

CHURCH EVENTS AT A GLANCE

October

19 Manic Monday Meal – Soup
Fellowship Hall, 5:00–7:00 PM

November

8 Combined Service, 10:00 AM
Purse Bingo
Fire Hall, 1:00 PM

11 Bell Practice
6:00 PM

18 Bell Practice
6:00 PM

December

5 Children's Christmas Shop
Fellowship Hall, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

20 Christmas Caroling, 4:00 PM

24 Christmas Eve Service
Sanctuary, 7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETINGS

Official Board

Third Wednesday of each month
Fellowship Hall, 6:30 PM

As we approach the beginning of October, I've realized just how fast this year has gone. I blinked, Summer was gone, and it's Fall now. We are in my favorite time of the year, because I like all the months that end with "er": September, October, November, and December. I enjoy the change in the seasons for sure. I like when the leaves turn their bright colors and there is a crispness in the air. It is really refreshing to live far enough south that it doesn't get frigid until around Thanksgiving. But regardless of where we are in our lives, change is inevitable and is going to happen whether we want it to or not. Whether it is the leaves changing, the weather changing, or God changing us, good things happen with change.

We have to be ready for that change that God promises will happen to us. Even better: God and his ways are unchangeable. Hebrews 6:16-20 says: "Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek." Although everything in the world changes from seasons to ourselves, there is one constant: God.

If God says that he is going to do something, you can bet that it will happen according to his timeline and not ours. Yet, we can count on the Lord to do wonderful things in our lives if we only get out of the way and allow him to change us for the better. He will never make anything worse. If our hope is in the one that doesn't change, what do we have to worry about? We just need to stay positive, avoid sin, and wait for God to act. Enjoy the change to the fall season and embrace the changes in your life, so that you can better serve the Lord with all of your gifts and skills.



NATE'S NOTES



Grocery Bingo contestants studying their cards intently!

Pastor Nate

OFFERING • SEPTEMBER 2026

Service Date	Attendance 9:00	Attendance 11:00	Weekly Total
9/6	8	35	\$1,278.00
9/13	11	37	\$870.00
9/20	5	32	\$580.00
9/27	7	24	\$1,985.00
Weekly required income:		Average weekly income:	
\$2,088.46		\$1,515.33	

BINGO EVENT REQUESTS

We have two bingo events coming up and we are asking for your help. A link to a sign-up sheet with a list of items needed for our Grocery Bingo prizes follows. Please donate an item if you are able to help out: <https://grow.withlome.-com/a/a32a9b9b-d525-47b0-9fa1-65d5180ef844>.

We are also asking for donations for our upcoming purse bingo night. Larger items are needed for raffles, and themed baskets are needed for the "tricky tray" tables. These themed baskets can be as large or small as you would like. Examples would include: a snack basket, a tea basket, a coffee basket, a specific meal basket, etc.

If you have questions or need other ideas, please let me know.

Kari Farnell

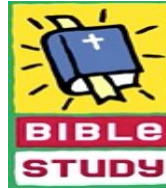
PLEASE NOTE: There will be a combined Sunday Service at 10:00 AM on November 8.

We are currently accepting donations for the Children's Christmas shop. If you have new or very lightly used items to re-gift, please bring them in to the church on a Sunday, or deliver to Pastor Nate Tuesday through Thursday, 11:00 AM–3:00 PM.



