea Schadel: My name is Andrea Schadel and I am on the Deacon track with the Global Methodist Church in Valentine Nebraska. I am passionate about serving on the judicial committee for the formation of the Global Methodist Church. I served as a delegate in Costa Rica in 2024 and would like to finish the work that we started there. I would be honored to represent the Upper Midwest Conference in 2026.

Darcy Rubenking: My name is Darcy Rubenking. I am a pastor's wife; a retired physician assistant and I am active in our Clarinda Methodist Church. I teach Pre K - 2nd grade Sunday School and I am active in our women's group. I have been a delegate at the UMC General Conference of 2012, 2016 and 2019. I was an alternate laity delegate for the first Global Methodist Church General Conference in Costa Rica. I understand the commitment of time and effort that it takes to be a delegate at a General Conference. I have been helping to launch the women's ministry of the Global Methodist Church, and I feel it is important that the conference have representation of women. I loved seeing the birth of the Global Methodist Church at the first general conference and the trust and love that bloomed during the conference. It is important that the Global Methodist Church continues to be Wesleyan, Biblical and have strong Christian values. We need to concentrate on being the church Jesus wants us to be and not mire in politics. It is important that the petitions that are passed further the kingdom of God and grow the Global Methodist Church. We are called to be salt and light to a sinful world and our Global Methodist Doctrine needs to reflect this.

Dayle Wiley: My name is Dayle Wiley, and I am a life-long Methodist. I was part of the team that led my current church, Trinity Methodist in Cavalier, North Dakota, through the disaffiliation process and in joining the Global Methodist Church. I strongly believe that the Word of God should always be the guide for churches and individual Christians. Following and faithfully sharing the Word of God allows us as Christians to stay relevant in the world, not by confirming to the world, but by working to transform it. I have been the delegate to Annual Conference for the last nine years at my church and have witnessed first-hand many of the changes that ultimately led my church to take the path of disaffiliation and join the Global Methodist Church. During this time, I have seen the commitment and focus on the Word of God that the African churches have faithfully demonstrated, and I feel deeply called to fellowship and worship with our African brothers and sisters. At my current church, I have served in the following roles: Certified Lay Servant, Trustee, Chair of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Ad Board Member, Adult Sunday School Teacher, and Lay Leader.

Dee Willoughby: I am the Lay Leader for First Methodist Church. I led our church (without a pastor) through the disaffiliation process from UMC and then to join the GMC. All four of our children attended K-12 at Unity Christian School. I served as board chair, foundation chair, etc. I own and operate a domestic manufacturing business that has been in business since 1906, selling customers such as Lowes, Home Depot, Walmart, Ace, True Value, Menards, and Do it Best. I went to Costa Rica as a visitor for the convening GMC Conference and enjoyed the 9 days of watching a historic event. I have just recently taken on the position of Chairman for the Finance and Administration Committee for the GMC Upper Midwest Conference. I am also available to travel to South Africa on the dates listed for the conference.

Clergy Nominees Biographies

Luann Benge: My name is Luann Benge. I am a life-long Christian and follower of Jesus Christ. I have been married to my husband, Carl, for 24 years and we have two children, Sarah and Lydia. As an elder in the Global Methodist Church, I currently serve as the pastor at the Ida Grove Methodist Church in Ida Grove, Iowa. In my role as pastor, I am passionate about preaching, teaching, and discipleship. I thoroughly enjoy walking alongside the good folks at Ida Grove Methodist Church as we live out our calling to make disciples who will become disciple makers for Jesus Christ. I am also your current Vice Chairperson of the Board of Ministry, as well as your Conference Relations Chairperson. Additionally, I serve as the Presiding Elder for the Northwest Iowa District of the Upper Midwest Conference. I am honored to serve our conference in these roles because I get to walk alongside our brothers and sisters in this conference as well as in the Global Methodist Church as a whole. I would love to represent our conference as a delegate for the 2026 Global Methodist Church General Conference. As a leader in our conference, I am so excited about what I see God doing through and in the Global Methodist Church. I want to do all I can to help us continue to connect with our Wesleyan heritage as we move forward into who God has called us to be as Global Methodists.

