

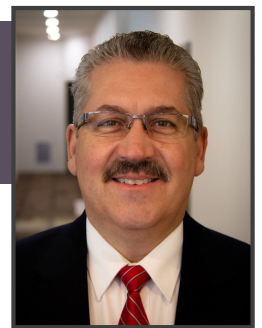


Dakota Messenger

DAKOTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A Circle of Faith

Mark R. Weir, President



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Major premise #1 - Dakota Adventist Academy is a crucial part of the mission and ministry of the Dakota Conference.

Major premise #2 - For the past eighteen months, Conference administration, the Executive and K-12 Finance committees, along with the K-12 Board of Education, have been working towards ensuring the long-term viability of Dakota Adventist Academy.

Key consideration #1 - We have less than 100 potential academy-aged students in Adventist churches across the Dakota Conference. Twenty-three of those students attended DAA last year.

Key consideration #2 - For the upcoming school year, the Dakota Conference has committed to increasing its financial support from \$40,000 a month to \$45,000 a month.

As I travel across our conference, I am so blessed to be able to interact with so many wonderful people. People who understand the importance of hard work, the value of a dollar, that difficulties in life are to be expected, and that regardless of challenges you simply keep moving forward. The people of our conference are generous, dedicated, careful thinkers, and don't tolerate much foolishness. I admire all of those traits.

Each year, the funds to run Dakota Adventist Academy come from three primary sources: tuition, conference support, and donations.

Tuition is simple. There is a fixed cost for a student to attend. Often a family will have help paying their tuition from sources such as worthy student funds, local churches, and occasionally sponsors will step forward. Based on the number of students, total potential tuition income is an easy number to calculate.

The second area of funding comes from the Dakota Conference operating budget. We as a conference are dedicated to this school and about 10% of our entire operational budget goes to support our Academy.

The third source comes from donations towards Academy operations given by people like you. These essential resources, which come from generous people, are vital and necessary. It is our goal to show how every dollar donated was used. We want to be very careful with the funds entrusted to our care.

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What we have discovered from the past several years, is that those three income sources have not been sufficient to meet the financial needs of our Academy.

For some years, tuition payments have run behind - sometimes due to the number of students attending, sometimes due to student accounts not being paid. For some years, donations have been low.

In the past, we have had additional funds that were available for use. During the years our conference was financially strong, many shortfalls were covered. We have also used some of the operational reserves. Over the course of time, more reserves were used to cover different obligations until we hit some financially challenging years. We as a conference, are doing better financially. God has blessed us in many ways, but we are not in a position to cover all shortfalls going forward. In round numbers, once tuition, conference support, and the average annual giving is calculated, we will still be running at least \$250,000 behind.

The Dakota K-12 Finance Committee, chaired by Robin Weisz, has been very vigilant in addressing the best ways to ensure that our Academy is on solid financial footing. In addition, we have done surveys of our constituency to ascertain the perspectives of our members as well as hired two different marketing consultants. We have had very forthright and beneficial conversations with both our K-12 Board and Executive Committee, and most recently we held a meeting during Campmeeting asking for people to step forward financially for a three to five-year commitment. Now, I am engaging all of you.

When DAA closed its doors back in the 80s, I was pastoring in Minnesota. I have heard many different stories through the years - why the closing happened, the process to reopen, as well as lingering questions regarding the wisdom of the initial closing and the reopening. I want to clearly state that my desire is for Dakota Adventist Academy to be open, to be a place for our students, and be an integral part of the future of the Dakota Conference. There are many others who desire that as well, yet this will not happen based on us simply wishing for it.

There must be a circle of faithful people willing to share their financial resources to ensure our Academy's future. There must be a circle of faithful people praying earnestly for students and staff. There must be a circle of faithful people voicing the many good aspects of our Academy. We need a "circle of faith".

We have asked each member of our K-12 Board and Executive Committee to prayerfully consider what they could give that is above and beyond their regular giving for the next three to five years. When a group of people gathered during Campmeeting they were also asked to contribute. We are calling this our Circle of Faith, and at this moment, about \$120,000 has been pledged to ensure that our Academy continues to operate. That is a great start! I am asking each of you to join in as well.

Many people have spoken to me and shared why an academy in a conference of our size is impossible to maintain. Yet there is something else to consider, the providence and blessings of a generous, prayer-answering God.

