

Dakotas Annual  
Conference of The United  
Methodist Church

# Agenda



*Unleashed*

Fearless,  
Spirit-Led  
Churches

---

*Rapid City, South Dakota  
Ramkota Inn*

*June 5-7, 2014*





# table of contents



Welcome from Bishop Ough .....	3
Sessions Team Welcome .....	4
Conference Speaker Adam Hamilton .....	5
Pre Conference Workshops .....	5
Daily Schedule for Wednesday, June 4 .....	6
Daily Schedule for Thursday, June 5 .....	7
Daily Schedule for Friday, June 6 .....	8
Daily Schedule for Saturday, June 7 .....	9
Opening Worship .....	11
Miracle Offering Worship Service .....	13
Baptismal Covenant Service .....	14
2013 Retirees .....	15
Ramkota Inn Map .....	20

## Follow Us!

 Twitter @DakotasUM, hashtag #dak14

 facebook.com/dakotasumc

 channel: dakumcom

 Dakotas UMC

<http://s669.photobucket.com/>

# welcome



To those in the Dakotas Conference who are dearly loved by God and called to be God's people.

Grace to you and peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Dakotas Annual Conference! Char and I are looking forward to the wondrous things God will do in and through us while we are assembled here in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Our theme, "Unleashed: Fearless, Spirit-Led Churches" will launch the Dakotas Conference into a focus on starting new congregations and unleashing our existing congregations to become more vital, missional churches. Rev. Adam Hamilton, our conference teacher, will help us explore the practices that lead to "Fearless, Spirit-Led Churches."

God is calling us to a party of grace upon grace. We will celebrate, once again, the miraculous outpouring of God's abundant grace through the \$100,000 offering for a new regional church in Kenmare, North Dakota and the 5,000 items to stock our Watford City mobile thrift store.

We will celebrate those clergy and lay leaders who have served us so faithfully and sacrificially.

We will celebrate God's grace poured out on those being licensed, commissioned and ordained as clergy leaders.

We will celebrate God's grace in the many Holy Spirit breakthroughs that will be reported and experienced.

We will be blessed by God's grace in our holy conferencing.

And, we will be unleashed – unleashed to become fearless, Spirit-Led churches.

Welcome to annual conference!



## Gospel imperatives

# Grow

in love of God and neighbor

# Reach

new people

# Heal

a broken world



# from the planning team



## Greetings from the conference session planning team!



Welcome friends! It is always an exciting time as the United Methodists of the Dakotas gather together for Annual Conference! This year's theme is "Unleashed: Fearless, Spirit-Led, Churches!" I eagerly anticipate this week's celebration of ministry and missions! I look forward to inspiring worship as our Bishop casts the vision, the gospel is proclaimed and as we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit to unleash us for the sharing of the gospel through word and deed! I am excited for our learning and growing opportunities in the Wednesday workshops and the teaching sessions of Rev. Adam Hamilton from The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, KS.

Please join me in praying for Bishop Ough as he prepares to lead us in our sessions of worshipful work. Pray for one another, as we conference, worship, learn and listen to Christ's leading in our lives and our Church. Pray for our time together to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord as the Dakotas United Methodists are UNLEASHED for mission and ministry in our communities! May this be a joy-filled celebration of encouragement and growth in all of us!

*Rev. Ryan Mutzenberger Chair, Annual Conference Sessions Committee*



Greetings to all United Methodists gathering in Rapid City for our 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Dakotas Annual Conference! Your friends and partners in ministry here in the Prairie Hills District are pleased to host you, and to allow you to enjoy some time in God's country. From Cresbard to Sundance, Wyoming and from Eureka to Jamison, Nebraska, the Holy Spirit is at work in exciting and powerful ways. Our prayer for you is that you would experience both a sense of profound peace and enthusiasm as you spend time in the Hills. Welcome, and God bless!

*Rev. Randy Cross, Prairie Hills District Superintendent*



Welcome to this 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Dakotas Annual Conference! Against the backdrop of the Black Hills and surrounding plains, we gather as *Unleashed: Fearless, Spirit-Led Churches*. The vast expanse of pines and grasslands readily creates inspiration to stir up our desires to pursue God-sized dreams and visions for our disciple-making mission. Calling to mind those who arrived here long before us, we remember a fearless, spirit-led preacher who travelled to the dusty streets of gold rush Deadwood. He came sharing the gospel and a deep conviction to see souls renewed and lives transformed. May these days together be days rich with the discovery of imperishable treasure. And in the legacy of Preacher Smith may we be ready to face our fears in the power of the risen Christ. Unburdened by fear we are ready to be unleashed for the sake of sharing Christ throughout the Dakotas, including today's oil rush region, and to the world beyond.

