

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

January 2025 Early Edition Newsletter

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What's In This Issue:

- What Will This New Year Bring?
- Prayer Team Update: Forgiveness
- Let's Celebrate: 2024 End of Year Statistics
- Serving In Our Conference
- Save the Date for 2025 Annual Conference!
- New Appointments and Assignments
- Bold Witness
- Beyond These Walls



What Will This New Year Bring?

by Rev. James Parks, Upper Midwest Conference Superintendent

As we step into a new year, I find myself asking this question—not just for my own life, but also for the local church I serve and for our conference. What does God have in store for us in 2025?

With that question in mind, I've been reflecting on goals for the year ahead and the systems and strategies that can help us move forward where God is leading.

For the Upper Midwest Conference, the Leadership Council and Cabinet have prayerfully approved several priorities to focus on together in 2025. I'm excited to share these priorities with you and invite your thoughts and input!

**Which of these priorities sparks passion in you?
Where do you feel called to help us grow?**

We believe it will take all of us working together to grow into the vision God has for us. So let's start the conversation! I'd love to hear your thoughts—reach out and share your ideas as we begin this journey into the new year.

1. Wesleyan Witness

- a. Clearly define what a Global Methodist is and advocate that understanding across the conference.
- b. Deliberately educate every pastor and lay person in the Wesleyan way.
 - i. Know our Wesleyan orthodoxy (what we believe and why)
 - ii. Direct Wesleyan Orthopraxy (what we do because of what we believe)
- c. Refresh on connectionalism. Help us know each other and trust each other.

2. Encourage every church.

- a. Proclaim a spirit of vitality in mission and witness
- b. Resource our churches with effective pastors
- c. Assist in the growing and training of a strong laity
- d. Connect congregations in mission and ministry
- e. Support children and youth in growth and connection
- f. Call new pastors.

3. Every church plants.

- a. Claim the salvation of souls and making new disciples as a primary ministry.
- b. Make "Dirt Roads" network a primary ministry in our conference.
- c. Give clarity regarding how growing a new congregation strengthens existing congregations.

4. Grow global.

- a. Define for every church what our partnership with South Africa means
- b. Define the width of the Christian family and need to serve and be served by Christians beyond our culture.

I hope you too have goals and priorities in this new year for what God is doing in your life. We all have new opportunities in front of us to grow as disciples of Jesus who are making disciples and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

In Christ,
James Parks

Email and Share Your Ideas With Us:

jamesp@uppermidwestgmc.org



prayer team update

What Will Be God's Wish for His Children and Church for the Year 2025?

This article is one of the most challenging ones I have written, as it took far longer than usual and had many interruptions. Based on my experiences, it happens when the enemy does not want us to know the truth; in this case, God wants us to forgive and be free.

I have prayed to God to reveal His wish for us for 2025 for the January article. I sensed God saying, "Tell my people to forgive those who hurt you and be freed from the pain and bitterness." Experiencing the disaffiliation of GMC from UMC, the election we recently had, and many wars throughout the world, let alone conflicts in our churches and personal lives with unforgiveness and pain, I felt God hit the spot; Ouch!

Jesus says if we don't forgive others, God will not accept our worship and offering (Mt 5:24), and if we do not forgive others their sins, neither will our Father forgive our sins (Mt 6:14-15). The Bible also tells us that forgiveness matters to God because unforgiveness hinders our relationship with Him and blocks blessings and the work of the Holy Spirit for us and the church.

Malcolm Fenwick served in Korea as a missionary for 46 years. He was invited to preach for a 3-day revival service. On the first night, he did not feel God's presence during the worship service and felt that the church had the issue of unforgiveness, which blocks the flow of the Holy Spirit. As Malcolm shared it with the Pastor, the Pastor confessed his hostility toward one church member. The Pastor visited the church member immediately, asked for forgiveness, and they reconciled. They shared their story with the congregation during the next day's service. Then, people started crying and repenting their unforgiveness. Indeed, the Holy Spirit powerfully moved the church in a way they had never experienced, and it became a spark for the Great Pyongyang Revival in Korea. Don't we need a revival?