Two years ago this month, we were in the grip of a pandemic. Elder Neil Biloff, a man I deeply respect and admire, had announced his retirement. Our conference operational budget was running behind. We were doing everything in our power to continue to employ all of our workers. Then God stepped in. Over the course of the next couple of months, 1.2 million dollars in unexpected monies came in. Those funds enabled us to pause, consider, plan, and continue. Are more gifts likely to come our way? I certainly believe so. When they do, wouldn't it be great to use them to advance into new areas of ministry instead of simply keeping afloat?

Major premise #3 - We are a faith-based organization that counts on God's provision.

Key consideration #3 - The Dakota Conference members are consistently in the top five of per capita giving in the North American Division.

In conclusion, God has called each of us to this place at this time. How we use the time and resources entrusted to us is an opportunity to demonstrate both our commitment and our faithfulness. We may be small in numbers but we are mighty in the Lord.

Upcoming 2022 Regional Meetings

Theme: Tell Someone

What to look forward to:

Sabbath School - 10:00a

Church - 11:00a

Potluck Lunch

Seminar Sessions on Church Life - 2:00p

Supper

Rapid City Regional: October 15

Participating Churches: Custer, Hermosa, Hot Springs, Rapid City, & Spearfish

Aberdeen Regional: November 12

Participating Churches: Aberdeen, Bowdle, Ellendale, Huron, Lehr, Pierre, Tolstoy, & Watertown

Bismarck Regional: December 17

Participating Churches: Bismarck, Bottineau, DAA, Goodrich, Mandan, McClusky, Minot, & Turtle Lake

Calibrating Our Voices

Mark Piotrowski, VP of Administration



May God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of Christ Jesus, so that all of you together may praise with one voice the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - Romans 15:5-6 (Good News).

In the Navy, there is a saying that goes back a long time: Loose lips sink ships. Have you ever heard it? It is a warning to those who serve in the navy not to share talk with the enemy that may lead to sinking their ship. There is no more key place for us to consider our words and conversations than in the church. Ministry can either be strengthened by words of faith, hope, and inspiration or be weakened and demised by unholy conversations.

The tongue enables us to do many good things. Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word spoken at the right time is like golden apples on a silver tray." One commentator suggests that this verse speaks of a design of words, being silver baskets of network into which golden apples or oranges are placed, and set on a table, looking beautiful. This refers to words that bring healing, offer comfort, bring about reconciliation and build others up in their walk with Christ. However, the Scriptures warn us that words can also contain the power of death (Proverbs 18:21) and can be misused. The Lord Jesus had direct things to say about the words we utter. "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). Jesus also said that the trend of words emitting from our mouths are an indication of our inner condition (Matthew 12:34).

We all have, in one way or another, been affected by words. Words spoken by ourselves or words spoken by others about us. Words can be used as an intimidation tactic against God's leaders, (Nehemiah 6:5; Psalms 41:5; 3 John 1:9), separate close friends (Proverbs 16:28), betray confidences (Proverbs 11:13), divide God's community of faith (Leviticus 19:16), and words can perpetually fuel the embers of quarrels (Proverbs 26:20). We ought to pay careful attention to the gift of speech that has been given to us. We are surrounded by a world filled with hurtful words. It is on our mobile phones, text messaging, emails, and Facebook. It is not just through technology, but it happens in our homes, at the office, in our neighborhoods, and the list goes on. God's Word offers much sound counsel on how words can be used for good. Bernard Meltzer, renowned radio host who anchored a program for many decades in the past called "What's Your Problem?", used to share the following challenge with his listeners: "Before you speak ask yourself if what you are going to say 1. is true, 2. is kind, 3. is necessary, and 4. is it helpful and encouraging?" These points are in line with the inspired counsels of Ellen White to the church on this important subject, "Christians are elevated in their conversation...They are courteous, kind, and benevolent. Their words are those of sincerity and truth" (*Messages to Young People*, p.349).

Our words should demonstrate the power of God's grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

By His grace, let us aim to build up, strengthen, and encourage our churches and ministries across the Dakotas and His World Church. May we prove to be faithful stewards of God's gifts in our lives - our time, substance, and in our speech.

Dakota Conference Membership Report (1st half of 2022)

Membership as of December 31, 2021 - 3,836 members

Membership as of June 30, 2022 - 3,851 members

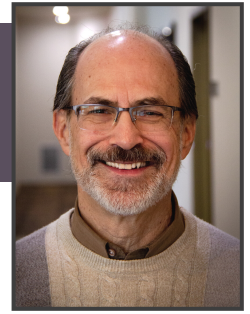
Dropped by:		Additions:	
<i>Letter</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Baptisms & Professions of Faith</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Deceased</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Letters of Transfer</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Removed</i>	<i>3</i>		
TOTAL	57	TOTAL	72

Membership in the Dakota Conference increased by 15 members or 0.4% in 2022 (January - June). This is the first increase in 3 years.