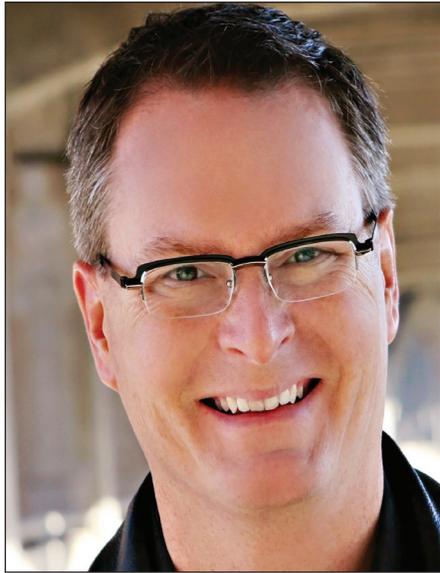
*Rev. Greg Kroger, Director of Ministries*



## Sessions Team

- Rev. Ryan Mutzenberger, chair
- Bishop Bruce R. Ough
- Rev. Greg Kroger, director of ministries
- Rev. Randy Cross, host district superintendent
- Rev. Amy Atkins, worship coordinator
- Rev. Duane Coates, agenda coordinator
- Rev. Dayne Zachrisson, site coordinator
- Rev. Sharla McCaskell, host clergy member
- Scot Sturlaugson, host lay member
- Sharon Blumer, conference statistician and sessions registration
- Doreen Gosmire, conference communications

# conference speaker



COURTESY OF ADAM HAMILTON

Rev. Adam Hamilton is the founding pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. He grew up in the Kansas City area. He earned a B.A. degree in Pastoral Ministry from Oral Roberts University and a Master of Divinity Degree from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

Adam was named Distinguished Evangelist of the United Methodist Church by the Foundation for Evangelism and one of the “Ten People to Watch in America’s Spiritual Landscape” by Religion and Ethics Newsweekly. He currently serves as a board member at Saint Paul School of Theology. He lectures on leadership, evangelism, and preaching across the country and has authored more than a dozen books and several small group studies.

The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection has grown from four people in 1990 to more than 18,000 adult members with an average weekly worship attendance of more than 8,800 in 2012. The church was listed as the most influential mainline church in America in a 2005 survey of American pastors.

# wednesday workshops



**Using technology to create a ministry partnership** – Rev. Kermit Culver, leaders from Moffit United Methodist Church in Moffit, North Dakota and Legacy United Methodist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota share their experience with utilizing video technology to provide a sermon and other worship experiences from one location to another.



**Creating the capacity for congregational transformation**-- The Missional Church Initiative is an intentional, intensive process that involves study, prayer, consultation, and prescriptive coaching. Rev. Greg Kroger, Director of Ministries shares insights to the process.



**Creating a new congregation for a new mission field** -- Rev. Phil Storm, Minnesota Annual Conference describes a vital merger: to assist congregations working through the process to create successful, healthy congregations through mergers.



**What churches of all sizes can learn from Embrace** – Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota is one of the fastest growing churches in the country. Your local church can use many of the principles in action at Embrace.



# wednesday, june 4

Please note: Pre Conference meeting room times and places may change. Check at the registration desk for updates. Bring thrift store donations to the registration area when you arrive. You should keep one or two items for the miracle offering worship.

	<b>1 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.</b>	Registration and Information Center open	 Convention Center II Lobby
<b>MORNING</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Committee Meetings and Workshops</b>	
	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	Cabinet	
	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	Archives and History	 Roosevelt
	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	Board of Ordained Ministry	 Storm Mountain Center
	<b>12:00 p.m.</b>	Historical Society Luncheon	 Rushmore
<b>AFTERNOON</b>	<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	CCFA	 Bear Butte
	<b>1:30-3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Equipping Workshops</b> (see page 5 for descriptions)	
		Using Technology to a Ceate Partnership	 Lincoln
		Creating Congregational Transformation	 Harney Peak
		Forming a Vital Merger	 Washington
		Learn from Embrace Church	 Rushmore
	<b>3:15 to 4:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Equipping Workshops</b> (see page 5 for descriptions)	
		Using Technology to Create a Partnership	 Lincoln
		Creating Congregational Transformation	 Harney Peak
		Forming a Vital Merger	 Washington
	Learn from Embrace Church	 Rushmore	
<b>EVENING</b>	<b>5:15 p.m.</b>	Lay Servant Ministries Dinner	 Rushmore
	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	New Member Orientation	 Convention Center II
	<b>7:30-8:30 p.m.</b>	Rootbeer Floats and Tour Mobile Thrift Store	 Covention Ctr. II Parking



*Come enjoy a rootbeer float and tour the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry Mobile Thrift Store on Wednesday, June 4, 2014 in the parking lot right outside Convention Center II of the Ramkota Inn. Free will donations for the miracle offering will be accepted. Thanks to Spearfish United Methodist Church for hosting this event. Bring thrift store donations to the rootbeer float area. You should keep one or two items for the miracle offering worship.*