Rey Colon: Born and raised in Puerto Rico but adopted via marriage by South Dakota. I have been a pastor for a number of years and have always felt called to be a leader. I believe that God has given me vision and communication skills to serve as a shepherd. I had the honor of serving as clergy delegate to the Convening Conference in 2024 in Costa Rica. This experience gave me hope for the denomination's future. It also provided me with a better understanding of what the GMC stands for and what it hopes to accomplish.

Darla Hadrick: My father was a pastor in the Methodist Church and so I was raised learning to love Jesus and everything about Jesus. Throughout my young life and into adult hood, my father taught me that Scripture is God's Divine Word and no man had any authority to change God's Word. I really did not fully understand what he meant until I grew older and saw how others would either remove, change, falsely interpret, or ignore the Word of God as written in Holy Scripture. Those acts broke my heart as I finally understood what my father was teaching me all along. We will only have a novel and not a solid foundation for which to stand upon for our salvation. We must follow the Word of God as written because that is what Jesus Christ did when he walked the earth. If selected as a delegate, it would be an honor to use Scripture to form our doctrines and disciplines so that the next generations will not have to experience shifting sand but rather a solid rock foundation. Currently I serve as a Presiding Elder in the SD West district. My leadership includes (former life); training new recruits in law enforcement, leading the reserve deputy unit and leading the shift of deputies. In ministry, I have started and lead Stephen Ministries, and various committees. As a pastor, I have had to make hard decisions by not allowing behavior to continue which met with resistance and people leaving the church. Afterwards the church grew and became healthier. More importantly, I have learned to lead from the wisdom and guidance of the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to set aside my desires.

Corey Jenkins: I was a delegate to the Convening General Conference in Costa Rica, and I served on the Constitution Committee. It's always been my hope and prayer that I can be a part of building the Kingdom of God in the world. By having a voice at the General Conference level, I would, in part, be stepping into the calling God has on my life. Also, by the time General Conference comes around again, it will be in 2032, and, God willing, I will be approaching Senior Status and it would be time for younger voices to lead us. But for now, I would hope for one more opportunity to serve God in the world, and in our denomination.

Jeff Kelley: Having served the church as an elder for 40 years and being a delegate to the past general conference in Costa Rica, I believe I bring a sense of wisdom and understanding of the church and its mission for the future. I would be humbled and honored to serve as a delegate once again.

Zach Kingery: I am 37 years old with a wife and three children, an ordained elder in the GMC, and currently reside in Clarinda Iowa. I grew up in a Wesleyan church in rural Kansas. Since 2009 I have served in youth ministry, pastoral ministry, and as a laity in adult discipleship in churches with numerically large and small congregations across the Midwest. I have been clergy in the UMC to GMC since 2016. I am committed to orthodox Wesleyan theology and desire to see lives transformed for the Gospel and nations reformed through the spread of Scriptural holiness. As a clergy person called to rural and normative sized churches it is my hope to see the Methodist movement once again planting or revitalizing churches in all areas, empowering our congregations to advance the Kingdom of God. I lead the Upper Midwest Conference Multiplication team and am a Network Director with Dirt Roads Network which is a parachurch organization within the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition that works with clergy, congregations, and church plants. In both roles I place a vital importance on active discipleship and the development of spiritual leaders to see an Ephesians 4 APEST expression at the local level in order to see the Church multiply. As a delegate I will represent our rural congregations, be an advocate for Clergy who serve in normative sized churches across the US and the globe, and also place an important emphasis on active discipleship and multiplication practices that lead to healthy, fruitful congregations.