We praise the Lord for His goodness!

Rural Beacons of Light

Mark Seibold, VP of Finance

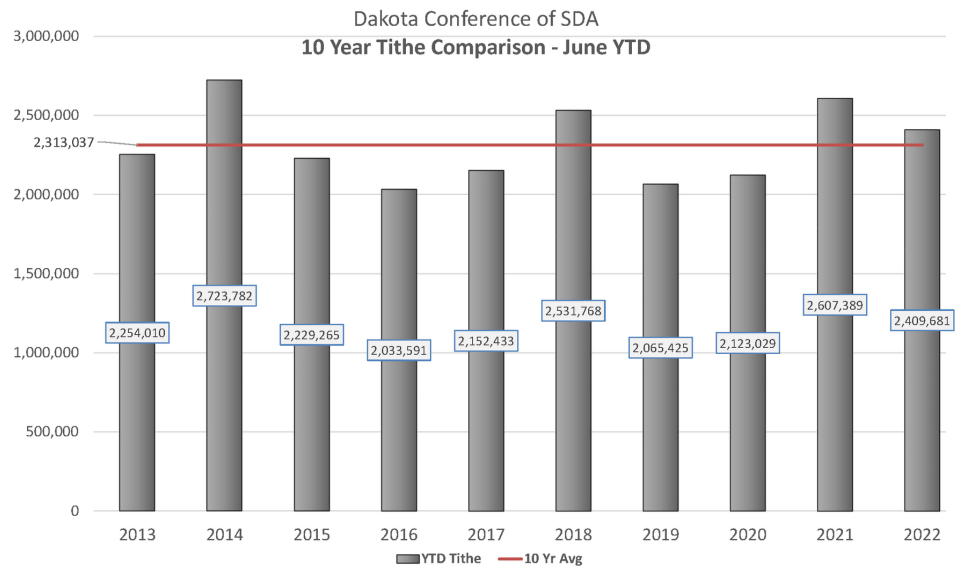


Over the last couple of months, I've had the opportunity to visit several of our small churches. Two of these were particularly notable as they are congregations that are so much a part of my life, mostly as youth, but still hold a special place in my heart.

I was baptized as a member of the Cleveland Seventh-day Adventist Church, in North Dakota, when I was ten. Until leaving home for academy and college, this church community was my social and spiritual home and the people there helped shape my views of the world and of God during these formative years. On a recent visit, it was a blessing to see how several generations of members, many of them lifelong friends and relatives, are actively engaged and interested in making a positive difference. With God's help, they are influencing their neighbors through the gospel message.

Similarly, I recently visited the New Home Adventist Church in central North Dakota. A smaller group today with fewer familiar faces, this was the church where my father was raised and my paternal grandparents spent most of their years. It was easily my family's second "home" church as we often attended for family events. While a more isolated country church, a positive spirit for God is obvious as the members work to find ways to promote the message of His love in their areas of influence. It was a blessing to be able to participate!

These are only two examples in our conference of small churches that are making a positive difference. In Dakota, we hear of rural congregations fading away in this time of great demographic change, so it's gratifying to see how small rural congregations can remain relevant and be a vibrant local influence. Please continue to pray for our conference and especially our smaller legacy churches as they strive to be shining lights in their communities.



DAKOTA CONFERENCE TOWN HALLS

Join us for a DAA centered meeting!

- Bismarck - September 8
- Fargo - September 19
- Aberdeen - September 22
- Jamestown - September 26

- Dickinson - September 27
- Rapid City - October 13
- Sioux Falls - October 20



Each meeting will be held at the local church and begin at 6:30p.

Come One, Come All! You are invited to attend one of our Conference Town Halls. These meetings will be centered around Dakota Adventist Academy with the goal to share as much information as possible regarding how our Conference is working towards the long-term viability of DAA.

Along with updates, financial information, and trend lines, you will have the opportunity to ask anything about DAA. Please plan to attend one of the seven meetings being held at the local Adventist Church. They will begin at 6:30p, local time, and last no more than 90 minutes.

Follow Me

Ted Struntz, Youth & Young Adults Director



We had a great summer at the Dakota Adventist Camps! Starting out at Flag Mountain in the Black Hills and ending at Northern Lights on Lake Metigoshe, our weeks seemed to be filled with non-stop action and memory-making opportunities. It was so exciting to listen to the memories of campers who have attended our camps for 10 or more years, and it was awesome to overhear the new memories our cub campers shared with their parents as they got ready to go home on Sunday. Like them, we can't wait to see them back next summer.

