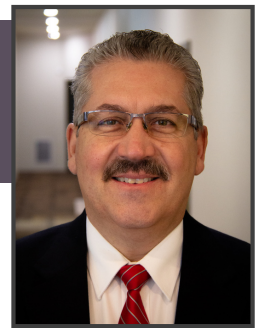


Dakota Messenger

DAKOTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Where We Stand

Mark R. Weir, President



For the past two years, we have been working to find a long-term solution to our Academy's financial needs. For many years, the Dakota Conference has given up to 23% compared to tithe for Academy subsidy. This has nearly exhausted our operational reserves.

Beginning in September, we did a series of seven Town Halls across the Dakota Conference to share the trend lines in both the Conference and Dakota Adventist Academy because we want our constituency to fully understand the reality of our situation. With Conference support of \$540,000, Alumni support averaging about \$200,000 annually, collecting 100% of tuition, and receiving 100% of Circle of Faith financial pledges, the current school year is still projecting a \$363,000 shortfall. We as a Conference have committed to somehow covering that deficit but cannot continue to do so going forward.

To address this situation, we held a joint K-12/Executive Committee meeting on November 6, 2022. The proposal brought forward stated as follows: The K-12 and Executive Committee members will decide from among the following options regarding the future of Dakota Adventist Academy.

- Option 1 - Sell Existing Assets
- Option 2 - Reduce Employees
- Option 3 - Cease Operations

Extensive time was spent discussing each of the options.

Among the assets the Conference owns are our office building, parsonages, and summer camps. These are Conference entities that promote and expand the mission and ministry of the Conference. In addition, the Academy owns approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land.

To close the shortfall gap, a minimum of five full-time employees would need to be reduced. Since the Academy could not operate with five fewer staff members, a reduction would also affect Conference employees, including office and pastoral staff.

The third option would require calling for a special constituency session and would take 75% of the votes to cease Academy operations.

Continued on page 2

Following an extensive discussion of the options, a motion was made to take "Cease Operations" off the table. After a season of prayer, a secret ballot vote was taken. The vote was 18 people in favor of removing Option 3, and 8 against. Thus, it is officially voted that we are not going to consider closing the Academy. Now came the time to discuss how to fund what was just voted.

Several times the sale of the Academy's agricultural land had been mentioned. While the land is an asset, it is not integral to the mission and ministry of the Conference or the Academy - even though it nets the Academy approximately \$55,000 in rental income per year. Based on a preliminary discussion with a land auction company, the land is valued between 3 - 3.5 million dollars. With this information in mind, a non-binding vote was taken in regard to selling the land. That vote was 15 in favor, 9 against.

In conclusion, the Executive Committee will finalize a plan to fund the Academy for the foreseeable future. The land sale will likely be a key component to obtaining the funds required to care for financial shortfalls in the future. This meeting will take place on December 11, 2022.

We are committed to finding a solution, but that takes two vital necessities - students and funds. With at least 55 students, we would not have a funding shortage. For many years the Dakota Conference was able to cover that monetary shortfall. We no longer have the ability to do that given our current financial realities.

Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to seek a sustainable path forward.

Town Hall Meeting Content is Now Available for Viewing



If you were not able to make it to a recent Town Hall Meeting regarding Dakota Adventist Academy, a studio recorded version is now available. To access, please use the QR code by opening your phone's camera app and focusing on the code, or go to: youtu.be/hqH0jMYELpA

Echoes of the Apostolic Church

Mark Piotrowski, VP of Administration



And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved...believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. - Acts 2:47; 5:14.

The Apostolic Church remains the model to emulate of what the church is to become. One of the tasks of pastors and lay leaders is for them to lead their churches to narrow the gap between where their churches are today (what we typically experience at church on Sabbath mornings) to what the church was like in the days of Pentecost. The last 2,000 years have seen massive changes come into the church. We have veered from the blueprint. The New Testament presents a clear picture of God's design for the church. As we seek to assimilate these timeless principles in ministry, we will in time, be able to see the same results in our churches today. So what are some of the outstanding characteristics of His early church? Can we see the first signs of this move back towards the original plan, can we hear echoes of those early church values being replicated in our day? What are the characteristics of a church full of vitality and health as we read of in Acts? Actually, there are many: the early Christians were fully devoted Spirit-filled disciples, they experienced God's providential workings on a daily basis, their ministry consisted of faithful preaching of God's Word, eating together, faithfulness to the teachings of the Scriptures, they prayed much together, gathered in warm fellowship, exhibited love for each other and for the lost, to mention just a few.