Forgiving is loving God; by forgiving, we obey God's command. How can we dare go before God and ask Him to forgive us if we refuse to forgive others? Without forgiveness, our worship is formal, dry, and lifeless, merely going through the motions. Please remember that unforgiveness hinders our prayer life and relationship with God and blocks our spiritual growth and the flow of God's blessings.

How are you doing? How is it with your church, GMC & UMC, our nation, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East? Is it God's calling to pray for ourselves, the church, and the country? Please join the "Conference Noon Prayer" (45 seconds), for forgiveness, healing, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit over the next 6 months.

Noon Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we love You because You first loved us (1 Jn 4:19) and forgave us (Col 3:13). Please help us to love all and forgive those who hurt us individually and collectively. Jesus, transform our broken hearts into joy and beauty as Your temple. We pray for forgiveness, healing, and unity to flow from heaven through me and my church and reach the nations as far as the east is from the west for Your Kingdom and glory. Help us demonstrate Your love today. Come, Holy Spirit, come! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

*Conference Prayer & Intercession Team wish YOU for the New Year;
You will bless the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on your lips (Ps 34:1).*

Come and pray together on the 3rd Tuesday prayer at 7:00 PM (CT): The Conference Prayer & Intercession Team invites you to join the monthly 3rd Tuesday Conference prayer at 7:00 PM (CT).

Email us at prayer@uppermidwestgmc.org and let us know that you would like to join us, and I will send you the Zoom link.

When we pray, God works!

Blessings and Shalom, Christina Sung

UPPER MIDWEST ANNOUNCEMENTS



Let's Celebrate!

As we celebrate the New Year, let us also celebrate all that God has done this past year in the Upper Midwest Conference.

We ask that someone from each church take a few minutes to gather the information for the questions listed below and then submit it via the 2024 End of Year Statistical Form using the link below.

Please submit your church's information by Saturday, February 15, 2025

Here are the Questions on the Form:

1. Total number of Professing Members.
2. Total number of Baptisms.

3. Total Professions of Faith.
4. Average In-person Worship Attendance of Your Primary Services (Only count those in the service).
5. Average Households Who Worship Online (Number of views over a minute the week the service was live).
6. Number of Adults Involved In Classes, Bands, Accountability Groups and Small Groups (Not total attendance, but individuals involved).
7. Average Attendance of Youth in Discipleship Ministries (Ages 12-18).
8. Average Attendance of Kids in Discipleship Ministries (Ages 0-11).
9. Number of People Serving in Missions (Mission trips, Compassion and Evangelism Ministries with a purpose of serving people not connected to the local church etc.).
10. Total Operating Income.

2024 End of Year Statistical Form: <https://forms.gle/gM8nbwYDiCHfas7a7>

This report is a time to celebrate and document all the ways God has shown up, shown out,



The Upper Midwest Conference Needs You!

Each of us is blessed with different spiritual gifts, and we are asked to use those gifts in ways that glorify God. As we prepare for the 2025 Annual Conference, we have begun looking for people who are passionate about a particular area of ministry and desire to help the Upper Midwest Conference continue to grow and thrive.

We are blessed with more than 190 churches in the conference, making it hard to know the gifts and talents of each member. Therefore, we ask you to prayerfully consider a self-nomination to serve in the conference leadership. Every committee has a 3-year term, and voted on in June at the Annual Conference.

Committees, Teams and Ministries for self-nomination include:

Missions

Multiplication

Leadership-Development

Disaster Response

Prayer

Finance

Conference Communications

Please prayerfully consider this opportunity to serve. If you feel lead to serve in one of these areas or nominate someone please fill out the self-nomination form by following the link below.

Self-Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/2YanuFHCWHF5fiBMA>

If you have any questions please send us an email at contact@uppermidwestgmc.org

2025 Annual Conference Save the Date



June 13 - 15, 2025

at the Convention Center in Sioux City, IA

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.