Each day was filled with fun; between the two camps, campers rock climbed, baked, swam, water skied, wake boarded, mountain biked, ziplined, tubed, sailed, creek walked, kayaked, made crafts, and did archery. They also played volleyball, ultimate frisbee, King of the Dock, banana tag, Nerf War, and other various games. Campers also sang and helped lead out in daily worships. While our days were full of activities, our morning and evening worships together were some of our campers' favorite parts of the week. Hearing our young people praise the Lord is an amazing experience.

The best time for me was during the three baptisms, including baptizing one of our own staff. It was a powerful moment to see our lifeguard Seth get baptized in the very water he spent all summer keeping swimmers safe - it was an ultimate lifesaving experience! Seeing our young people make decisions to follow Jesus and be baptized in front of their camp friends and visiting family members is an experience that can't be beaten. Praise God! Besides those three who decided to be baptized during the summer, we had 111 campers decide to follow Jesus!

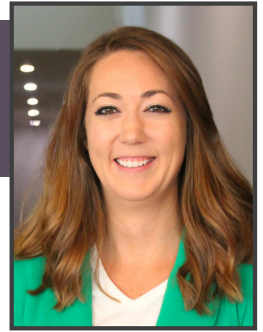
These decisions mirrored our theme this year: Follow Me. Those simple words spoken by Jesus to His disciples ended up changing their lives forever. This summer, campers learned that although following Jesus isn't always easy, it can sure be exciting because He shows up in big ways to help His followers. There isn't anything more rewarding and life-changing than following Jesus! Each week, we emphasized how Jesus wants us to follow Him in every part of our lives. I can't wait to hear the stories of how more than a hundred of our campers' lives have been impacted by their decisions to follow Him. Beyond the fun and the friendships made, this is what camp ministry is really about - helping kids follow Jesus for the rest of their lives. Thank you for supporting our camp ministry!

Halie Garrett



Education

Kelli Wasemiller, Education Superintendent



"I, Peter, am an apostle on assignment by Jesus, the Messiah, writing to exiles scattered to the four winds. Not one is missing, not one forgotten. God the Father has his eye on each of you, and has determined by the work of the Spirit to keep you obedient through the sacrifice of Jesus. May everything good from God be yours!" (1 Peter 1:1-2, Message).

I think it's safe to say that over the past couple of years, each of us has had a moment where we felt like an exile. Have you felt lonely? Disconnected from family, friends, or your spiritual community? Or maybe you lie awake at night praying for your children, grandchildren, or church children, whom you see struggling to connect with the faith you hold so dear? Take heart in Peter's words that no one is missing, no one is forgotten. God sees, God hears, and God acts. The Spirit is working in the Dakotas!

Dakota Conference educators recently gathered for their fall in-service meetings and were guided by guest presenter Mindy Salyers to remember the faithful presence of God during our times of discouragement, exhaustion, and loneliness. She provided resources on spiritual and intellectual self-care, stress, anxiety, depression, and conflict resolution. Time was spent in personal reflection, group collaboration, and prayers of dedication.

Jovannah Poor Bear-Adams, Dakota Adventist Academy's vice-principal and English teacher, expressed, "Her presentation was a much-needed breath of fresh air. Issues of self often get ignored. It was nice to be able to face it head-on." "Mindy was just what I needed for this in-service. I could tell she spoke from the heart and experience. It was interesting, applicable, interactive, and inspiring," related another educator.

Mindy is a licensed school counselor with a burden on her heart to support the mental health of our young people. She created Counselation, which "provides academic, spiritual, and developmental tools for success that promote emotional wellness for all students of Seventh-day Adventist schools" (2021). Visit www.counselation.com to see videos and activities that she has available for families and students.



**SCHOOL
COUNSELATION**

As another school year begins, I invite you to reflect upon your role as an Adventist educator. From parents, to Sabbath School teachers, to Pathfinder leaders, I have yet to meet an individual in this conference who doesn't have a burden on their heart for our young people. May we partner together this year to create the environment and provide the opportunities for every young person in the Dakotas to have an encounter with the love of Jesus and desire a personal relationship with Him. If there is anything we can do to serve or advocate for the young people in your life, don't hesitate to ask.



A big "thank you!" to our Dakota church family for showing your appreciation of our teachers and staff by treating them to an evening of fellowship aboard the Lewis and Clark Riverboat.

Employees on the Move

Jodi Dossenko, Communication Director



Carlene Lang

Carlene Lang has accepted the lower grade teaching position at Hillcrest Elementary School in Jamestown, ND. She and her husband Darrell are no strangers to the Dakotas having lived in Jamestown in the past. Carlene has spent the last 11 years teaching in Chadron, NE.