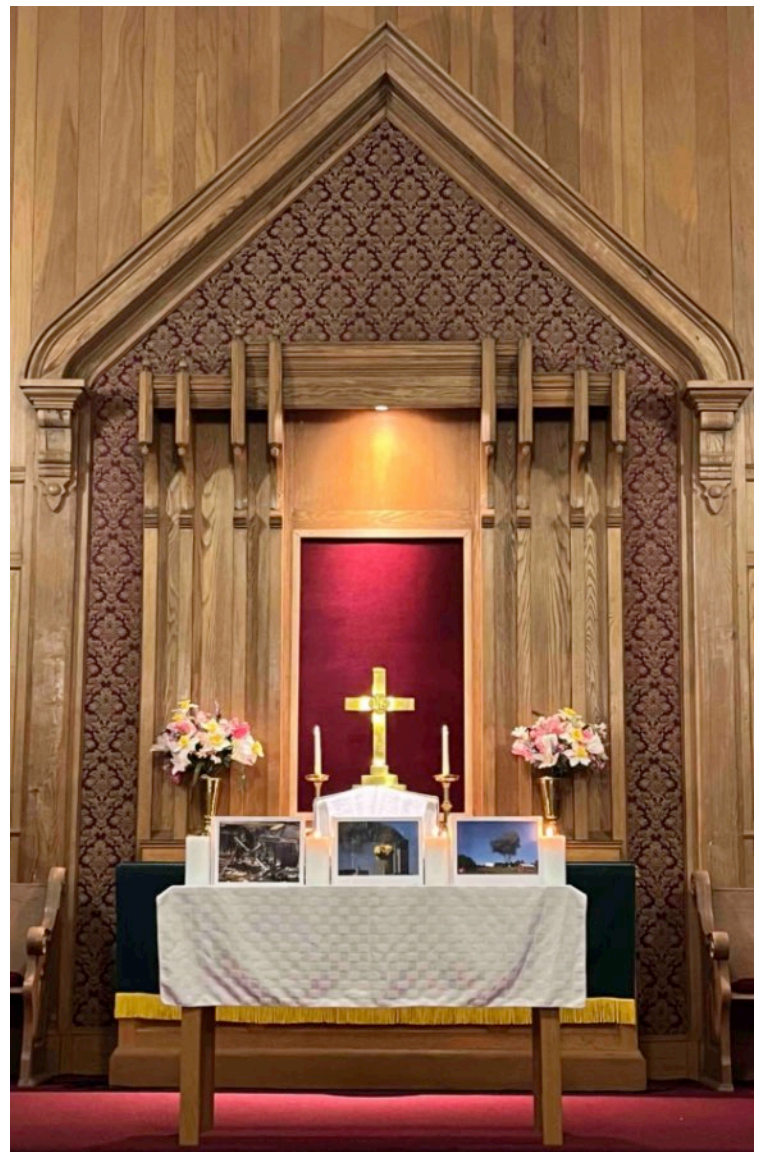
PRAY & GO 2026

We will be holding Pray & Go the second and fourth Saturday mornings of most months, beginning September 12. From 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM we will pray at people's houses and leave a door hanger that tells them we were there. If you would like to take part, contact Kari Farnell.



Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, Pastor Nate leads a study of the book of First Corinthians. All are invited to participate.

Cub Scout Pack 461 will host a blood drive on Wednesday, October 28, from 1:00 to 6:00 PM. The drive will take place at the Lions Club Building, 114 Williamson Street.



The chancel is decorated for the 9/11 Remembrance Service last month.

2ND ANNUAL

BETHESDA METHODIST CHURCH'S

DESIGNER PURSE BINGO



DOORS OPEN

11:30 AM



GAMES START

1:00 PM

NOVEMBER 8

PRESTON FIRE HALL

\$30 IN ADVANCE | \$35 AT THE DOOR

MORE WAYS TO WIN!

50/50 • TRICKY TRAY • RAFFLE • TAG BOARDS



FOOD & DRINKS AVAILABLE



**SCAN TO
VENMO**



Lisa Brown

@Lisa-Brown-117



GRAB YOUR FRIENDS & COME PLAY!

DESIGNER PURSES • BINGO • FUN



Global Methodist Church Concludes Historic 2026 General Conference in Johannesburg

With worship, prayer and a renewed commitment to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe, the Global Methodist Church has concluded its 2026 General Conference at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Gathered under the theme “The Beauty of Holiness,” clergy and lay delegates from across the global connection spent the week worshipping together, discerning the future of the Church, considering 451 petitions, electing denominational leaders, strengthening ecumenical relationships, and celebrating the extraordinary work God has done in the four years since the Global Methodist Church officially launched.

The gathering marked the first General Conference of the Global Methodist Church held on the African continent and only the second General Conference in the denomination’s history.

From the opening worship service to the final benediction, the conference reflected a Church increasingly shaped not by any one nation, language or culture, but by the shared Wesleyan conviction that God calls His people to holiness of heart and life and sends them into the world for the sake of the Gospel.

A Church Becoming Truly Global

The growth of the Global Methodist Church since the 2024 Convening General Conference in San José, Costa Rica, provided a striking backdrop to the week. Connectional Operations Officer Rev. Mike Schafer reported that the denomination has grown from approximately 4,700 congregations following the 2024 General Conference to 7,250 congregations today. During the same period, the number of annual conferences has grown from 36 to 55, with six additional emerging areas that may become annual conferences. The number of annual conferences outside the United States has more than doubled. Those numbers were visible in the room. Worship throughout the week incorporated languages, music, prayer and leadership from across the worldwide connection. Delegates and guests came together from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America and beyond, embodying what it increasingly means to be not simply a Methodist denomination with a global presence, but the Global Methodist Church.