# thursday, june 5



	<b>7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.</b>	Registration and Information Center open	✱ Convention Center II Lobby
MORNING	<b>All day</b>	Wellness Checks	✿ Needles
		Exhibits and Displays	🌿 Sylvan I & II
	<b>8:30 to 9:45 a.m.</b>	Opening Worship with communion	🟢 Convention Center II
	<b>9:45 to 10:00 a.m.</b>	Break	🌿 Sylvan I & II
	<b>10 to 11:00 a.m.</b>	Plenary	🟢 Convention Center II
	<b>11 a.m. to noon</b>	Episcopal address	🟢 Convention Center II
AFTERNOON	<b>Noon to 1:30 p.m.</b>	Lunch	
		Extension Ministry Luncheon	🚫 Badlands
		Clergy Spouse Luncheon	🔴 Bear Butte
		Garrett Seminary Luncheon	🟡 Harney Peak
		Asbury Seminary Luncheon	🟦 Lincoln
EVENING	<b>1:30 to 3:00 p.m.</b>	Adam Hamilton session one	🟢 Convention Center II
	<b>3:00 to 3:45 p.m.</b>	Break and Adam Hamilton book signing	🌿 Sylvan I & II
	<b>3:45 to 5:15 p.m.</b>	Adam Hamilton session two	🟢 Convention Center II
	<b>5:15 p.m.</b>	Break	
	<b>5:45 p.m.</b>	<i>*Child Care available</i>	🔴 <b>Bear Butte</b>
	<b>5:45 to 7:00 p.m.</b>	Celebration Banquet	🟡 Rushmore
	<b>7:15 to 9 p.m.</b>	Clergy Session	🟡 Washington
Laity Session		🟢 Convention Center II	

*\*For those who registered for child care*

**KEY**

Regular events	Optional events	🟡 Rushmore	✿ Needles	🟢 Convention Center II
		🟡 Washington	🔴 Bear Butte	🌿 Sylvan I & II
		🟡 Lincoln	🚫 Badlands	✱ Convention Center II Lobby
		🟡 Harney Peak	🔴 Roosevelt	🟢 Other location off site



# Friday, June 5

**7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** Registration and Information Center open  Convention Center II Lobby

**6:30 a.m.** United Methodist Men's Breakfast  Badlands  
 United Methodist Women's Breakfast  Washington  
**All day** Wellness Checks  Needles  
 Exhibits and Displays  Sylvan I & II

**MORNING**

**8:00 to 9:15 a.m.** Opening Worship with Miracle Offering  Convention Center II  
**9:15 to 9:30 a.m.** Break  Sylvan I & II  
**9:30 to 11:00 a.m.** Adam Hamilton session three  Convention Center II  
**11 a.m. to noon** Plenary  Convention Center II

**AFTERNOON**

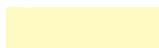
**Noon to 1:30 p.m.** Lunch  
 Retired Clergy Luncheon  Washington  
 Ordinand Luncheon  Lincoln  
 Sioux Falls Seminary Luncheon  Harney Peak  
 Holy Land Tour Information Session  Badlands

**EVENING**

**1:30 to 3:00 p.m.** Plenary  Convention Center II  
**3:00 to 3:15 p.m.** Break  Sylvan I & II  
**3:15 to 5:00 p.m.** Plenary  Convention Center II  
**5:00 p.m.** Break  
**7:00 p.m.** Service of Life in Ministry  Performing Arts Center  
**Following the service** \*Reception for honorees  Performing Arts Center lobby

*\*Retirees, ordiinand, comissionees, and all those being remembered will be honored in designated reception areas.*

**KEY**

- Regular events 
- Optional events 
-  Rushmore
-  Needles
-  Convention Center II
-  Washington
-  Bear Butte
-  Sylvan I & II
-  Lincoln
-  Badlands
-  Convention Center II Lobby
-  Harney Peak
-  Roosevelt
-  Other location off site

# Saturday, June 7



**8:00 a.m. to 11:30 .m.** Information Center open Convention Center II Lobby

<b>MORNING</b>	<b>All morning</b>	Wellness Checks	Needles
		Exhibits and displays	Sylvan I & II
	<b>8 to 9 a.m.</b>	Worship	Convention Center II
	<b>9 to 9:30 a.m.</b>	Break	Sylvan I & II
	<b>9:30 to 10:45 p.m.</b>	Plenary	Convention Center II
	<b>10:45 to 11:00 a.m.</b>	Break	Sylvan I & II
	<b>11:00 to 11:45 p.m.</b>	Plenary	Convention Center II
	<b>11:45 a.m.</b>	Closing Benediction	Convention Center II



## Special thanks to all of the following contributors to this conference

### Conference Secretary

Rev. Mark Ellingson

### Conference Parliamentarian

Rev. Randy Cross

### Communications and Production

Matt Bader, Projection and Announcements  
 Sean Binder, Projection and Announcements  
 Ian Blumer, Video production and Graphic Design  
 Lance Hendrickson, Video production  
 Charity Kerr, Photography, Facebook, Twitter  
 Jack Mortenson, Multi-media Production  
 Thara Said, Logo and Graphic Design  
 Bethany Sheets, Layout and Graphic Design  
 Kent Taylor, Video Productio  
 Amanda Willis, Layout and Graphic Design

### Sound, Lights and Video

Dakotas Sound and Music

### Local arrangements and assistance

Scott Sturlaugson  
 Sharla McCaskell  
 Laity and clergy of the Prairie Hills District

**Music provided by:** Embrace Church worship team  
 Aubrey Bohl, worship coordinator; strings group from  
 Canyon Lake United Methodist Church; and laity and  
 clergy of the Prarie Hills District. Special thank you to  
 Ken Ketel, Rapid City First for directing the orchestra  
 and choir for the Celebration of Life in Ministry service.

