

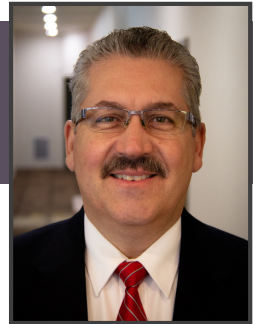


# Dakota Messenger

DAKOTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

## *What We Wish For*

Mark R. Weir, President



At our recent January Pastor's meetings, one of our presenters paused during his presentation and asked me an intriguing question, one that I have often thought about. "If money were no concern, what would you wish to happen in the Dakota Conference over the next five years?"

That is a loaded question. I am a pragmatist at heart and extremely conscientious in regard to our financial resources. Every available dollar we have comes from the generous hearts of our Dakota family. With that knowledge, I want to be sure that each and every one of those hard-earned dollars is carefully utilized. An endless supply of money to do whatever with is a pie-in-the-sky fantasy, yet I still dream of what could happen here in the Dakotas. With all of that running through my head, it was time to share a bit of my heart. "I would wish that for the next several years we could plant one church every year in the various population centers across our conference."

Planting a church provides a new opportunity to reach people - of a different group or in a different part of town. It is a new opportunity for more people to get involved. It is a new opportunity to perhaps do church differently.

Now before anyone thinks I am dreaming of something radical, everything we currently enjoy in our churches was new once. This goes for indoor plumbing, microphones, big screens, even pianos and organs. At every one of those changes there was someone against it. Different isn't bad.

With that being said, I can imagine some people saying, "Why start new churches when our current churches aren't full?" There may be a number of factors contributing to why our churches aren't full but that is a discussion for a different time. Right now, people are moving into the Dakotas. Are we prepared to receive them?

In the last decade the population in North Dakota has grown tremendously. Most of that growth has been in Fargo, Mandan, Bismarck, and Dickinson. South Dakota has also seen significant growth and people are flocking to the Sioux Falls and Rapid City areas. I think that this trend is only going to continue. If that is the case, what do we need to do to impact those that are moving in? The answer is simple - reach them where they are.

Yet that simple answer would require significant thought and effort. It means that we may need to think about planting a church focused on a different ethnic group. It may mean that we aim at a different age group. For example, the median age of the Fargo community is almost half of our typical churches, so what would it look like to target a younger audience? Another example is our Sioux Falls church. Located in one

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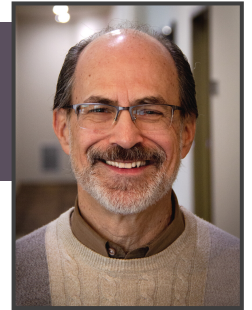
corner of the community, now surrounded by new homes, what about focusing on a different area of town? Tea, South Dakota, a neighboring community, has seen an 88% population increase in the last ten years. Again, I think this trend will only continue.

We are a people of movement, of focus, of energy, of faithfulness. We are a people of commitment and mission. We are a people who view life through the lens of eternity. We are Adventists and we have a wonderful message about Jesus to share!

Each one of us is a member because someone shared with us. Maybe it was mom and dad. Maybe a teacher. Maybe they shared through bible studies or a public meeting. The key is that someone shared. We must continue to be people who share because the message of a better kingdom, a heavenly one, has never been more needed than today.