Continued on page 3

One other important characteristic of the early church is their exponential growth. The Greco-Roman world was stirred by the presence of this primitive group that arose from Judea. Their fame spread like wildfire across the provinces of the empire. The early church was a healthy body, ever moving forward and expanding its influence and reach, even when the opposition seemed overbearing. A healthy congregation invites and welcomes seekers and new believers. Consider the early church in Jerusalem. From about 120 believers at the time of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1), the church grew to more than 3,000 after Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Then the church kept growing from that day on through the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit through the apostles (Acts 2:42-43). More and more people believed the message of salvation and became Christians because of the compelling power of God in the church. So how do we shape up to the early church here in the Dakotas? We are on the brink of great things that the Lord wants to do for us. How shall we respond?

You may not be aware, but our mission field has a fast-growing population. I shared with our Executive Committee recently that both states in our conference territory are experiencing growth faster than the national average. The rate of growth of North Dakota from 2012 to 2021 was 10.4% and that of South Dakota over the same period was 7.4% (US population national growth rate for the same period is 7.3%). In the 20 fastest-growing cities in both states, the Dakota Conference has established churches in 13 of these urban areas. There are people in our communities that are receptive and ready to hear the Everlasting Gospel. The Holy Spirit is preparing for a fast-closing work.

Our conference leadership recently launched a church renewal initiative called "ReVITALIZED." In the months ahead all 44 of our churches will be invited to participate in a journey of spiritual renewal, mission refocus, and health improvement. We are praying for the Lord's leading in this initiative. Four churches have already signed up as a first "run" as we look towards growing our conference. We hope to have this process going in at least 10 churches before the end of 2023. Be listening to announcements coming to your church about this in the future.

We have wonderful times to look forward to. The pen of inspiration reflecting on the hour of glory ahead wrote, "The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God" (Great Controversy, p. 611-12). Be sure you are part of this divine kindling dear fellow believer, we can clearly see His Spirit stirring our churches to action to accomplish a completed mission.

Dakota Conference Membership Report - 3rd Quarter

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

Membership as of September 30, 2022 - 3,847 members

Membership in the Dakota Conference decreased by 4 members or 0.1% in the 3rd Quarter (July - September).

For the entire year of 2022, thus far, the Dakota Conference has 11 more members than at this time last year or an increase of 0.3%.

Dropped by:

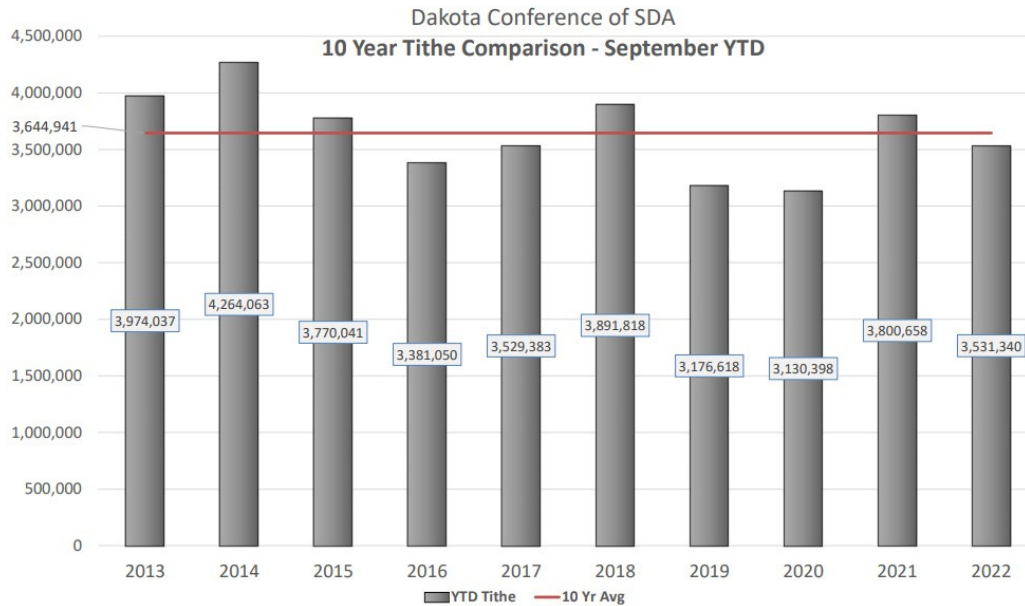
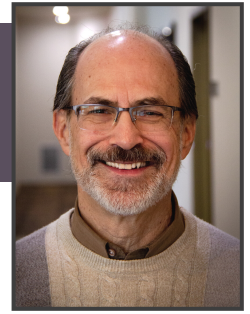
Letter	92
Deceased	11
Removed	5
TOTAL	108

Additions:

Baptisms	16
& Professions of Faith	16
Letters of Transfer	88
TOTAL	104

Financial Report

Mark Seibold, VP of Finance

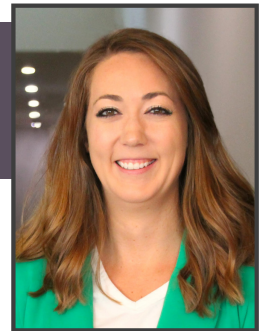


While 2022 year-to-date tithe is currently below budget and under the 10-year average (see chart), also consider this: First, expenses are also correspondingly below budget. Second, historically the largest tithe contributions come in December as donors assess their 2022 taxes. As you consider your annual giving, we urge you to also keep in mind the limits inflation places on expenses for

everyone - but no less for the Dakota Conference as we continue to promote the important message of God's love in the Dakotas! Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Outdoor School

Kelli Wasemiller, Education Superintendent



Outdoor School seeks to empower students to explore the natural world and encounter their Creator God. This program had been on hold due to COVID-19, so students in grades K-8 were excited to gather again for a week at Northern Lights Camp. Outdoor School provides an opportunity for students to enjoy a unique educational environment, foster scientific curiosity, develop friendships, learn about God through experiencing nature, and create a desire for lifelong outdoor learning.

Students were divided up into grade groups to rotate through learning stations that correlated to this year's science curriculum. Teachers led out in a food chain art project, classification of animals, and a very exciting fish dissection. Students visited Metigoshe State Park's Learning Center for a lesson in wildlife ecology and to play a new game called Ranger. Cooler weather prevented lake activities but learning to forage for edible plants and a photo scavenger hunt kept students active and exploring the fall flora and fauna.



Afternoon STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) projects were a highlight as students were divided up into multi-grade teams, with an 8th grader leading each team. TJ Roberts, teacher from Sioux Falls, led out in a rocket-building project where students developed a simple paper prototype before moving on to create a large bottle rocket. Teams created a supply budget and then proceeded to build a decorative rocket with hopes that it would fly the longest. Lower-grade students excitedly counted down "3-2-1," before performing their role as rocket launcher.

Continued on page 5

Another STEM project found students working in upper and lower-grade pairs to build a boat using only string and nature supplies found around camp. Sticks were tied together, leaves packed in for waterproofing, and makeshift sails hung. As the boats were launched off the beach students could be heard saying, "Wow, look at that one made with bark, it's not sinking. That was smart!" or, "Our leaf sail is catching the wind!" Innovation at its finest.

Dakota Adventist Academy seniors spent the week leading out in evening games and assisting with the meals and learning stations. Their help was greatly appreciated, and their energy even more so as games of Banana Tag, Capture the Flag, and Duck Duck Goose encouraged teamwork and healthy sportsmanship. Anytime a high schooler invests in an elementary school student, a difference is made.

The week's theme was "All Creatures Great and Small," based on Job 12:7-10. Morning and evening worships drew students together as they connected the wonders of nature with a wonderful, loving God. Each school took turns leading out in worship music followed by devotionals shared by Dakota pastors and conference personnel. Initially, students would only sit with their friends from their school, but by the end of the week, everyone had made so many new friends that you couldn't tell any of the schools apart. It was a beautiful visual of the family of God!

All week long, students were encouraged to engage in activities in God's classroom, so that they might discover God through His creation and seek to know Him more deeply. Outdoor School is a time and energy commitment for all of the teachers, pastors, and support staff, but their dedication is greatly appreciated. The Dakota Conference is devoted to its young people and looks forward to future opportunities to minister to all of our amazing Dakota kids.



Scan the QR code to watch the Outdoor School recap video.

If you want to be involved in a future Outdoor School program, contact Kelli Wasemiller at: **superintendent.dakota@gmail.com**

Annabelle Harper



Children Are a Gift From God

Ted Struntz, Youth & Young Adults Director



"Behold, Children are a gift from the Lord." Psalm 127:3

With the wrap-up of a fun and successful 2022 summer camp season, I've been able to start traveling around the conference to speak at several of our campers' churches and schools and to meet more of our awesome Dakota families. It is great to see campers' church families and to hear campers talk about their favorite part of camp this year. It is different for everyone; campers often tell me a great story as they remember a certain activity, staff member, worship story, praise song, or Friday night's Agape Meal. As I reflect on my own favorite times, I would say it was hearing our kids sing songs to the Lord and conducting baptisms with the families who came to share in their children's decisions for Jesus. No matter what any of us might choose as a favorite moment, though, this year's camp season truly was an amazing time at Flag Mountain and Northern Lights.

