



Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

## CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

All United Methodist churches are connected through shared mission and ministry and united in their efforts to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world. Check out these news tidbits from the Minnesota Annual Conference, which serves all 360 United Methodist churches in the state.

- **Reach new people in your community:** Jesus commands us to make disciples, but figuring out how to do that authentically and practically often raises questions and creates anxiety. Five speakers from across the nation offered fantastic inspiration and suggestions to 500 Dakotas and Minnesota United Methodists gathered at a “Reach” event in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in early October. Videos of their presentations, and an accompanying study guide, are now available—and these tools are guaranteed to give your congregation new ideas and new passion for reaching the next person for Jesus. Find them at <https://tinyurl.com/reach-DKMN> and explore them with a team or small group.
- **Share your “Why Jesus?” story:** Oftentimes, we don’t share our personal faith stories because we’re afraid. But in this broken world, there are people all around us who need to hear what God has done in our lives. Rev. Roz Picardo, executive director of new church development at Ginghamburg Church in Ohio and a speaker at the Oct. 5-6 Reach event, offers a framework for a short elevator speech of your story. What was life like before your Jesus encounter, what was your Jesus encounter, and what does your life look like now? Fill in these blanks: I used to be \_\_\_\_\_. My turning point was \_\_\_\_\_. Now I’m \_\_\_\_\_. Then flesh out your story from there. Who could be helped, who could be

healed, and who could receive forgiveness because of your story? Try sharing it with someone!

- **Make a scarf for a visitor:** The United Methodist General Conference (The United Methodist Church’s top lawmaking body) will be coming to Minneapolis in 2020. The Dakotas-Minnesota Area intends to greet every delegate, dignitary, bishop, and spouse with a handmade scarf. All United Methodists in Minnesota and the Dakotas are invited to help knit or crochet 10,000 purple scarves for these visitors. This initiative is called “the Lydia Project,” after Lydia in Acts 16. Will you help? Learn more at <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/lydiaproject>

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### BRIGHT SPOT IN OUR MIDST

- **Embracing God’s love in Le Sueur:** Lisa, James, and their two children (none of whom had a religious upbringing) joined Le Sueur UMC in 2016 after 12-year-old Calvin repeatedly asked to attend services. After they began coming, they made good friends and got involved, and the kids started attending “Jesus and Me” (JAM), a program for youth. Last fall, a fire damaged the family’s home, forcing them to move to temporary housing and adjust to a new life. “That fire changed me,” said Lisa. “In the past, before I had a church family, I would have seen it as validation that I was worthless.” The fire was the first tragedy she encountered without feeling like being angry with God. “Before becoming Methodist, I would have said, ‘I don’t think I’m part of God’s plan,’” she said. “Now, due to the fire and the response from the church, I *do* feel like I’m part of God’s story!” Lisa said she used to have a love/hate relationship with God. “I now see that God never hated me—He’s always loved me,” she said. Thanks be to God!

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### STAY CONNECTED!

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