# Treasurer's Report

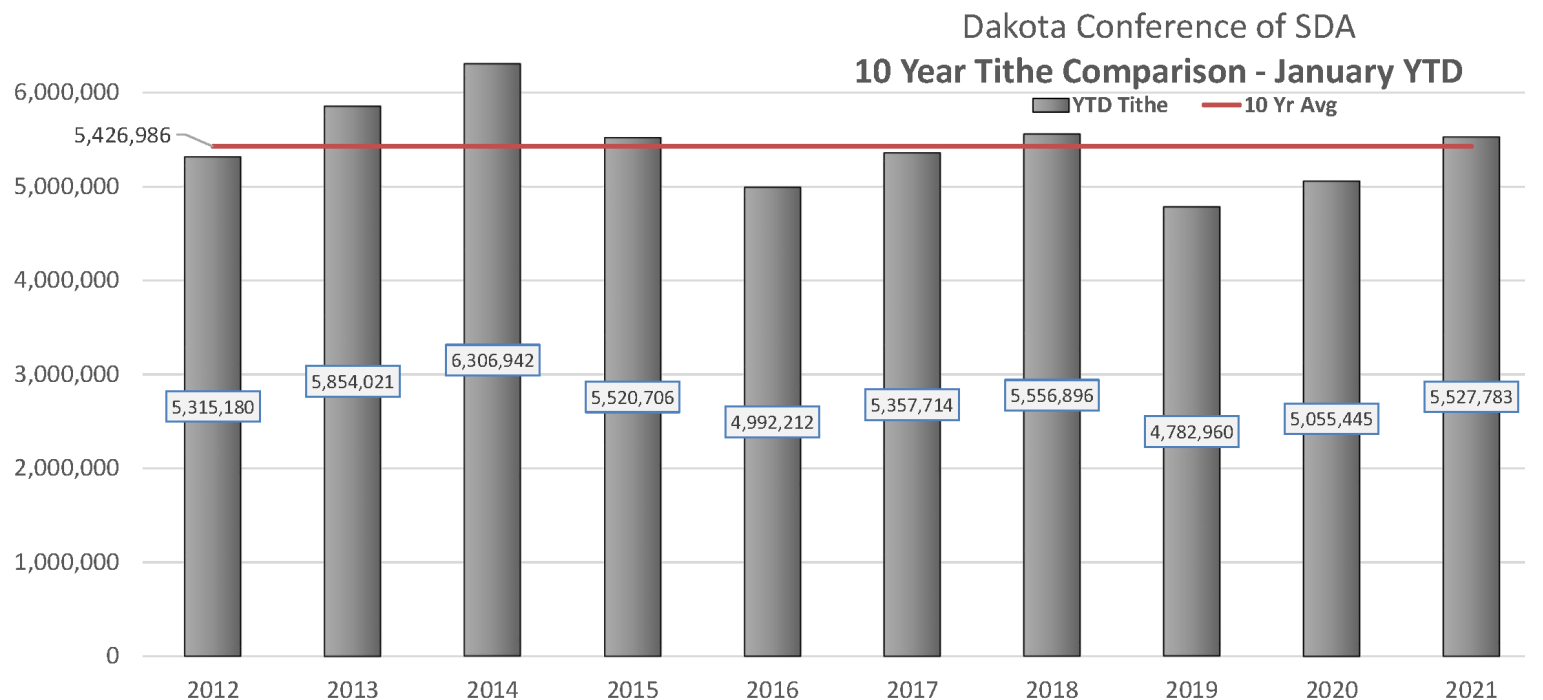
Mark Seibold, VP of Finance



Now that 2021 is complete, we can look back and reflect on the blessings God has provided to Dakota Conference.

After lower tithes in 2019 and 2020, 2021 showed a significant rebound, making it the fourth highest tithe year in the last ten. Given unsettled economic conditions largely affected by the pandemic, we must credit God blessing our members and His prompting in their hearts to respond so generously! Higher tithes and offerings, combined with lower expenses in several categories, have allowed Dakota Conference reserves to recover to some extent, promoting operational stability. Also encouraging is the start to 2022, where January tithe was the highest in conference records for that month!

While we don't know what lies ahead in 2022, we can rely on God's faithfulness to lead our churches, conferences, unions and divisions in the best possible direction to promote His gospel, regardless of financial considerations. We at Dakota Conference appreciate your stewardship, faithfulness, and prayerful support as we forge ahead in this vitally important ministry to the Dakota region.



# Before You Tell Someone

Mark Piotrowski, VP of Administration



*"Don't begin telling others yet - stay here... until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." - Luke 24:49, TLB*

In the book of Acts, there is a lot of action. It isn't named "Acts" for nothing! Luke has provided an inspirational account of the church's development from the resurrection of Jesus to Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the point at which the book ends. Luke describes the emergence of Christianity from its primitive beginnings, when it was seen as an offshoot of Judaism, to its position as a movement of worldwide status and appeal. So powerful was it felt in society that it was nicknamed "The Way" (Acts 9:2 and 19:9).

When you read Acts, one dominant word comes to the foreground: MISSION. We are told about the mission in Jerusalem (2:14-8:3), the mission to those living in Judea and Samaria (8:4-9:43), the inauguration of mission to those outside of Judaism, the gentiles (10:1-15:35) and the mission of Paul to the ends of the Earth (15:36-28:31). The book is full of preaching, miraculous acts, bold testimony, loving community, and divine power. Within a span of just over three decades, the New Testament Church carried the gospel to the ends of the Roman Empire (Col. 1:5-6, 23) and was made known to all the nations (Rom. 16:25-26). So, what was the secret behind their success? What made the difference to their witness? The answer is clear in their story. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:5, 8).

