



"It's Not That Far to Bethlehem"

December 16, 2023
3:00pm

featuring
DAA's Choir,
Instrumentalists, &
Handbell ensemble

Also featuring
students from
Brentwood Adventist
Christian School

Three gold starburst decorations of increasing size are arranged diagonally from bottom-left to top-right.

On December 16, 2023, join us at Dakota Adventist Academy for a special presentation of "It's Not That Far to Bethlehem" by Dennis and Nan Allen—an enchanting Christmas musical drama showcasing DAA's choir, instrumentalists, and handbell ensemble. This heartwarming yet poignant performance will also feature students from Brentwood Adventist Christmas School.

The event takes place in DAA's auditorium, beginning at 3:00 pm. Admission is free, and a free-will offering will be collected. Extend the invitation to your friends; everyone is welcome to join in the festive celebration.

Blessings Amidst Challenges

As I reflect on the past year, I am confronted with a tapestry woven from both the threads of difficulty and the fabric of triumphs. Life has, at times, presented itself as a challenge, yet when I choose to view these adversities through the lens of gratitude, a transformative perspective emerges. It's a realization that even in the face of hardships, my circumstances could be more severe—I have a warm house to go home to, a family who loves me, food in my pantry, a reliable mode of transportation, and a God who died to save me.

In navigating this year's challenges, I am reminded of the profound truth echoed in 1 Peter 1:7 (CEV): "Your faith will be like gold that has been tested in a fire. And these trials will prove that your faith is worth much more than gold that can be destroyed. They will show that you will be given praise and honor and glory when Jesus Christ returns." Through the refining flames, God has bestowed upon me a testimony of His goodness, a narrative to share with those who find themselves struggling with similar hardships.

Shifting our focus to thankfulness is not merely a sentiment; it is a deliberate and transformative practice. Here are some actionable ways to redirect our thoughts toward gratitude:

- **Start a Gratitude Journal:** Take a moment each day to list the many things you are thankful for. In the act of writing, you'll find that even in the midst of challenges, there are blessings to be acknowledged.
- **Reflect on Positives at Day's End:** Allocate five minutes at the close of each day to acknowledge and allow yourself to feel the frustrations of encountered hardships. However, use this time intentionally, like a pivot point, to shift your focus towards the positive aspects of the day. This simple act can set the tone for a restful night and a hopeful tomorrow.
- **Express Gratitude Verbally:** Take the time to verbally express your gratitude to others. Whether through a simple "thank you" or a heartfelt note, sharing your appreciation can deepen connections.
- **Serve Others:** Engage in acts of kindness and service for others. Helping those in need can



shift your focus from personal challenges to the positive impact you can have on someone else's life.

- **Create a Blessings Jar:** Find a jar and fill it with notes about things you are grateful for, acknowledging each entry as a testimony to God's goodness. Read through these notes during challenging times to remind yourself of the positives in your life.
- **Spend Time in Nature:** Spend time outdoors and connect with nature. Whether it's a walk in the park or simply sitting in a garden, immerse yourself in the beauty of God's creation. In these moments, let the wonders of nature inspire gratitude in your heart for the intricate design and artistry of the Creator.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate small achievements and victories, no matter how minor, recognizing them as God's guidance and blessings. This practice reinforces a positive mindset rooted in faith.
- **Limit Negative Inputs:** Be mindful of the media and information you consume. Limit exposure to negative news and surround yourself with content that inspires gratitude and positivity.
- **Reflect on Lessons Learned:** During challenging times, reflect on the lessons learned and the personal growth that has resulted. Framing difficulties as opportunities for learning can shift your perspective.

As we embrace gratitude as a spiritual practice, may our reflections not only be a personal endeavor but also a source of strength and encouragement for others who journey through the refining fires of life. Through gratitude, may we find a sacred connection with the divine, a reminder that even in our trials, we are held in the arms of a loving and purposeful Creator. One who cares for us so deeply that He will never leave us to face the fires alone.

Worship Thoughts by Jodi Dossenko, Dakota Conference communication director.

Knighly Knews: DAA Newsletter



If you are interested in receiving the *Knighly Knews*, a monthly newsletter about the happenings at Dakota Adventist Academy, [click here](#) to sign up!

Dakota Constituency Town Halls

DAKOTA CONFERENCE TOWN HALLS
Constituency Delegates & Guests Welcome

Sioux Falls - Nov 11, 5:30p	Dickinson - Dec 6, 6:30p
Bismarck - Nov 28, 6:30p	Aberdeen - Dec 12, 6:30p
Minot - Nov 29, 6:30p	Fargo - Jan 3, 6:30p
Jamestown - Dec 4, 6:30p	Rapid City - Jan 9, 6:30p

Each meeting will be held at the local church.