Trudy Smith has returned to the Dakota Conference to teach upper grades at Hillcrest School. She started her career in the Dakotas and then worked in various conferences around the Mid-America Union before returning "home". She and her husband, Jerry, plan to retire in the area.



Trudy Smith



Annabelle Harper

Annabelle Harper is a recent graduate of Union College and has joined the Dakota teaching staff. She will be teaching upper grades at Rapid City Adventist Elementary. Even though South Dakota is a long way from her home state of Georgia, she looks forward to this new experience.

Pastor Marveen Gentillon has recently moved from the Hermosa, Rapid City, Spearfish district to serve the newly formed Bismarck, DAA church district. He has spent the last two years in South Dakota and is ready to embark on a new ministry chapter in North Dakota.



Marveen Gentillon



Greg Ratter

Greg Ratter is returning to Dakota Adventist Academy to teach History after spending a year in California. He formerly served at DAA as assistant boys' dean after completing his student teaching in the History department. He and his wife Karen were recently married.

Forrest Calhoun is the new food service director at Dakota Adventist Academy. Originally from South Dakota, he and his family recently moved from Gallup, NM. He is excited to return and work in the Dakotas. Forrest and Ilene have one son with another child on the way.



Forrest Calhoun



Stephen & Cindy Eastwood

Pastor Stephen & Cindy Eastwood accepted the call to the Pierre, Bowdle church district in South Dakota. The Eastwoods recently pastored in the Central California Conference. Cindy's grandparents are from the Mobridge area and she has fond memories of her time in South Dakota, so it was an easy decision for the couple to make the move. They have five adult children.

Pastors Kris and Kisa de Bruin have moved to the Bismarck area. Kris accepted the pastoral position at the Mandan Adventist Church and Kisa will be working at Dakota Adventist Academy as the chaplain and upper grades' Bible teacher. The de Bruins have spent the last couple of years in the Aberdeen, Ellendale, Lehr, Watertown church district where Kris served as the associate pastor.



Kris & Kisa de Bruin

DAKOTA CONFERENCE WOMEN'S RETREAT

"Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments."
Psalm 119:66 (NKJV)

Use the QR code to register:

Class is in Session

September 30 - October 2, 2022

The Abbey of the Hills
46561 147th St
Marvin, South Dakota

Brochures and registration information is available at:
dakotaadventist.org/ministries/womens-ministries

Dakota Conference

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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www.dakotaadventist.org



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CALENDAR

September

- 5 Office Closed - Labor Day
- 8 Bismarck Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 11 K-12 Meeting - Office (10a)
- 11 SE ACS Federation Mtg - Pierre (10a)
- 12 NE ACS Federation Mtg - Jamestown (10a)
- 13 NW ACS Federation Mtg - Grassy Butte (10a)
- 18 SW ACS Federation Mtg - Rapid City (10a)
- 19 Fargo Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 19-22 Elementary Outdoor School - Northern Lights
- 22 Aberdeen Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 25 Executive Committee - Office (10a)
- 26 Jamestown Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 27 Dickinson Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 30-2 Women's Retreat - The Abbey of the Hills

October - Pastor Appreciation Month

- 7-8 DAA/SRA/PVA Alumni Weekend
- 9-11 New in Ministry Meetings
- 13 Rapid City Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 15 Rapid City Regional
- 18 Executive Committee - Zoom (7p)
- 20 Sioux Falls Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 29 Endowment Sabbath

November

- 6 K-12 Board - Office (10a)
- 12 Aberdeen Regional
- 14-17 MAUC Year-end Meetings
- 18 MAUC Executive Committee - Lincoln
- 23-24 Office Closed - Thanksgiving

President, Evangelism, ASI

Mark Weir

VP of Admin, HR, Church Ministries

Mark Piotrowski

Admin Assistant, Receptionist

Jaelyn Pickett

Admin Assistant, Membership Clerk

Julie Brude

Communication

Jodi Dossenko

Development, ABC

Lynette Miller

VP of Finance

Mark Seibold

Associate Treasurer

Cindy Miller

Treasury Clerk

Judy Weir

Youth & Young Adults, Camps

Ted Struntz

Maintenance Services

Marlin Miller

Field Officers

Adventist Community Services

Bob Forbes II

Education Superintendent

Kelli Wasemiller

Men's Ministries

Randy Rubbert

Ministerial Director

Vernon Herholdt

Prayer Ministries

Barry St. Clair

Women's Ministries

Paulette Bullinger