First Full-Time Assembly of Bishops Elected and Consecrated

Among the most historic actions of the conference was the election of the Global Methodist Church’s first regular, full-time Assembly of Bishops. Following the interim episcopal structure established at the 2024 Convening General Conference, delegates elected eight bishops to serve as general superintendents of the whole Church during the 2026–2032

sexennial. After five ballots, the following were elected:

- Episcopal Area 1: Bishop Luther Oconer
- Episcopal Area 2: Bishop Johnathan Lee
- Episcopal Area 3: Bishop Mark Webb
- Episcopal Area 4: Bishop Lyndol Loyd
- Episcopal Area 5: Bishop Jerry Kulah
- Episcopal Area 6: Bishop Eduard Khegay
- Episcopal Area 7: Bishop Paul Lawler
- Episcopal Area 8: Bishop Carolyn Moore

The eight episcopal areas intentionally bring together annual conferences from different regions of the world, reinforcing the Global Methodist Church’s commitment to a teaching episcopacy. Rather than serving primarily as regional executives, bishops are called to be teachers, spiritual leaders, and general superintendents of the whole Church, helping to strengthen our shared doctrine, mission, and Wesleyan identity across the connection.

Those newly elected to the episcopacy were consecrated on the last day of the General Conference, and the new Assembly will officially begin its term of service on November 1, 2026. The conference also paused to honor those whose active episcopal service is concluding: Bishops John Pena Auta, Kimba Evariste, Jeffrey Greenway, Leah Gregory, Scott Jones and Kenneth Levingston. Delegates surrounded them in prayer and gave thanks for leaders who helped shepherd the denomination through its formative years.

Establishing the Church’s Doctrinal Foundation

Among the most consequential legislative matters before delegates was the continued work toward a combined Articles of Faith for the Global Methodist Church.

Developed through the work of the Discipleship, Doctrine and Just Ministry Commission with feedback from church members, and refined through the legislative process, the Articles of Faith articulate the core beliefs that unite Global Methodists across nations, cultures and languages. Their adoption represents an important moment in the continuing formation of the denomination and a shared declaration of the faith the Church is committed to proclaiming and passing on to future generations. The Doctrine and Sacraments Legislative Committee used the commission’s report, Petition 1441, as its base text and undertook careful consideration of the proposed articles during its meetings in Johannesburg.

The work represented more than an exercise in church law. It asked the Global Methodist Church to articulate clearly what it believes about God, Scripture, humanity, salvation, the Church, the sacraments and the Christian life — and to do so in a way faithful to the historic Christian faith and the Wesleyan tradition while speaking clearly to a worldwide Church.

Reflections on the 2026 Global Methodist Church General Conference

by Rev. Karen Handy

I need to be honest that it has taken me a couple of weeks to truly process everything that I experienced at our 2026 General Conference, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from late August through September 6. There were times of incredible worship and joy. There were moments of watching history in the making. There were also moments of tears and heartbreak.

I was elected at the 2024 General Conference to serve on the Council on Appeals. The council members, along with a clergy and laity alternate, are required to be on site during General Conference in case a declarative decision is needed. It has been such an honor to serve with the members of the council over the last two years. We had never met in person until we met in Johannesburg. That alone was an incredible moment for me. We completed work, laughed together, and shared life stories and struggles with one another. I chose not to seek re-election as there were restrictions that did not allow me to serve on any conference committees other than being a presiding elder. (Little did I know that there was legislation that would have allowed conference involvement when I needed to turn in my nomination.)

I still have a hard time really explaining how I felt as our opening worship began. I participated in the mass choir (about 60-70 members). We sat on the stage for the entire worship service. As I sat there and could see the sea of faces, hear the many languages, and witness various races and cultures, I was struck by the realization that the Global Methodist Church is truly global. We later heard that we now have over 7,250 churches throughout six continents (Antarctica being the exception). We have grown and continue to grow. I sat and thought, "this is a glimpse of heaven." It was beautiful and moving.

The worship the rest of the conference was Spirit-filled. We had messages that challenged us. We had moments to respond. Each day we shared in Holy Communion, often serving one another around the table.