What happened at camp this summer wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for the outstanding support our members and churches provide. I think of the Williston Church who called and committed to sponsoring every child from their church who wanted to attend camp or Pastor Lindensmith who personally drove all the kids sponsored by the Fargo Church to camp. These are just two of the many churches that helped send kids to camp and made a Kingdom difference, helping young people have opportunities to say yes to Jesus.

And it wasn't just sending kids to camp that made a huge difference; it was also the hundreds of volunteer hours that you, our members, gave to help improve our camps during work bees. Those of you who donated funds or equipment, like lawnmowers, also made a tremendous difference in making our Dakota Camps so special for our kids and families.

We want to continue making Dakota Camps better each year. Just as I am sure each of you look for ways to improve your own life, we do the same at Dakota Camps. In examining our camp program and facilities, we have identified several key areas that need to be improved to provide our young people with the best possible environment to play and meet God. I would like to invite you to partner with us as we look to improve our camps. In our next *Dakota Dispatch*, there will be a link that will take you to a list of some of the improvements we need to make. If you would like to speak with me personally about this, you can contact me at dakotaadventistcamps@gmail.com or call 701.751.6177. Every donation counts; no matter the size, when we come together, we are able to do much. Thank you, again, and in advance, for investing in the young people of our Dakota Conference.

Lynnette Struntz



Employees on the Move

Jodi Dossenko, Communication Director



Licinius & Mirela Chiriac

Pastor Licinius and Mirela Chiriac are currently packing their belongings in Atlanta, Georgia, and preparing to sell their home. The couple accepted the pastoral position in the Watford City, Williston district in northwest North Dakota. They are excited to come to the Dakotas and already see big potential in their new church district. Pastor Licinius grew up in Romania and has recently worked in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The couple has one daughter, a son-in-law, and two grandchildren.

Pastor James and Becky McCurdy have moved to Hermosa, South Dakota, and are pastoring the church there. Pastor James grew up in Washington and started working in ministry just over ten years ago - most recently in the Upper Columbia Conference. The couple have eight children and six grandchildren. They are looking forward to focusing on their one-church district, meeting the people who live in the area, and are excited to see what God has in store for them here in the Dakota Conference.



James & Becky McCurdy



Brian & Evelyn Mungandi

Pastor Brian and Evelyn Mungandi have accepted the call to pastor the Rapid City Adventist Church in South Dakota. Pastor Brian started his ministry in 1987 in Zambia, Africa, pastoring two churches and 22 companies. He recently served in the Minnesota Conference as vice president of administration. The couple has three grown sons and are looking forward to interacting with and ministering to the Dakota people, living in the Black Hills, and the challenge of leading out in a church and school remodeling project.

Pastor Brian Norton is the new pastor of the Bowman, Grassy Butte, Richardton church district in North Dakota. Though he has only lived in the area since late September, he has enjoyed his time here, especially the peace and quiet he feels. He is thankful that God has led him to the Dakotas and looks forward to seeing God work in ways he hasn't even considered yet. Pastor Brian has been in the ministry for the last 15 years, pastoring most recently for the Potomac Conference in Virginia.



Brian Norton

JOIN US FOR

Celebration of Praise

COUPLED WITH THE BISMARCK REGIONAL

Come experience a "Rebirth" with Jesus, DAA, & within.

Schedule of Events

Friday, December 16:

7:30p - Community / School Program
Social Hour to follow

Sabbath, December 17:

10:00a - Sabbath School
11:00a - Church
12:15p - Lunch
1:15p - Seminars by conference workers
2:30p - DAA Christmas Concert

Dakota Conference

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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



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CALENDAR

November

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

December

- 11 Executive Committee - Office (10a)
- 16 Celebration of Praise - DAA (7:30p)
- 17 Bismarck Regional - DAA (10a)
- 17 DAA Christmas Concert (2:30p)
- 26 Office Closed - Christmas observed
- 27-29 Office Closed - workers take vacation days

January

- 16 Office Closed - MLK Jr. Day
- 22 K-12 Meeting - Zoom (10a)
- 23-26 Pastor Meetings - Bismarck

February

- 3-5 Pathfinder Bible Experience & Honors Fair - DAA
- 9-11 Music Festival - DAA
- 13 Executive Committee - Zoom (7p)
- 18 MAUC Pathfinder Bible Experience - Lincoln, NE
- 20 Office Closed - Presidents' Day
- 23-26 DAA Preview Days - DAA

President, Evangelism, ASI

Mark Weir

VP of Admin, HR, Church Ministries

Mark Piotrowski

Admin Assistant, Receptionist

TBD

Trust Assistant, Membership Clerk

Julie Brude

Communication

Jodi Dossenko

Development, ABC

Lynette Miller

VP of Finance

Mark Seibold

Associate Treasurer

Cindy Miller

Treasury Clerk, Trust

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