Jesus told them to wait to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they went to tell anyone or to preach the gospel and fulfill the ministry of Jesus. Luke would intentionally position the command that Jesus gave to the disciples at the end of his gospel. The Living Bible paraphrases the command in Luke 24:49 this way: "And now I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven. So, they did what Jesus said; they waited." "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). For ten days, they met in the upper room to study, fast, pray and make all things right between one another and with God. Ellen White described their fellowship with the following words: "These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised" (The Acts of the Apostles, p.37).

A closer look at the blueprint for ministry in the New Testament church is they first availed themselves to be prepared by God for witness. They came into unity to then spend time in repentance, humility, and revival. They were qualified to receive God's gift from heaven. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that it is only then that they went out to tell others the good news. To put it succinctly, they first PREPARED then RECEIVED and only afterwards went forward to PROCLAIM to all peoples—religious leaders, philosophers, kings and rulers and folk living in cities and in the countryside.

We find this to be one of the most profound secrets for successful ministry hiding in plain sight. In Revelation 12:17, we read about a winning blueprint for the early church and for His end-time church today. Let's strive to follow this pattern to complete His mission that is ordained by Heaven, here in the Dakotas.

*"We find this to be one of the most profound secrets for successful ministry hiding in plain sight."*



# Introductions

Kelli Wasemiller, Education Superintendent & Children's Ministries



In January, Kelli (Vigil) Wasemiller accepted the invitation of the Dakota Conference to serve in the half-time position of superintendent for the Dakotas. Kelli is humbled and honored to serve in this role and is excited to support Dakota teachers and advocate for the education of children.

Kelli grew up in Hutchinson, Minnesota, in a family that was dedicated to the ministry of the Adventist Church. This made her hesitant to become a teacher because she knew that it is not simply a job—it's a lifestyle. A variety of experiences such as working at summer camp and as an academy assistant girls' dean solidified God's call in her life. She attended Adventist schools all of her life and graduated from Northwoods Elementary and Maplewood Academy in Minnesota, and from Union College in Nebraska with a B.S. in elementary education.

After graduation, Kelli went on to teach upper grades at the Rapid City Adventist Elementary School and later moved to Washington state to serve as a 7-8th grade junior high teacher. After getting married and moving back to the Dakotas, Kelli began a master's degree in Ministry Leadership with an emphasis in Human Services, which she will finish this summer.

Stephen, Kelli's husband, hails from Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is a graduate of Loma Linda University now serving as a cardiologist in Rapid City. The couple loves to spend time outdoors and tries to hike, camp, and backpack as often as they can. They have two dogs named Zeus and Clyde.

Kelli believes education starts in the home and from there grows while attending Sabbath school, church, camp, and Campmeeting. She is excited to invest in all Dakota Conference families and is thrilled to be a part of the conference team. Her personal philosophy is to create an environment and provide the opportunities for each young person to have an encounter with the love of Jesus, so they desire a personal relationship with Him.

## Visit our YouTube Channel: Dakota SDA Kids

Visit our YouTube channel for content designed for kids!

- **Yellow Chair Devotionals** provide a daily devotional video.
- **Storytime with Zeus** presents a weekly read-aloud book.
- **Craft Corner** is a monthly video featuring easy themed crafts.
- **Sing-Along Songs** invite participation and worship through music.



To visit the YouTube channel, please use the QR code by opening your phone's camera app and focusing on the code:

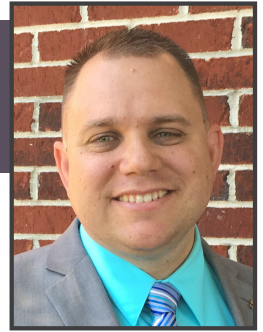


## 28 Fundamental Beliefs for Kids on Dakota SDA Kids YouTube Channel

There were 28 days in February and 28 Fundamental Beliefs, a "match made in heaven"! Every day in February, a new kids' devotional video was posted on the Dakota SDA Kids YouTube channel. Dakota pastors and ministerial team were hard at work to prepare these videos and were excited to share them with children around our Conference. The project features videos from: Pr. Harold Chin, Pr. Kris de Bruin, Pr. Marveen Gentillon, Pr. Dave Moench, Pr. Mark Piotrowski, Pr. Darren Purdy, Pr. Barry St. Clair, Pr. Ted Struntz, Pr. Sam Thomas, Kelli Wasemiller, and Pr. Mark Weir.