The purpose of the Town Hall meetings is to:

- Provide orientation regarding procedures, processes, and session rules of order
- Discuss any issues pertaining to the session
- Gain input and advice from the representatives of local churches
- Raise issues that may be added to the session agenda
- Elect representatives to serve on the nominating committee for the constituency session.

Town Hall meetings will be held at the local Adventist Church; see graphic for locations and times. These meetings are geared primarily towards delegates, but all members are encouraged to attend and support your conference. Please plan to arrive and register approximately 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting. Each church supports its own delegates; consider carpooling to save expenses.

Regional Church Breakdown:

- **Sioux Falls:** Hurley, Huron, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, Yankton
- **Bismarck:** Bismarck, DAA, Goodrich, Mandan, McClusky
- **Minot:** Bottineau, Bowdon Country, Harvey, Manfred, Minot, Turtle Lake
- **Jamestown:** Cleveland, Edgeley, Jamestown, New Home
- **Dickinson:** Beulah, Bison, Bowman, Grassy Butte, Invitation Hill, Richardton, Watford City, Williston
- **Aberdeen:** Aberdeen, Bowdle, Ellendale, Kulm, Lehr, Pierre, Watertown
- **Fargo:** Fargo, Grand Forks, Wahpeton
- **Rapid City:** Custer, Hermosa, Hot Springs, Rapid City, Spearfish

Youth & Young Adults

We are so thankful for all of you who partner with us in ministry! Thank you for supporting our Dakota youth! Happy Thanksgiving! –Pastor Ted & Lynnette Struntz



Pastor Ted & Lynnette Struntz, Dakota Youth & Young Adult Department. Photo by Rachel Skaife.

Office Staff: Mark Piotrowski, Mark Seibold, Jessica Stanton, Mark Weir

Adventist Entities: Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Yankton, Hurley, Brookings, Vermillion, Yankton Reservation

Southeast, South Dakota: Fargo, Moorhead, MN, Wahpeton, Ellendale, Jamestown, Cleveland, Edgeley



DAKOTANS PRAY
is now scheduled weekly
Thursdays at 7:00p CT

Meeting ID: 841 1749 9925
Passcode: 382190
Call In: 669.444.9171

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84117499925?pwd=MHJVS0k4Ryt1UWVXT0l4MDlmc2NoZz09>

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Other: General Conference (GC) & World Divisions

[Click here](#) to visit the Prayer Ministries webpage.

Kids' Corner

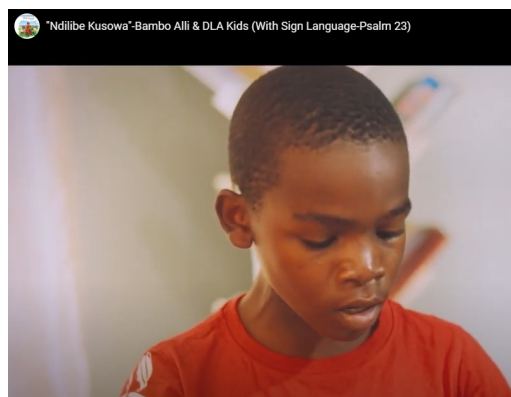
One of the amazing things about the Adventist church is that we are part of a worldwide family! Kelli Wasemiller recently received an email from Emmanuel who lives in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, which is a country in Southern Africa. He discovered the Dakota SDA Kids YouTube channel and was inspired by the sing-along videos to do something similar. He created a rendition of "The Lord is My Shepherd," #48 in the Sing for Joy songbook, and had kids sing in their native language and incorporate sign language into the video performance. This song and video have become so beloved by children that it is constantly being requested and shared on the local TV channels.

Emmanuel thanked Kelli for the Dakota SDA Kids YouTube channel and for providing easy access to Adventist kids' content. He prays that God continues to bless this ministry and that children as well as adults will be reached across the globe.