Jonathan Lee: Serving as a 2024 Global Methodist Church's General Conference delegate has been a profound honor. I feel called to continue offering my service out of a deep love for the Church and a strong commitment to its mission, unity, and global witness. As someone deeply engaged in multi-ethnic ministry, I am passionate about helping the Church reflect the beauty of Christ's international and diverse body. My leadership roles within the GMC reflect this commitment. I currently serve as Co-leader of the Multi-Ethnic Fellowship, President of the Korean Orthodox Pastors' Association (KOPA), Presiding Elder in the Minnesota area, and Chair of the Ethnic Ministry Team at the Upper Midwest Annual Conference. These roles have allowed me to foster cross-cultural relationships and advocate for inclusive leadership development. I have also served as a member of the Commission on Higher Education, the Committee on Global Education—which works to reduce theological and educational gaps across regions—and the Nomination Committee for the 2024 General Conference, where I helped discern Spirit-led leaders from diverse backgrounds. With a global perspective and a heart for unity in diversity, I believe the GMC is uniquely positioned to model the Church as a worldwide family. I am committed to helping shape a future where theological faithfulness, cultural inclusion, and mutual learning across nations and ethnicities are foundational to our identity. I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the Church in this season of growth and transformation.

Michael McInnis: I served in ministry for 40 years across four denominations: the Free Methodist Church, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Covenant Church and now the Global Methodist Church. I graduated from Asbury Seminary and served churches in Nebraska, Kansas and Minnesota. Currently I'm part of the Jethro Project, mentor churches and pastors in the GMC in northwest Iowa. I have been involved in three church plants and two church building projects. The churches I served experienced numerical and financial growth. I served for eight years on the Nebraska Conference Board of Ordained ministry in the UMC and served with Walk to Emmaus ministry, including on the Nebraska board as state Spiritual Director for three years. Personally, I have been married to Kathy Jo for over 42 years, and attribute much of my ministry fruitfulness to her partnership, gifts and support. We have four adult children (two single sons and two married daughters) and nine grandchildren - so far! I feel called to offer myself to serve on the Midwest Conference delegation to General Conference at this time primarily because I bring those years of experience and fruitful ministry in the local church (the primary place of ministry and witness in the church). I have a deep interest in the future of the GMC, and continue to study our Wesleyan history and theology to apply it to my service in the church today. Being retired, I have the time to invest in preparing for and attending this General Conference.

Juwle Nagbe: My name is Juwle Nagbe, ordained in June of 2029 at the Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Disaffiliated in 2023 to join the Global Methodist Church. I was approved as an Elder in the Global Methodist Church on the 11th. day of January in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-four by the Bishop Mark J. Webb. Cur-

rently, I am pastoring the Napoleon-Streeter Global Methodist Churches in North Dakota. I am originally from the West African Country of Liberia. I became a citizen of the United State of July 11, 2023. I am married to Martha W. Nagbe and we have had four children one of whom passed away in April of 2022. I look forward to attending the next General Conference of the Global Methodist Church. God bless!

James Parks: My name is James Parks, and I've had the privilege of serving as a pastor for over 20 years. In August, I began my third pastoral appointment. I am now co-lead pastor— alongside my wife, Helen—at Marion Methodist Church in Marion, Iowa. This congregation holds deep personal significance for me as the church where I was baptized, confirmed, and called into ministry. In addition to local church leadership, I also serve as the Conference Superintendent of the Upper Midwest Conference. In this role, I work closely with our Vice-Superintendent and Bishop to help shape a conference culture that serves and resources local churches. Balancing both local and conference ministry has grounded me in the daily realities of congregational life while keeping my vision focused on where God is leading our wider movement. I was honored to be part of our delegation to the Convening General Conference. Participating in the formation of our Book of Doctrine and Discipline was a powerful and hopeful experience. Since then, I've been committed to aligning our conference with these guiding principles while championing the freedom of every church to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Outside of ministry, I'm a big fan of Caitlin Clark, Patrick Lencioni's Working Genius framework, and Timothy Keller's Gospel in Life podcast.