The Courtyard Marriott Downtown/Convention Center

(attached to the Convention Center)

901 4th St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 712-202-2700

Rate for king: \$114 per night
Rate for double queen: \$124 per night

Marriott Room Block Link:

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1722275294872&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

Avid Hotel

(3 blocks from convention center)

101 Court St, Sioux City, Iowa

Phone number: 1 877-666-3243

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?
fromRedi-
rect=true&qSrt=sBR&qIta=99801505&icdv=99801505&qSIH=suxav&qCiD=12&qCiMy=052025&qCoD=15&qCoMy=05
2025&qGrpCd=pmg&qAAR=6CBARC&qRtP=6CBARC&setPMCookies=true&qSHBrC=VA&qDest=101%20Court%
20Street,%20Sioux%20City,%20IA,%20US&srb_u=1&qChAge=&qRmFltr=](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=&qRmFltr=)

For more information about a hotel or making a reservation please contact
the hotel directly using the phone number provided above.

NEW LAY MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Lisa Koester

11/1 – Chapel Church in Green Mountain, IA

View the updated list of appointments, churches, and districts in the Upper Midwest conference in our Index of Churches.

Access the Index of Churches here:

[https://mcusercontent.com/64124f1d5b1170491dea9f3cf/files/196cea42-abdd-cc5b-98fe-ee331e506f93/
Index_of_Churches_01.01.2025.01.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/64124f1d5b1170491dea9f3cf/files/196cea42-abdd-cc5b-98fe-ee331e506f93/Index_of_Churches_01.01.2025.01.pdf)



Bold Witness

Now in conjunction with the Global Methodist Church, we are excited to invite you to share your story - your bold witness of what God's doing in, around, and through you. There are good ministries and exciting events happening all over our conference - and we want you to share them with us so we can spread the good news.

Take a minute or two and fill out this quick form to celebrate something going on in your local congregation, or in another local GM Church in your area. These will be shared in future Upper Midwest Newsletters and with the Global Methodist communications team.

Let's get excited about how God is using us in this season!

Share Your Story: <https://form.jotform.com/242467999461171>

Check out our first "Bold Witness" post on our Upper Midwest Global Methodist Church Facebook page. Pastor Ben & the Prairie Creek Church in Grimes, IA are doing great things in their community!

Upper Midwest Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Upper-Midwest-Global-Methodist-Church/61560495272933/>

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

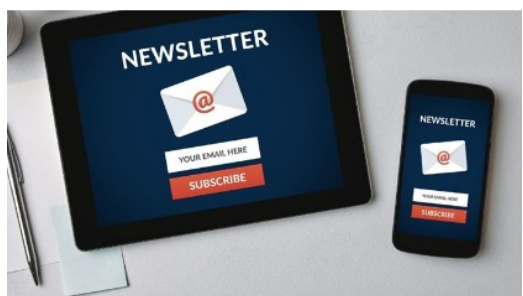


Beyond These Walls will mobilize and equip you and your congregation through the "best of the best" mission practices so you can fulfill your divine calling... making disciples of all the nations. Engaging speakers, meaningful panel discussion, inspiring worship, and practical breakout sessions make this a great investment for churches of all sizes.

Learn More or Register: <https://beyondthewalls.com/>

MORE INFORMATION

Be the First to Know!



Sign up for our Newsletter

Subscribe Here:

**[https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/
newsletter](https://www.uppermidwestgmc.org/newsletter)**

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

Important Dates to Remember



May 1-3, 2025

Beyond These Walls

June 13-15, 2025

Annual Conference

***More info about these and other events on
our website Events page.**

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

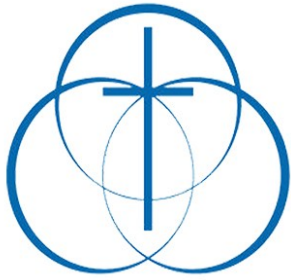
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GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH UPPER MIDWEST CONFERENCE

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

Upper Midwest Conference of the Global Methodist Church

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