# Dakota Summer Camps

Ted Struntz, Youth & Young Adults Director



Elder Ted Struntz has accepted the invitation of the Dakota Conference to serve as the camp director, youth and young adult director, as well as lead Pathfinders and Adventurers. He began his new role on February 15, 2022.

Born in New York and raised in several states across the midwest, Struntz is the son of an Adventist evangelist and spent his childhood traveling around the country witnessing firsthand the impact of ministry. His goal in life was to become a medical doctor but while leading a spiritual retreat during his senior year at Laurelbrook Academy, felt the unmistakable call to ministry. He studied theology at Southern Adventist University and during this time spent a year in Loveland, Colorado, as the youth pastor for the Champion Academy Church. It was during his time in Colorado that he developed a special burden for young people.

Weeks after graduation, Struntz married Lynnette Aldridge, the daughter of an Adventist pastor. Their first post was at a church in Georgia at which time he began a Master of Divinity and Lynnette worked at the conference office as managing editor in the communication department. The couple later moved to Michigan, where Ted attended seminary at Andrews and Lynnette began her Masters in English.

Over the last 21 years of ministry, their family has pastored in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Oregon. Struntz has written curriculum for two VBS programs, penned a Q&A column for Kids Ministry Ideas magazine, and directed the Review and Herald's VBS "Go Fishin" Mission Adventure Camp DVD. He has served as a chaplain for the Knox County sheriff's department and ran the Teen Zone for the last three Pathfinder Camporees in the Southern Union. As a child, Struntz attended summer camp at Mohaven in Ohio. He spent five summers working at Nosoca Pines Ranch in Liberty Hill, South Carolina, as well as served as camp pastor at several summer camps across the division.

Struntz recently pastored the Rockwood Seventh-day Adventist Church in Portland, Oregon, and Lynnette currently teaches English at Portland Adventist Academy (PAA). The couple's eldest daughter, Liz, is almost finished with her sophomore year and has spoken several times for PAA's Student Week of Worship. The couple's younger daughter, Katherine, is a sixth grader who loves to cook and bake. Both daughters play volleyball. The family includes a four-pound Yorkie named Charlie. Struntz's family will finish the 2021-2022 school year in Portland before joining him in the Dakotas.

Pastor Ted is eager to join the Dakota Conference team and is most excited about working with the kids and staff at summer camp. He looks forward to helping Pathfinders grow in the Dakotas as well as encouraging churches to involve the youth and get to know them on a personal level.

**Come  
to Dakota  
Summer  
Camps**

## Flag Mountain

cub camp, ages 8-10 • June 15-19 • \$200  
junior camp, ages 11-13 • June 19-26 • \$275  
teen retreat, ages 14-17 • June 26-July 3 • \$275

## Northern Lights

cub camp, ages 8-10 • July 13-17 • \$200  
junior camp, ages 11-13 • July 17-24 • \$275  
teen retreat, ages 14-17 • July 24-31 • \$275

**Register online at:**

[dakotayouthandyoungadults.org](http://dakotayouthandyoungadults.org)



# Dakota Conference Prayer Retreat Live by the Spirit

March 18-20, 2022  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Speaker: Paulet E. Howard Jr.

*Come to the Prayer Retreat to experience new prayer styles, learn practical applications, and revitalize the role of prayer in your life.*

For more information & to register use the QR code:





## ANCHORED

JUNE 1-4, 2022

**SPEAKERS:**  
John McVay  
Mike Tucker  
Gil Webb  
Kendra Haloviak Valentine  
with music by Pam Tucker

### DAKOTA CAMPMEETING



The Dakota Conference is empowering pastors and churches with a brand new tool to assist them with reaching their communities more efficiently. *MissionInsite* is a Christian organization that allows our churches to understand community challenges so they can fulfill people's needs and be able to build bridges. This is truly helpful in light of Christ's method of witnessing which is encapsulated in *Ministry of Healing*. "The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their need, and won their confidence" (pg 143).

All pastors received training and have been encouraged to begin exploring with *MissionInsite*. Church leaders will use this information to brainstorm ideas on how to help their churches connect with their community and move from data to decisions. Ask your pastor how to utilize this tool in your church.

Visit [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com) for more information.

## DAKOTA ADVENTIST ACADEMY WORK BEE

Looking for a way to give back?