**Stage and podium banners** were designed and cre-  
 ated by Dawn Diehl.



# Preachers

## Reverend Adam Weber



Adam Weber lives in Sioux Falls where he's the lead pastor of a church called Embrace. He's married to his beautiful wife Becky and has 3 kids: Hudson, Wilson, and Grayson. "This dude is crazy blessed," said Weber. Embrace is a 7-year-old church that has grown to 1,900+ in weekly attendance and is still growing. Weber explains, "So much more than that, we're seeing people come to know the Lord and God is changing lives." Friend Adam on Facebook at /adamaweber and follow him on Twitter @adamweber. Adam will preach on Thursday, June 5.

## Bishop Bruce R. Ough

Bishop Ough is the resident bishop for the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area. He began his service to the Area on September 1, 2012. Previously he served the Ohio West Area, of The United Methodist Church, where he was the spiritual leader for nearly 200,000 United Methodists in more than 1,100 congregations in 58 Ohio counties. Prior to his election and consecration as a bishop in July 2000, Bishop Ough served as the senior pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, a 2,800-member congregation in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is married to Charlene Ough, and they are the parents of three sons. Bishop Ough will preach at the Service of Life in Ministry on Friday, June 6.



## Reverend Sara Nelson



Sara Nelson is a pastor at First United Methodist Church in Watertown, SD having served there since 2010. She is a graduate of University of South Dakota, and attended seminary at Sioux Falls Seminary receiving her Master of Divinity in 2010. Sara has a passion for community service, and is a recipient of the Streams of Justice Award. She and her husband Mat are the parents of Mara and Austine. Sara will preach on Saturday, June 7.

# Opening worship



## Thursday, June 5 - 8:30 AM

\*GATHERING SONGS

"Open Up Our Eyes" Elevation Worship

"Build Your Kingdom Here" Rend Collective

WELCOME AND INSTRUCTIONS

\*OPENING SONG

"Our God" Chris Tomlin

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

"Eric's Story"

SERMON

"5 Loaves, 2 Fish, 5000 People"  
John 6:1-14 CEB

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

"Katie's Story"

HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

CONFESSION AND PARDON

\*THE PEACE *(All exchange signs and words of God's peace and reconciliation.)*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*There will be six Communion serving stations throughout the room: two in the front, one on each side, and two in the back. When serving teams are in position, all are invited to go to their nearest station to receive the bread and the cup. Gluten-free elements will be available at the two stations in the front.*

Songs

"Burning In My Soul" Matt Maher

"Lord I Need You" Matt Maher

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

\*SONG

"Oceans" Hillsong United

\*BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

*\*Indicates all who are able are invited to stand.*

### Worship Leaders

Celebrant - Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Area

Preacher - Rev. Adam Weber, Embrace

Musicians - Embrace Worship Team

Communion Servers - Haiti Solar Oven Partners

*A special thank you to the members of the Haiti Solar Oven Project for using the solar oven bread pans to bake the bread used for Communion this morning.*





# miracle offering

Western North Dakota is being called the greatest mission field in North America. "The fields remain white onto harvest. *Look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest (John 4:35).* I am calling again this year for a miracle offering to be received at the 2014 Conference Session," Bishop Bruce R. Ough. The Miracle Offering goal has two parts: \$100,000 in cash to launch the new church in Kenmare, and 5,000 clothing and household items to stock our Watford City Mobile Thrift Store.

## Kenmare / Donnybrook Vital Merger

(\$100,000 )



The 2014 Miracle Offering is being designated for the start of a new regional congregation in Kenmare on the eastern edge of the Bakken Oil Rush area. The \$100,00 cash offering will assist with the start-up costs of the new regional church in Kenmare, including land purchase, staff support and building design. In the past several years, the oil field workers and new families moving into the area to find housing are transforming the small communities of Donnybrook and Kenmare. The region has witnessed a building boom as the population has grown by 12.3 % in the last three years.

## Mobile Thrift Store

(5,000 ITEMS)

Jim and Kathie Konsor, our lay missionaries in Watford City, launched a very successful Mobile Thrift Store to minister to those who desperately need assistance in transitioning into an extremely expensive and often inhospitable environment. This ministry is also enabling them to build trust and position the United Methodist Church for the launch of a new worshipping congregation. Since the opening of the Mobile Thrift Store in November 2013, they have distributed 2,000 clothing and household items valued at over \$20,000.

## Items needed:

- coats, including winter coats of all sizes
- hooded sweatshirts
- blankets (no comforters)
- bath towels, and
- heavy or thermal socks



# Miracle offering service



**Friday, June 6, 8:00 AM**

\*GATHERING SONG "This is Amazing Grace" Phil Wickham

WELCOME

\*OPENING SONG "Build Your Kingdom Here" Rend Collective

\*OPENING PRAYER

RESPONSIVE LITURGY "Blessed To Be A Blessing"

"RISING FROM THE ASHES: Living in Resurrection Joy, and Hope" Rev. Randy Cross

EXPERIENCE THE STORY "Donnybrook and Kenmare"

"A WHOLE NEW THING" Rev. Greg Kroger

EXPERIENCE THE STORY "Ministry on the Move: Mobile Thrift Store"