Jacob Schadel: My name is Jake Schadel and I am a Presiding Elder in North Central Nebraska. I served on the WCA and was on the Advisory team as we set up our conference here in the Upper Midwest. I have a passion for the Global Methodist Church and its expression in our conference. I would love the opportunity to represent the Spirit led people of the Upper Midwest at General Conference in 2026.

Sedar Shako: Rev. Sedar Shako, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, serves in the Northwest district of Iowa. I am passionate about serving as a delegate for the General Conference in Africa, where I can explain to others the benefits of being involved in the Global Methodist Church. I also speak some of their languages, which will help me answer their questions, as many African clergy members do not speak English. As a native of Africa, I know how to respond to various inquiries, including in French, Swahili, Kikongo, Otetela, Tshiluba, and Lingala. In the Bible, when Jacob arrived in Egypt, Joseph played a crucial role as a mediator between Pharaoh and his family because he knew the language. He instructed his brothers on what to say to Pharaoh when he asked them and prepared Pharaoh with good words to communicate with them (Genesis 46:31, 34). Sometimes, those in Africa do not fully understand the GMC mission and vision. Why did we leave the UMC? After leaving the UMC, what is the GMC's goal? I can explain this to many of them in their languages and slang. I want to be elected to this General Conference as a delegate because I can communicate effectively, and those who have served with me in the UMC will be encouraged to serve and spread the word of God. Last week, we welcomed six new members to our church in Lake Park, and in Harris, we have three members who will attend church on Easter Sunday.

Travis Stevick: After growing up outside of the church, I became a Christian in high school and have been in pastoral ministry since I was twenty-one years old. I was ordained in the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2013 and joined the Global Methodist Church in 2023 when my church disaffiliated. I have felt called to make myself available to serve as a delegate to the Convening General Conference in part to be part of the early theological development of this new denomination. I was also a Reserve Clergy Delegate for the Convening General Conference. I have a PhD in Theology from the University of St. Andrews and, in addition to serving as the pastor of a local church in Iowa, I have been teaching courses on Christian Doctrine and Wesleyan Theology through the CTM program at United Theological Seminary (an approved alternative educational pathway for ordination in the GMC). I am passionately committed to a robustly Wesleyan understanding of Christian faith and do my best to articulate such a vision in every as-

pect of ministry “in the trenches.” I believe that I could be an asset in helping to ensure the theological faithfulness of the Global Methodist Church at an institutional level long into the future. I am married and have two boys and am looking forward to serving in the GMC for years to come!

Hui Angie Vertz: I am applying to be a delegate for the General Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2026, motivated by a profound sense of calling and service. After experiencing the transformative power of the Spirit at last year's General Conference in Costa Rica, my heart is dedicated to serving in this capacity. My involvement as full-time prayer team last year deepened my commitment to our conference and affirmed my desire to follow Christ closely. Currently, I serve as the full-time lead pastor at Hazen Methodist Church since July 15th 2024, and am preparing for ordination as an elder on June 15th 2025. This upcoming milestone marks two years before the General Conference, allowing me to bring fresh insights and fervent spirit to the table. I am eager to contribute to our Global Methodist Church by leveraging my gifts in prayer and music. I aim to support spiritual transformation and assist worship teams in organizing impactful services, embodying the humble servant-hood that Jesus modeled for us. While I understand my full connection time may not meet the required two years, I am humbly applying to be a delegate to support our conference and denomination. I aspire to be a messenger of the Gospel, demonstrating faith and service to the world as we strive to fulfill our mission together. Thank you for considering my application as I seek to serve with passion and dedication.



