

“SERVING JOYFULLY” with Dakotas Missions

In recognition of the 2026 Annual Conference theme “Serving Joyfully”, we are encouraging all our conference churches to partner with one of our conference mission sites to actively support a project or event they are currently undertaking. You can participate by forming a team from your church or individually joining an on-site mission activity. Or if traveling to a site presents a challenge, there are a couple of activities that can be performed at home or church and forwarded on to the mission.

Dakotas Conference Missions include Spirit Lake Ministry Center near Devils Lake, North Dakota, Tree of Life Ministry in Mission, South Dakota, Bakken Oil Rush Ministry in Watford City, North Dakota, and Solar Oven Partners currently headquartered in Fargo, North Dakota but housed in three South Dakota workshop locations. All these missions have been in operation no less than 10 years and have either been serving people within the Dakotas, specifically on tribal lands and oil country, or outside the conference and even globally where food insecurity and environmental concerns are troublesome.

Two of these missions are in dire need of materials to provide their constituencies. Solar Oven Partners builds and distributes ovens that use only the sun to cook meals and sanitize water for drinking purposes – but for safety purposes potholders are a necessity. Randy Harwood, Solar Oven Partners Director, has templates and instructions to sew potholders which can then be sent to one of the workshop locations and eventually shipped to the oven distribution sites. There is literally need for hundreds of potholders. What a perfect project for a church sewing group!

The other item that is seriously needed are mittens and gloves for the Bakken Oil Rush Ministry. Many individuals arrive in the Watford City area annually looking for work in the oil fields but are ill-prepared for the cold weather that pierces the winter months. The ministry is in constant need of hand coverings, as well as other winter apparel – but gloves and mittens are so necessary for winter survival. Angie Hartel, Bakken Oil Rush Ministry Director can provide a list of items that they make available for giveaway at their thrift store prior to the winter months. They might also need some assistance in early August to set up for a back to school giveaway and shopping day!

Our other two mission sites are better equipped to receive volunteers to assist with many projects right in their reservation communities. Tree of Life works with Feeding South Dakota by offering both food and non-food items to their thrift store and warm welcome ministries. Specifically, Feeding South Dakota delivers a semi-trailer load of food at the beginning of each month which must be unloaded, stored, and then packed into food pantries or food boxes for distribution to the elders. Tree of Life is looking for volunteers to come to Mission, South Dakota on the first Wednesday of August to assist with each of these duties – and if this is your calling, you can come every month to help. Additionally, Tree of Life always has small

construction projects that can be wrapped up in a day or two for those not looking to spend an entire week volunteering. Sonny Prue, Tree of Life Director, continues to innovate the mission by delivering much needed service to the Rosebud Reservation.

Lastly, Spirit Lake Ministry Center is taking on a new challenge this year as they attempt to create a new environment in which to manage food insecurity on the reservation, not only for today but for the future as well. Spirit Lake is planning to build a meat and fresh produce program that raises beef and vegetables for immediate consumption and winter utilization. The garden is going in now and the pasture fencing will be placed around harvest time – this means they will need many volunteers to pick and prepare produce for winter food supplies and many others to assist with fencing and pasture development for calves’ next spring. In addition to resourcing food products, Kim and Paulette Paulsen, Spirit Lake Ministry Co-Directors also intend to teach the tribal members how to raise, butcher, and store their produce. This is such a win-win opportunity that you could make a reality!

We hope you will take advantage of these mission project opportunities. It is our desire that there will be a solid turnout for each mission later this summer. Please prayerfully consider where you and / or your church are called to support the Dakotas UMC Missions! Remember, “Serving Joyfully” just might be the most rewarding activity you engage in all year.

If you wish to participate in Mission Service, you can contact any mission leaders at the contact information below or have your 2026 AC delegates look for the mission display tables for sign up details.

Solar Oven Partners	Randy Harwood	701-361-2378
Bakken Oil Rush Ministry	Angie Hartel	director@oilrushministry.com
Tree of Life Ministry	Sonny Prue	308-413-0016
Spirit Lake Ministry	Kim Paulsen	701-739-9019
	Paulette Paulsen	701-351-8579