"FEARLESS, SPIRIT-LED CHURCHES: Miracles in the Bakken" Rev. Keith Nelson

\*SONG "Burning In My Soul" Matt Maher

INVITATION Bishop Ough

CALLED TO BOLDLY AND FEARLESSLY RESPOND Miracle Offering

*It is time to respond to a God sized vision. As we sing you are invited to bring your offerings, both monetary and items for the Mobile Thrift Store, forward to the oil well. Volunteers will help collect your offerings as we see what can be done by joyful and generous givers.*

Songs "Open Up Our Eyes" Elevation Worship  
"Forever Reign" Hillsong United  
"One Thing Remains" Jesus Culture

BLESSING AND DEDICATION

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

*\*Indicates all who are able are invited to stand.*

**Worship Leadership**

- Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Area
- Rev. Randy Cross, Prairie Hills District Superintendent
- Rev. Greg Kroger, Director of Ministries, Dakotas Annual Conference
- Rev. Keith Nelson, Sakakawea District Superintendent





# Worship



## BAPTISMAL COVENANT SERVICE

**Gathered to Share. Scattered to Serve.**

**Saturday, June 7, 8:00 AM**

GATHERING SONG "Burning In My Soul" Matt Maher

WORSHIP INSTRUCTIONS

\*SONG "This is Amazing Grace" Phil Wickham

\*OPENING PRAYER

SCRIPTURE Matthew 28: 19-20

SERMON "It's Our Turn"

INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATE Marie Lynn Anderson

*daughter of Pastor Jen and Blair Anderson*

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

BAPTISM WITH LAYING ON OF HANDS

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCE

*When instructed use the water at your table to turn to your neighbor and make the sign of the cross on their forehead and offer the blessing "Remember your baptism and be thankful."*

THANKSGIVING

\*SONG "One Thing Remains" Jesus Culture

FIXING OF APPOINTMENTS

*As each appointment is read the pastor is invited to come forward and remain until all new appointments are read from that district.*

APOSTOLIC CHARGE

SENDING FORTH

\*SONG "Open Up Our Eyes" Elevation Worship

\*DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

*\*Indicates all who are able are invited to stand.*

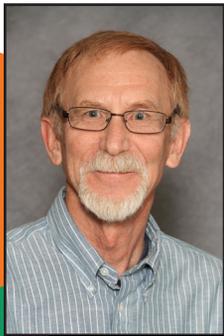
### Worship Leadership

Celebrant - Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Area	Rev. Keith Nelson, Sakakawea District Superintendent
Preaching - Rev. Sara Nelson, First United Methodist Church - Watertown, SD	Rev. Roger Spahr, Eastern Sunrise District Co-superintendent
Musicians - Embrace Worship	Rev. Marilyn Spurrell, Eastern Sunrise District Co-superintendent
Cabinet -Rev. Randy Cross, Prairie Hills District Superintendent	Rev. Roy Caudill, Glacial Lakes District Superintendent

# 2013 retirees



## Reverend Peder Anderson



It is with a thankful heart that I express my wonder and sometimes questions to God about using me as a servant leader. Being a pastor has certainly been God's doing. I have simply sought to be an obedient follower, knowing and believing that each of us is called to tell our story of redeeming and reconciling love.

I am thankful for the many wonderful opportunities to serve the Lord over these 30 some years—hospital chaplain, credit counselor, and for most of the years as a local church pastor. From small rural towns, to county seat communities and the big city, I have experienced much. The many people I have met: laughed with, cried with, rejoiced with through victories and healings, struggles with through losses and disappointments have all enriched and strengthened my life.

Thank you to the laity and clergy friends that have helped me to see a part of God's wonderful kingdom people. We will continue to transform our part of the world, one person at a time. I am eager to transition to a new form of ministry. One that I would call "support ministry". Supplying garden produce to food banks, resource centers and coops so people's basic need of food can be met.

Learning about and using the spiritual gifts he gave me and drawing upon the Holy Spirit's power to share those gifts, has lead me on a wonderful journey that continues to bless me. I want to continue to be used by God. I know that Jesus will help me do just that!!!

## Reverend Doug Diehl

"Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14 NRSV)

My decision to follow Christ took place during the "Jesus Revolution." I was sure God wanted me to be a "hitchhiker for Jesus." When I shared that plan with my pastor, he suggested it might be a better idea to become a United Methodist pastor. A few months later this direction was confirmed during an altar call at the church when I felt the "heavy hand of God" on my shoulder pointing me to pastoral ministry. That moment of call at First United Methodist Church of Mandan has been the defining experience that has kept me going all of these years.

I have been richly blessed in my experiences as a pastor in the Dakotas. I have served - in both North and South Dakota; as associate pastor and as senior pastor; in small, medium and large churches; as pastor of United Methodist, Presbyterian and American Baptist congregations; as dean or counselor at Wesley Acres, Lehr, Big Stone, Storm Mountain and Lake Poinsett camps; as District Superintendent; as delegate to Jurisdictional and General Conference; and, as chair of both the Sessions Committee and the Board of Ordained Ministry for the Dakotas Conference. All of these experiences have been opportunities of grace. None of this was in my imagination as a very introverted pilgrim moving along the path of ministry.

I give thanks to my family and to the people of Bismarck First (now Legacy); Rapid City First; Britton, Langford, Pierpont parish; Grand Forks Zion; the Northwest District; and, the clergy and laity of the Dakotas Conference for their support and love in helping form me as a United Methodist pastor and disciple of Jesus Christ.