Bishop Mark J. Webb 2025 Annual Conference Sunday Message

Video Sermon Resource for June 15, 2025

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

You can access this resource on the Upper Midwest Conference YouTube Channel by clicking the button below. ***Please Note:** It is recommended that you please read the Scripture 2 Timothy 1:1-14 before viewing the Message



2025 Annual Conference

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

See the conference web page:
<https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/annual-conference-home>

Livestream

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

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

Ordination Service

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

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

Daily Schedule

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

Registration

Registration is open for the 2025 Annual Conference in Sioux City! The \$120 conference fee includes Saturday lunch and light snacks. Click the link below for more details and to secure your spot. Please note: If you register after June 4th you will need to check in at the Information Table at Annual Conference.

Young Adult/Youth Discount

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

Hotel Accommodations

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

DoubleTree by Hilton Sioux City

(a few blocks from the Convention Center)

701 Gordon Dr., Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: (712) 717-6670

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

[DoubleTree Room Block Link](https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/suxgodt-gmc-12c92445-b648-48f2-b3a2-e85ca4a33044/)

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

Rate for king: \$139 per night

Rate for double queen: \$139 per night

Avid Hotel

(3 blocks from convention center)

101 Court St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 1 877-666-3243

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

Rate for king: \$130 per night

Rate for double queen: \$130 per night

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

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

South Sioux City Marriott Riverfront

(6 minutes from Convention Center)

101 Court St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 1 877-666-3243

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

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

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

Rate for king: \$199 per night

Rate for double queen: \$199 per night

Other Helpful Annual Conference Links

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

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

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

Planning Annual Conference Q & A

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

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



Certified Lay Ministry

2025 Summer/Fall Session

Another 6 months have passed, and the Upper Midwest Conference will be hosting the next session of training for the Certified Lay Ministry (CLM) program. This program is for professing members (for at least 2 years) who are in lay leadership with their church, leading a church as a lay person, or are called to further their calling to of the coursework and other requirements, you would be commissioned as a CLM at the 2026 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 the CLM Committee here:

certifiedlayministry@uppermidwestgmc.org



New Appointments, Assignments and Moving to Senior Status as of July 1, 2025

Scott Squires

Wesley Church in Sioux City, IA

Tracy Winters

Redeeming Grace Church in Sioux Falls, SD

Todd Schlitter

Senior Status

Rey Colon

Calvary Church in Fargo, ND

Tracy Winters

Redeeming Grace Church in Sioux Falls, SD

Carl Benge

Crescent Park and Trimble Churches
in Sioux City, IA



MISSION TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA



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 Blessmann 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



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.

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



Because We Believe in the Power of Prayer:

A Call from the Assembly of Bishops

Dear Global Methodist Community,

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

We write today with hearts full—both in celebration and in sorrow. We celebrate the incredible harvest happening across the world as Methodist-minded people find a home in the Global Methodist Church. **It is a joy to share that more than 5,000 member churches have joined the GMC**, with new inquiries and affiliations arriving daily from every corner of the globe. At the same time, we carry a deep burden. Many in our connection are rejoicing, but others are suffering. As the Apostle Paul reminds us, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). And so, we are calling our global connection to pray.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



Sign up for our Upper Midwest Newsletter
at <https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/newsletter>

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



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more—delivered straight to your inbox. Sign up now!

Important Dates

June 13-15, 2025
[Annual Conference](#)

September 22 -26, 2025
[Bishop Webb visits the Upper Midwest](#)

November 6-18, 2025
[Mission Trip to South Africa](#)

September 17-19, 2025
[New Room Conference](#)

September 25 -27, 2025
[Nebraska GMC Gathering](#)

Upper Midwest Prayer Opportunities



**The Upper Midwest Conference
Daily Noon Prayer**

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

Join Us and Let's Find Out!



**Monthly on the 3rd Tuesday
at 7:00 PM (CST)**

Scheduled Zoom Prayer Meetings

Here is the link for you to request to join:
[https://mailchi.mp/uppermidwestgmc/june-2025-early
-edition-newsletter-12824022?e=cf0d94bb0f](https://mailchi.mp/uppermidwestgmc/june-2025-early-edition-newsletter-12824022?e=cf0d94bb0f)



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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