



Bakken Oil Rush
care • connect • collaborate
A Ministry of the United Methodist Church

The Dakotas Conference Bakken Oil Rush Ministry Plan

Introduction

The mission field has come to the Dakotas Conference. People from all around the world now call western North Dakota home. The population of North Dakota has grown from 642,023 in 2000 to over 700,000 today. The growth is credited to the Bakken Oil Rush happening in western North Dakota.

The cost of living, lack of housing, isolation, and intense work hours have brought immense needs in this region of North Dakota. Families have no place to live. Children have nowhere to play. The cost of living is far above the income of many. People are in desperate need of services like daycare, shelter, and food. There is urgency for human and spiritual connections.

God is calling us to respond!

Look! I'm doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it? Isaiah 43: 19 (NRSV)

Vision

The vision of the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry is to: **Touch lives with Jesus' love while expanding the Kingdom of God and the United Methodist presence in the Bakken Oil Rush Region.** Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Area of the United Methodist Church, calls for a three-pronged approach to the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry:

1. Meet human needs
2. Equip local congregations for greater missional impact
3. Develop new faith communities

Plan of Action

Getting Started in the Bakken Oil Rush Region

Outreach in Watford City – Establish a ministry center with a thrift shop, play area for children, gathering place for people to meet, connect, worship, and pray.

Digital Presence -- A [web page](#) that connects people in the Bakken Oil Rush Region to the ministries of the United Methodist Church and partners.

Children and Families

- **Sidewalk SONday School** will be offered in multiple locations in the Bakken Oil Rush Region. Churches in the area will plan ongoing outreach to children in these various communities once the Sidewalk SONday School trailer leaves town.
- **Kids to Camp** -- Churches in the Bakken Oil Rush Region are being asked to identify at least one child from a Bakken Oil Rush family and invite that child to one of the many United Methodist Camps during the summer of 2013 at no cost to the family.

Long-Term Strategies

The three-pronged approach for involvement in the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry: 1) meet human needs, 2) equip local congregations, and 3) develop new faith communities ministry is the framework for long term ministry. The framework is concisely defined as: **Caring, Connecting, and Collaborating.**

Caring for people is basic to who we are as Christians and as United Methodists. Currently there are great people and facilities in communities that have a United Methodist presence. Two main strategies will provide a “Caring for People” emphasis. First, training workshops demonstrating ways of living out and showing hospitality to all will be available to churches throughout the region. The second emphasis will be church and community workers. Outreach workers will be placed in Bakken Oil Rush communities. These workers will focus on building *caring* ministries in specific “high need” communities. Caring also means the environment. The impacts of the oil industry on God’s creation are vast. Stewardship of all the resources of creation that God has entrusted to us will be an ongoing effort.

Connecting is about helping people connect with God and with one another, making new disciples through new faith communities. [Path 1](#), a Global Board of Discipleship division of the United Methodist Church, will partner in this endeavor helping with the training of Lay Planters, to be deployed throughout the Oil Region. Path1 will also provide guidance and support for the Dakotas Conference to develop two different planting zones. The zones will address the differing needs in four larger communities in western North Dakota.

Collaborating is supporting and equipping church leaders for greater missional impact in the Bakken Oil Rush Region. Collaboration will involve training and other intentional growth opportunities. There may be some places where new ways of being the church will be tested. The Dakotas Conference will have resources available to assist in the experimentation efforts, and will develop partnerships with churches outside the Bakken Oil Rush Region. It is critical for the Conference to provide leadership, work teams, expertise, and financial support for ongoing ministries.

Staffing

The Bakken Oil Rush Ministry needs an advocate and leader. A staff position of Associate Director for Missional Impact for the Dakotas Conference will provide focus and development of the strategic pathway of *Extending Missional Impact* including the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry.

Funding Needs

The Year	The Project	The Amount
2013	Sidewalk SONday School; Kids to Camp; Create a digital presence—web page; Outreach workers in Watford City (housing, salary, ministry space)	\$150,000
2014	Continue 2013 Activities Outreach workers in Williston Training and planning with Path 1 Hire an Associate Director for Missional Impact	\$241,000
2015	Build Ministry Center in Watford City Outreach workers in three other communities in the Bakken	\$2,000,000

Pray

All effective and transformational ministries begin with prayer! Please pray consistently and courageously for this ministry effort. The mission field has come to us. Working together to accomplish this great ministry can be a decisive movement that will bring new life, energy, and a new Spirit to the United Methodist Church in the Dakotas Conference.

Prayer for Unleashing New Life

I will pray daily for the Holy Spirit to:

Break through to renew and revive our churches, unleashing new life

Empower our clergy and lay leadership to proclaim the Good News of Jesus' resurrection power and promise

Transform and boldly use us, without limits, delays, or excuses, to reach and make new disciples of Jesus Christ and to transform the world

Work through me to raise the dead to new life

I pray for this in the precious and holy name of Jesus.

For more information about the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry contact Rev. Keith Nelson, Sakakawea District Superintendent,

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