God is so good. Jesus is indeed the way, the truth and the life. In the power of the Spirit, may I continue to press forward in the calling placed upon my life to make a difference for God's Kingdom.



## Reverend Rick Fossum



My faith story is rooted in a tiny Methodist Church in Hillsboro, North Dakota. As a young boy, I remember walking forward during a revival service and dedicating my life to Jesus Christ.

Following that early experience, I let my faith lay dormant for the longest time. After all, I had a life to live. Through high school, college, the military, and the first parts of my marriage, my faith was somewhere around, but inactive. I was busy. I had things to do.

God, in God's own mysterious way, never forgot about me. I had my own business when that wee, but strong voice of God started calling me to do something more with my life. I did not know what that meant, but I knew that I was not going to be happy until my heart was right with God.

Thanks to my family and friends and that tiny Methodist Church in Hillsboro, my faith journey started to make sense. The path was becoming clear. I enrolled in the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City and the rest is history.

I want to thank the churches I served during my thirty-two plus years of ministry. At each church, I met people who helped me grow as a person and as a pastor. I am convinced that the following churches gave me much more than I gave them: Grantville UMC, Grantville, KS (31/2 years), Jud and Kulm UMC, Jud and Kulm, ND (2 years), Flame of Faith, UMC, West Fargo, ND (10 years), Vincent UMC, Minot, ND (5 years), McCabe UMC, Bismarck, ND (12 years).

My gratitude and thanks is also owed to the Dakotas Conference. Your confidence in me, your encouragement to me is and will always be appreciated.

My greatest thanks is reserved for my family. Nancy, my wife of almost forty years. Our children, Kate, Knute and Tracey. They grew up often in the absence of their father because I was too busy doing 'church stuff'. In hindsight, I wish I had spent more time with them. Thank you. I love you all.

I do not know what tomorrow will bring. I do know that the faith that has sustained me thus far will continue to guide me into the future. The unknown can be a bit frightful, but thanks be to God, I will not be alone.

---

## Reverend Tom Haagar

My parents were very instrumental in my faith development. They were loving and supportive parents, God-fearing, God loving parents that faithfully attended church. So, I grew up in the St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Sioux Falls. There I served as an acolyte for many years. I loved Wednesdays of Lent because I got to serve both in the morning and the evening worships. And I loved Holy Week because there was a service every day.

But my favorite time was when the women forgot to set up the communion "stuff" for a 7:30 service and I got to help the Bishop set it all up. I always felt I was serving Jesus and serving the people for Jesus when I was an acolyte.

I made a profession of faith at confirmation and learned that worship was a conversation or dance with God. In those years I also discovered to my surprise that not everyone loved Jesus. I fell away from the faith, from the church, and didn't want anything to do with this Jesus during those teenage years and into my young adult years. I thought I was too smart for and didn't need Jesus but I found out differently when I was 30 years old. I'd been on that quest to find out "Who I was" but that was answered by the question of "Whose I was."

Out of college I had taught in Faulkton and Lake Preston and ended up in Groton. There I was burned out, made some mistakes teaching, but found that I needed Jesus and was still loved. I went to my knees, asked for forgiveness, and was renewed and reconciled to God. I was asked to teach one of the Groton UMC Sunday School Classes. Some of the leadership in the church objected and probably with good reason but the members of the class said, "We don't care, this guy just needs to be loved and we're going to love him." It went well. We moved to Dell Rapids the next year. We were warmly welcomed and received, and got involved in the DRUMC. While we were still new to the church I remember very vividly a Lenten worship in which our five year child got sick. A member of the church jumped up, found wet towels, and cleaned up the mess.

The more involved in the work of the church at Dell Rapids, the more I felt God's call into ordained ministry. I thank God for the churches and the people of Ellis, Brothersfield, Geddes, Belle Fourche, South Maple, and Aberdeen. First that I've had the privilege to serve. I thank God for Bishops and superintendents that had confidence enough in me to appoint me to those churches. I thank God for the clergy I have had the pleasure to know and to work with. I thank God for the people I've met on the way and all the kids at camp. I thank God for my wife and children who have made the sacrifices and given me the support I needed to be a pastor in the Dakotas Conference. And I am thankful for a God who, when you go to give, continues to out give you.



## Reverend Beth Kelsey

I grew up on a farm near Fedora, South Dakota, and attended the Endeavor Presbyterian in Fedora. We never had a residential minister. Instead, a speech professor from Huron College was our regular pulpit supply. Four times a year “a real minister” came to celebrate Holy Communion. Church was a fun, loving place for me and in my pre-teens I began thinking I wanted to be a minister when I grew up. The Fedora church always had two women and two men elders. On several different occasions we had a woman preacher. Furthermore, a woman minister in Fedora had baptized two friends with whom I attended grade school in the early 1950s. Consequently, it never occurred to me that women could not be ministers.

After graduating from seminary I served part-time as pastor of the Summit United Methodist Church and the Waubay United Church of Christ. That fall the South Dakota Conference held an evangelism rally in Aberdeen with Bishop James Armstrong preaching. After the rally, I introduced myself to Bishop Armstrong and we started a conversation that continued a couple weeks later in his office. After that meeting, I decided to transfer my membership from the United Presbyterian Church to the South Dakota Conference of the United Methodist Church.