Work began as legislative committees met and worked through the many petitions that were submitted. I watched as an observer and witnessed love for our Lord and one another present. Not everyone agreed at times, but the conversation was respectful, at times sharing the differences from the

members in different contexts and cultures. The delegates were faithful and worked together. You could feel the presence of the Spirit in the room. This was holy work. One of the greatest and most historic moments in the proceedings was the passage of the "Articles of Faith." I think Matt Reynolds, a delegate and publisher of Firebrand magazine, stated it well when he wrote:

Unquestionably, the most historic action of the general conference was the adoption of new Articles of Faith, which combine and replace the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Both were inherited from previous denominations. The EUB Confession of Faith was approved in 1962, but merged documents that went back to the late 1700s. The Evangelical Association's contribution (the EA Articles of Religion) was the same MEC Articles of Religion but translated in German. These came from the Anglican Church, with some edits by Wesley, to the Christmas Conference in 1784. But most of those Articles dated back to at least 1571. To put this in context, the actions of the GMC General Conference to replace the Articles of Religion was a once-in-455 years occurrence. It was breathtaking to behold.

There was an election, and later a consecration service, of eight bishops who will serve a six year term. The bishops are also from many places on the globe. The election was done differently and each bishop elected was elected to a specific area. (Our Conference, the Northeast Conference, is in episcopal area 2.) The bishops begin their terms on November 1, 2026.

We had a night that was filled with African culture and food. It was called the Celebration of Africa.

During the General Conference, we had missions and training happening Monday through Friday. There was a daily VBS in Soweto. There was anywhere from 200 – 800 children each day. The children were also fed. Health Clinics were also held. I was able to participate in the one that was held in the township of Thokoza. We offered to pray with each person and fed those in attendance a meal. This location is the land of a soon-to-be-built GMC church. The first load of bricks was delivered that day, and we were able to pray over them.

General Conference also took action on numerous other matters affecting the doctrine, ministry, governance and shared life of the Church. A complete record of adopted legislation and other official actions will be released following final review and certification by the General Conference Secretary.

451 Petitions Shape the Church's Life Together

Delegates considered 451 petitions addressing the doctrine, governance, ministry and shared life of the Global Methodist Church. The work was initially undertaken through eight legislative committees: Doctrine and Sacraments; Social Witness; Local Church; Ministry; Superintendency; Conferences; Constitution, Connectional Organization and Finance; and Judicial Administration. Following the committees' work, legislation advanced to the full General Conference for consideration and final action, allowing clergy and lay delegates from across the global connection to discern together matters that will help shape the Church for years to come. The petitions addressed matters throughout the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, including foundational doctrine, the ministry of clergy and laity, episcopal leadership, annual and local church life, connectional governance, finances and the Church's witness in the world.

The legislative process reflected a defining commitment of the Global Methodist Church: that clergy and laity from across the connection share responsibility for discerning how the Church will order its life together while remaining faithful to its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe.

Leaders Elected to Serve the Connection

General Conference also elected clergy and lay leaders who will carry significant responsibility for the work of the denomination between sessions of General Conference. Through elections to the Connectional Council, commissions and other connectional bodies, the Church entrusted men and women from across the worldwide connection with the work of guiding its ministries, governance, doctrine, mission and shared life during the coming years. Their election continues a governance model intentionally built around the shared ministry of clergy and laity and the participation of the global Church.

A New Ecumenical Covenant

General Conference unanimously approved a covenant of understanding between the Global Methodist Church and the Korean Methodist Church, strengthening a relationship rooted in more than a century of shared Methodist history. The covenant was formally signed in Johannesburg in the presence of President Bishop Kim Jung-seok and a historic dele-

gation of Korean Methodist bishops and leaders.

Service Projects and Community Outreach

Through the Mission Experience, Global Methodists moved from the Sandton Convention Centre into communities throughout Johannesburg and Soweto for evangelism, prayer, leadership development, health ministries, children's ministry and discipleship. Participants served alongside local congregations and ministry leaders from South Africa, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Fiji, the United States and elsewhere.

Worship at the Heart of the Conference

Throughout the week, worship was not treated as an interruption of the business of General Conference. It was the foundation beneath it. Scripture was read and prayers were offered in languages from across the global connection. Holy Communion was shared. Preachers repeatedly called the Church away from institutional self-preservation and toward deeper surrender to Jesus Christ. Again and again, the conference returned to the conviction at the heart of its theme: holiness begins with God, is formed in the presence of Christ and becomes visible through lives surrendered to Him. As the Church considered doctrine, elected bishops and debated legislation, it was continually reminded that none of those things is its ultimate mission. The mission remains to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe.