We are searching for volunteers of all skill levels to donate their time!

When: Sunday, April 3, 2022  
from 8:00a - 3:00p

Where: Dakota Adventist Academy

Please register at: [dakotaconferenceeducation.org/daa-work-bee](http://dakotaconferenceeducation.org/daa-work-bee) and let us know what skills you can share.

Lunch will be provided.



# Answers to Perceptions, Pt. 2 - Rumors of Closure

Mark R. Weir, President

“Are you going to be okay? What will you do for a job next year when DAA is closed?”

Recently I received a phone call from one of our staff members relaying to me the gist of recent conversations they had with a number of concerned individuals. Genuine concern is noble, necessary, and very valuable. Despite good intentions, often times concerns are interpreted as truths.

The staff member had been inundated by people asking the same questions. It got to the point where frustration began to mount because the staff member was unable to get any answers as to where these rumors were coming from. After I got off the phone with them, I began to contact some of the people who had been expressing their concerns. My question was simple. “Where did you hear this from? Who is saying that the Academy is finished?” I am still seeking to find out where this rumor is coming from.

There is no secret to the fact that the ongoing operation of our Academy is an expensive endeavor. We are doing all we can to face facts and carefully address our unique situation. All of our Academy staff are planning to return next year. With that being said, everyone should rest assured that there will be a 2022-2023 school year at Dakota Adventist Academy.

Enrollment is not where it needs to be. There are many factors impacting this and some of those will be addressed in future articles like this one. Our total academy-aged population in the Dakotas is about 100 kids. I realize that DAA may not be for everyone, but I can say that there are many wonderful things happening there. At the February Preview Days, a good group of potential students attended and the weekend was filled with a number of interactive and enjoyable activities that touched me as I listened and observed.

As a conference we are planning to significantly increase our financial support for the next school year. God has provided money in amazing ways. One year ago, the Development Department received significantly more donations than in the past several years. The generosity of our people is amazing! The Academy saw 1.2 million dollars come from unexpected sources that have allowed us to pause, reflect, re-consider, and re-allocate funds so that both the Academy and the Conference are on more stable financial footing. This is an indication of the blessings of God being poured out upon us.

Why am I sharing this? The truth of “what is” matters more than the rumors of what might be. Please help us dispel the rumors of closure by telling anyone who speaks to the contrary what is true. What we say and do now will have a significant impact on our future. For me, I am going to do all I can to ensure that there are going to be many more years for our school. How about you?

## Upcoming 2022 Regional Meetings

### Theme: Tell Someone

#### What to look forward to:

Sabbath School - 10:00am

Church - 11:00am

Potluck Lunch

Seminar Sessions on Church Life - 2:00pm

Supper

### Dickinson Regional: March 26

Participating Churches: Bison, Bowman, Beulah, Grassy Butte, Invitation Hill, Richardton, Watford City, & Williston

### Jamestown Regional: April 2

Participating Churches: Bowdon Country, Cleveland, Edgeley, Harvey, Jamestown, Manfred, New Home

# Dakota Conference

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

7200 N Washington Street  
Bismarck ND 58503-6301  
www.dakotaadventist.org



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## CALENDAR

### March

- 11-13 Men's Retreat - Medora, ND
- 18-20 Prayer Retreat - Bismarck, ND
- 21 K-12 Board of Education - Zoom (7pm)
- 26 Dickinson Regional

### April

- 2 Jamestown Regional
- 3 DAA Work Bee (8a-3p)
- 9 Education Sabbath
- 12-22 MAPS Spring Testing - Schools
- 18 Office Closed - Easter Monday
- 24-26 New in Ministry Meetings

### May

- 1 K-12 Board of Education - Conference Office (10am)
- 2-6 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 10 Executive Committee - Zoom (7p)
- 20-22 DAA Graduation Weekend

### June

- 1-4 Dakota Campmeeting
- 6-7 Office Closed
- 6-11 General Conference Session
- 15-19 Cub Camp at Flag Mountain (ages 8-10)
- 19-26 Junior Camp at Flag Mountain (ages 11-13)
- 26-3 Teen Camp at Flag Mountain (ages 14-17)

#### President, Evangelism, ASI

Mark Weir

#### VP of Admin, HR, Church Ministries

Mark Piotrowski

#### Admin Assistant, Receptionist

Jaelyn Pickett

#### Communication

Jodi Dossenko

#### Development, ABC

Lynette Miller

#### Youth & Young Adults, Camps

Ted Struntz

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