Enjoy Emmanuel's video "Ndilibe Kusowa."
[youtube.com/watch?v=uDapiuGERfQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDapiuGERfQ)

Here is the playlist for the "Sing for Joy," songbook:

[youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT8TBICrTY6dCOJI77EFOS8sJZEyVDYy1&si=aH98i_gjblKcSI4Y](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT8TBICrTY6dCOJI77EFOS8sJZEyVDYy1&si=aH98i_gjblKcSI4Y)



And Kelli is currently singing her way through the "Little Voices Praise Him," songbook
[youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT8TBICrTY6cG4CtZHH-tFLNkDU6hyQU9&si=qBneWDEcFaliMvOg](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT8TBICrTY6cG4CtZHH-tFLNkDU6hyQU9&si=qBneWDEcFaliMvOg)

If you are interested in helping create video content for the Dakota SDA Kids YouTube channel, please contact Kelli at dakotachildrenministries@gmail.com

Happy Birthday, Jesus is a 25-day activity devotional for the whole family created by the North American Division, Children's Ministries department. This devotional will take you through the first 25 days of December, to help you celebrate and remember Jesus, the real reason for the season. Visit this website link to print all sorts of fun resources including memory games, sticker sheets, and countdown calendars:

www.childmin.org/happybirthdayjesus



Visit the Dakota Conference Children's Ministries YouTube channel, [Dakota SDA Kids](#), and explore the many videos available for children.

Kelli Wasemiller is the Dakota Conference elementary education superintendent.

Bringing Holiday Cheer

December 5, 2023
6:30 - 7:30 pm

*DAA Singers and
Ringers of Joy Hand-
bell Choir performing at
Kirkwood Mall*



If you are in the Bismarck area on December 5, 2023, consider visiting the Kirkwood Mall to support the Dakota Adventist Academy students and the music department.

Dakota Conference Calendar

The offering schedule is in purple.

The office preaching/visitation schedule is in blue.

Conference Regionals and Town Hall schedule is in green.

November -

- 22-23: Office Closed - Thanksgiving
- 25: Annual Sacrifice
- 28: Bismarck Constituency Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 29: Minot Constituency Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)

December -

- 2: Local Church Budget
- 2: Elder Mark Piotrowski preaching in Sioux Falls, SD
- 2: Elder Ted Struntz preaching in Spearfish, SD
- 2: Jodi Dossenko singing in Fargo, ND
- 2: DAA Church-to-Church Program in Turtle Lake, ND
- 4: Jamestown Constituency Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 5: K-12 Finance Committee via Zoom (7p)
- 6: Dickinson Constituency Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 9: NAD Adventist Community Services
- 9: Elder Mark Piotrowski preaching in Spearfish, SD
- 10: Executive Committee - Conference Office (10a)
- 11: Constitution & Bylaws Committee via Zoom (7p)
- 12: Aberdeen Constituency Town Hall Meeting (6:30p)
- 15: DAA Celebration of Praise
- 16: DAA Celebration of Praise and Bismarck Regional - DAA (10a)
- 16: DAA Christmas Concert (3p)
- 16: Dakota Challenge
- 23: Local Church Budget
- 25: Office Closed - Christmas
- 30: Dakota Evangelism

For more scheduled events, please see the calendar on the Dakota Conference website: www.dakotaadventist.org/events

Blessed & Kept

May grace abound in your heart.

May you view your mistakes in their full context.

May you give yourself the grace you would give to someone else making the same mistake who clearly was trying their best.

May you view others' mistakes in their full context.

May you remember that all of us are living together in a broken world and almost everyone is trying their best.

Even when you have the overwhelming suspicion that someone is not in fact trying their best, may you have grace enough to give them the benefit of the doubt.

May your graceful posture increase your sense of gratitude and awareness for the profound grace you have received.

Written by Casey Bartlett. To follow Casey's Podcast *Blessed & Kept* click [here](#).



The Dakota Conference Communication Department is always looking for beautiful photos to use in the *Dakota Dispatch*, *Dakota Messenger*, the website, and more. If you are willing to share, please send them to communication@dakotasda.org with the name of the photographer and a short description of where it was taken.

If you have local church news or stories to share, please send event information, news suggestions and/or articles, and pictures to: communication@dakotasda.org

Dakota Dispatch Mission: To build a climate of encouragement and blessing through the sharing of witnessing and evangelism activities. If you have news to share or would like to be added to the ***Dakota Dispatch*** mailing list, please email Jodi Dossenکو at

communication@dakotasda.org. Bison [Copyright](#). Cover photo credit: soybean field by Chrystal Rittenbach.

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 - [!\[\]\(7325769475e8f4bf67f57a0cbebc8ab9_img.jpg\) Dakota Conference Education](#)
 - [!\[\]\(1a468f12cdfc63dc07896d0781cf55ec_img.jpg\) Dakota Adventist Academy](#)
 - [!\[\]\(a9a0baec8ceb7d7c04180806eca8d32a_img.jpg\) Dakota Youth and Young Adults / Camps](#)
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