



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

Resident Bishop
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April 2, 2024

Dear members and friends of Dakotas United Methodist Churches:

Grace and peace to you this Easter season. Christ has risen, Alleluia! My prayer is that you are finding joy and hope in the spirit of the resurrected Jesus.

I write to share that preparations are underway for the 31st session of the Dakotas Annual Conference, which will take place June 6-8, 2024, at the Legacy United Methodist Church and McCabe United Methodist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota. This will be my second annual conference as your resident bishop, and I look forward with anticipation to the opportunity to spend time together in worship, celebration, learning, conversation, and discerning where God is calling us next.

Drawing from Isaiah 43:1, the theme of this year's Annual Conference is "Jesus. Redeemer." This passage and theme remind us that we, as beloved children of God, can live courageously as ambassadors of Christ. We are blessed to be a blessing to others—and that is precisely what our annual Miracle Offering is all about: expressing our gratitude for God's provisions in our lives and sharing God's redeeming love with a broken world. The 2024 Miracle Offering invites us to walk alongside our neighbors near and far, reminding them through our tangible actions that they too are worthy, loved, and beloved. Our generosity will have a lasting impact on each recipient.

This year the Miracle Offering will be divided equally among these recipients:

31:8 Project: 31:8 Project's mission is to equip and challenge society to proactively address issues regarding human trafficking. Based in Bismarck, North Dakota, 31:8 offers informative seminars, conducts research, and creates curriculum applicable to all levels of education and forms of human trafficking. Donation support activities like the Bakken Human Trafficking Summit, mentorships for survivors of human trafficking, and the Demand Reduction Program—an education partnership designed to reduce recidivism.

Abbott House's Bridges Therapeutic Foster Care: In 2013-2014 supporters of Abbot House came together to build Bridges Therapeutic Foster Homes in Mitchell, SD, so young girls could grow up with a family and a home. Today, there are 10 therapeutic foster homes serving, boys and girls, in Mitchell, Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Donations will support continuing efforts for Bridges Therapeutic Foster Care.

Recovery Ministry: Through recovery ministries, people are building their relationship with Christ, and shaping a path to healthy living with those around them. Funds will be granted to United Methodist churches in the Dakotas Conference engaged in recovery ministry.



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Clergy Sustentation Fund: A special fund has been set up to assist clergy with direct financial support when a desperate need does arise. The Clergy Sustentation Fund is a means to tangibly care for our clergy and families in a time of need. Your gifts become signs of hope and grace in difficult times.

In addition to giving financially to the Miracle Offering, congregations are invited to collect supplies and backpacks for the **Bravery Backpacks** program through the 31:8 Project. There will be an opportunity to put the backpacks together at Annual Conference in Bismarck.

More about the 2024 Miracle Offering can be found at www.dakotasumc.org/miracleoffering. Please invite the members and friends of your congregation to experience the joy of giving generously of themselves to offer God's love and grace to others.

Thank you for your extravagant generosity, your commitment to loving your neighbors and delivering hope to a hurting world, and the countless ways you live out your faith in Jesus Christ every day. I give thanks for you, and I'm grateful to be in ministry with you.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Lanette Plambeck

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