I thoroughly enjoyed parish ministry. My ministry in the United Parish in Bottineau, ND, was an amazingly wonderful and successful time. I shall always cherish my experiences with the saints in that parish. Three years with the Uniting Church in Australia broadened my understanding of the relationship between church and secular society. While church life is very similar in the two countries, Australian society does not give much credence to the church. That difference was a cultural shock.

After two years with the Kansas Conference Staff, I earned my doctorate in counseling and started working for Community Counseling Services in Huron, South Dakota, as a mental health counselor. I have been blessed with the manner in which so many people have opened themselves to me and shared their hurts and struggles in order that they may find new life and joy.

My journey as pastor and as a human being has been strongly influenced by Bishop Rueben Job and his wife Beverly. They showed me God’s love. They helped me develop a richer, deeper spiritual way of being in the world. Their ministry and friendship greatly enhanced my ministry and has enabled me to be a much more authentic human being than I otherwise would have been. I will continue to work at Community Counseling and as moderator and pulpit supply for the Wessington Presbyterian Church. When I do retire from those two positions, I plan to move to Sheridan, Wyoming, to be close to my sister and her family.

I sincerely thank the United Methodist Church for allowing me to minister under her umbrella. At a gathering in Huron, Bishop Job quoted an English bishop who said, “What is the reward of 40 years of ministry? 40 years of ministry.” How true!

---

God became known to me when I was nine years old. I didn’t share my experience with anyone because it was something I didn’t have words to describe. I kept it inside for several years and was sustained by a beautiful sense of love and peace. Not only did I feel changed inside but the way I perceived other people had changed. I no longer judged them. My desire to serve and care for them was more passionate than it had ever been. Everything was different for me. And as I grew so did my passion to tell everyone about God. “Go ye into all the world and preach.” God was calling me.

Sixty years of loving the Lord enables my spirit to “Go ye into all the world and preach.” God calls me. I am applying my service to the Iowa Conference for appointment under retired status. I served as a local minister in 1999 and moved to three churches in Williston, Grenora, North Dakota and Bainville, Montana. I served for three years. I was ordained Deacon in 2002. I was appointed to Burke, and Herrick, South Dakota and Jamison, Nebraska. I served there for two years. I was ordained Elder in June, 2004, and appointed to McClusky, Goodrich and Chasely, North Dakota. I was only there nine months when Altru Health System in Grand Forks, North Dakota called and asked if I would fill out an application for Hospice Chaplain & Bereavement Coordinator. I consulted with Bishop Deborah Kiesey, she supported me in my decision. In June, 2005, I was appointed to Extension Ministries. I was certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains in 2008, retired. In 2010 I was appointed to Mohall and Sherwood, North Dakota. God is calling me “Go ye into all the world and preach.”

## Reverend Pat Mersch



## Reverend Dr. Stephen Perry

I was born in Durham, North Carolina, in 1951 but grew up in First United Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois. I have been told that, since I hold a Ph.D. (1978) from the University of Cambridge, I have a license to preach in the Church of England, which, long before I was born, refused its pulpits to John Wesley.



During the 1970's, I helped to start a new congregation in the Chapel of Northwestern University. I was a member of the steering committee for this congregation when Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (G-ETS) dismissed two students for homosexuality. The University Chaplain's public stance on this issue divided the congregation. We were able to avoid a permanent split, and the success of our efforts helped persuade me, in ways that I do not fully understand, to ask the treasurer of the congregation, Marilyn Ziegler, to marry me, to apply for ordination in The United Methodist Church, and to enroll in G-ETS.

As a candidate for ministry in the Northern Illinois Conference, I was one of the first male seminary students in the conference to be assigned to a woman as my supervising pastor. I did my field education as a student pastor in the congregation she served in an immigrant neighborhood on the north side of Chicago, and I took Clinical Pastoral Education at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois.

By another sudden turn of events that I cannot fully explain, I attended a pastor's retreat at Storm Mountain in January of 1981, and Marilyn and I decided to apply for membership in the South Dakota Annual Conference. We left our families and the place where we both grew up for what has turned out to be thirty-three years in a land whose capital we had, until we moved here, always mispronounced.

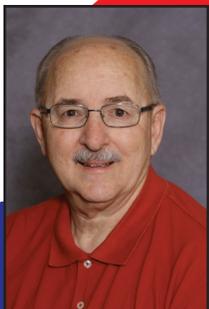
During our years in South Dakota, I have practiced the fine and difficult art of bringing the ancient texts of the Bible to bear on the lives of late 20th century/early 21st century people whom I came to respect and love. Some Sundays the results were better than other Sundays. But I always got something out of it even if my congregations at Wessington Springs, Lane, Milbank Parkview, Vermillion, Presho, Kennebec, Reliance, Ashton, Redfield, and Frankfort, had to bear with me.