Celebrating Africa and a Spirit of Generosity

One of the most joyful moments of the week came as delegates and guests gathered for the Celebration of Africa, an evening honoring the faith, cultures, music and witness of the continent that welcomed the Global Methodist Church for its second General Conference. Through music, dance, testimony and fellowship, the celebration offered a glimpse of the richness of the worldwide Church and gave thanks for the extraordinary hospitality extended by our African brothers and sisters throughout the gathering.

That spirit of celebration was matched by extraordinary generosity. During the evening, the Global Methodist family gave ZAR 378,708.89 (USD 23,858.66) in eight different currencies to Blessman International, with the offering designated to directly benefit Global Methodist churches and their ministry efforts in South Africa. The outpouring was a beautiful reminder that our connection is more than something we speak about. It is lived out in the ways we worship together, serve one another, and generously join in the work God is doing across the globe.

From Johannesburg to the World

The 2026 General Conference will be remembered for its

These are the moments of heartbreak. I cried that night when I returned to my hotel room. These men, women, and children are precious and yet many are living in poverty. The children played in dirty water. The church that will be built will be a place of ministry in the community.

After the conference was over, I attended a 2-day mission experience with One Mission Society (OMS). We were scheduled to worship in Soweto, but once on the bus we found out we would be worshipping “in a tent.” We soon arrived in Thokoza. (The same place that I had helped with health checks earlier in the week.) The day of the health checks was a beautiful day, but on Sunday a storm was looming. The church (not just one or two, but the entire group of worshippers) processed with singing and handmade instruments. The storm came and the tent walls were blowing in, and water was filling the ground. Lighting and thunder were all around, yet worship was not cut short. I witnessed people worshipping with their whole heart. They may not have much, but they praise God for everything that they do! Language barriers were removed as those gathered worshipped. I was convicted. How often do we allow weather or other conditions to interrupt our worship. We again shared Holy Communion together. (I think I will see World Communion Sunday different this year as I think of my brothers and sisters in Christ.) After the service, we spent some time talking and being present with one

another.

The next day, OMS took us to a VCP (Village Church Planting) training center. We learned of the 4-year training made available to people for church planting. Some of the participants shared where they are making an impact (Bible study, children’s ministry, senior ministry, and more) as well as the struggles (not having enough room to draw more people, travel issues, alcohol and addiction issues, etc.). We gathered around the participants and prayed for them. Africans have a culture of hospitality. They shared Sprite and tea along with muffins with us before we left. As we headed back to our bus, they sang asking God to come near to us. They have an incredible passion to share their faith with others!

I had a late flight, so I ended my time in South Africa at Pilanesberg National Park experiencing God’s creation and creatures. The park is a volcanic crater, and it is the home of the big 5 of Africa (Lions, Rhinos, Elephants, Leopards, and Cape Buffalo). No fences or barriers, just nature in its natural habitat. I was able to see a lion, several rhinos and elephants, as well as giraffes, hippos, jackal, Kudu, Wildebeest, Warthog, zebra, impala, crocodile, bamboos, and many varieties of birds. I was awestruck by God’s creativity!

I am honored to be given the privilege of attending General Conference. I look forward to seeing God continue to move among His people, the people called the Global Methodist Church.



decisions: a first full-time Assembly of Bishops, consequential legislation, foundational doctrinal work, new connectional leadership and a significant ecumenical covenant. But the deeper story of Johannesburg may be what happened around and beneath those decisions. A young denomination gathered on African soil and discovered more clearly what it means to be global. People who speak different languages worshiped the same Lord. Clergy and laity shared responsibility for the future of the Church. Delegates debated and discerned, prayed and sang, celebrated and served. Outgoing leaders were blessed. New leaders were called. Relationships were strengthened. The Church looked back with gratitude and forward with expectation. The Global Methodist Church leaves Johannesburg considerably larger than it was when delegates left Costa Rica two years ago. Yet the calling before it remains unchanged. To know Christ. To become holy as He is holy. To make disciples. And to spread scriptural holiness across the globe. As General Conference 2026 comes to a close, the Global Methodist Church gives thanks for all God has done — and goes forward trusting that the One who called this Church into being will remain faithful in the work still ahead.



BETHESDA METHODIST CHURCH

A Global Methodist Congregation

P.O. Box 147 • Preston, Maryland 21655

Celebrating Over 240 Years of Continuous Ministry

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SERVICE & CLASS SCHEDULE

Sunday Services

Contemporary Worship
9:00 AM
Choptank Marina

Traditional Worship
11:00 AM
Sanctuary

Classes

Bethesda Bible
Adventures
9:00 AM

1 Corinthians Study
Tuesdays, 6:30 PM