In addition to preaching, I participated in the resolution or management of a number of conflicts; taught confirmation almost every year; helped to establish a bus company that is still delivering people to worship on Sundays; participated in the transition of the United Methodist Foundation from its original 1950's model to the way it raises, invests, and distributes funds today; run Wednesday church schools for elementary school children; served on the School of Ministry when we brought one of the nation's leading experts on Islam to speak after the Gulf War; managed the Board of Ordained Ministry thru the many changes mandated by the Discipline of 1996 and at a time of growing student debt; drafted and led the adoption of the Board's first sexual ethics policy for clergy; initiated the Board's short-term leave policy; taught New Testament to undergraduates at the University of South Dakota; helped to found the Student Christian Community (a new kind of campus ministry); and taught United Methodist history at Sioux Falls Seminary.

For me, rural and small town ministry has turned out to be anything but unrewarding. In the course of my conference service, I have had the privilege of getting to know, at some point of their entry into the conference, many of today's serving pastors.

Recent years have confined my conference service to the research and writing that I am now retiring from parish ministry to complete. So far, I've published under my own imprint *Six Stories of United Methodism*, *In Praise of the Trinity*, and *Why, According to Scripture, Homosexuality is Not Sinful*. Moving with Marilyn to Anoka, Minnesota, to be closer to family, I hope to complete a history of United Methodists in the Dakotas, a study of religion and decentralization in United States history, and a biography of the remarkable and improbable friendship between my father, who taught at Northwestern University as a United Methodist minister, and the Sri Lankan monk, Walpola Rahula, who wrote *What the Buddha Taught*.

## Pastor Bob Cappel Licensed Local Pastor



When I went into pastoral ministry in 2010, I knew that retirement would lie ahead of me in a few years, but I didn't anticipate it would come this early. Unfortunately, a health issue has created the need to retire from my appointment. All of my career moves allowed me to work with people over the last forty-five years. Each one of the experiences was fulfilling, but none more, than serving as the associate pastor at Yankton First Church. I think of the many times when I called on a member or a person in need, and came away feeling like I had been ministered to.

It was in November, 2009 when an opportunity opened at FUMC that allowed me to use God's gifts and graces to work in pastoral care. It was from there I felt God's call to take the licensed local pastor path, and to then serve FUMC as my appointment. I am grateful for all those who "mentored" me in my journey including my wife Carolyn, Pastors Gordon Higgins, Dean Trapp and Ron Johnson, and my thanks to the members of the FUMC family for their encouragement and support, especially the last two years when my health problems surfaced. God Bless You All!

After completing college at Peru State College (NE), I spent thirteen years "ministering" in the Young Men's Christian Association at five different associations in the Midwest and Texas; nine years in human resources for a savings and loan and community hospital. In 1990 I began a career change when I moved to the chambers of commerce in Lexington, NE and Yankton, SD (1998)

It was God who walked along side of me during my tenure, and at times carried me, so I give Him all the honor, glory and praise for allowing me to reach this stage in my journey. I will continue to serve God as I live out this phase in my life.

## Reverend Eldon Reich



Being a preacher has always been a dream of my life. Growing up on a farm north of Olivet, SD, I was raised in a Christian family which, had a great influence on my life. I accepted Christ as my Savior at an old fashioned revival, and knew God called me to preach. My whole life after that was focused on fulfilling God's call on my life, even "practice preaching" to the cattle on the farm's hillside.

Attending Westmar College in LeMars Iowa, I was reacquainted with Donna Jose, who I first met at Wesley Acres summer camp as a teenager. I attended Asbury Theological Seminary and was privileged to see the work of the Holy Spirit during the 1970-1971 Asbury Revival. I am thankful for the influence of the church, camps, college and seminary in my life

When our children, Heidi and Jonathan, came to join our family, every parish graciously allowed them to have the freedom to be who they were. And today I am grateful that both have their families in worship and leadership in their local churches.

The gracious and forgiving laity of all our parishes –Onida, Agar, Kellerton, Ninth Avenue (Cornerstone), and Aberdeen First have been accepting of my sometimes creative (or crazy) ideas for worship and ministry. The United Methodist Church and the Dakotas Conference have been a blessing to my life and ministry. I thank all my colleagues in ministry (from both sides of the fence) who have sharpened my thinking and theology.

And special thanks to my wife, Donna, who has been a willing partner and supporter in our joint ministry, tempering some of my wild ideas, and "behind the scenes" putting into practical steps my vision for ministry.

***"Oh, send your loving kindness and truth to guard and watch over me, and I will praise your name continually, fulfilling my vow of praising you each day." Psalm 61:7-8 LB***

## Reverend Dr. Cori Waisanen

Jim and I entered fulltime pastoral ministry in the South Dakota Conference in 1992. My first year in ministry, Jesus spoke these words to me: "Cori, you can be a people pleaser or a God-pleaser, but you cannot be both. Choose whom you will serve." All of my life I have sought the approval of other people. But in my heart I wanted to be a God-pleaser. So I made a decision to seek Jesus with all my heart, soul, and mind that year.

During that year, I began reading literature on Mother Teresa. The following statement penned by this saintly nun has helped me keep my focus on being a God-pleaser.

You and God  
by  
Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.  
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.  
If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.  
Succeed anyway. If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you.  
Be honest and sincere anyway. What you spend years creating others could destroy overnight.  
Create anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.  
Be happy anyway. The good you do today will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.  
Give the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.  
In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

And so as I retire from pastoral ministry after twenty-two years - I will leave the effectiveness and fruit of my ministry in the hands of Jesus - who is my righteous Judge.



