

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS



FOR OPPORTUNITIES – YOU MUST GET OFF THE FENCE

When I was a kid, my parents enrolled me in 4-H. At that time, Dean, a family friend and farmhand, introduced me to the competition of showing beef cattle. I was just nine years old. I was supposed to get into the pen with this steer! The rope looked like a string. I was scared, and there was nothing to protect me!

I remember sitting on the corral fence, thinking that there was no way I could do this. There was no way I would have the courage or the willpower to take on this untrained animal. I remember saying to Dean, “I can’t!!” He turned to me and said: “All ‘can’t’ does is sit on the fence and watch the world go by.”

Once I overcame the fear, I named my new 1000 pound friend Sebastian and showed him at the county and state fair. From that day forward, I knew there would always be opportunities even when things look unproportioned and seem impossible. Showing beef cattle became our family passion at fairs for years to come. Once I got off the fence, opportunities were endless.

I think of this often at the Dakotas Methodist Foundation. Unfortunately, churches are facing many challenges. It may be a building that no longer meets their needs, a rapidly changing community, or a budget that never seems to balance. So naturally, many church committees and individuals choose to “sit on the fence,” feeling it is safer there.

But the real opportunities come from exploring options, making sound decisions, and moving forward. We in the Church cannot look at these challenges with scarcity but rather with the abundance we find in the living Gospel. Only then will we see all the tremendous occasions for ministry.

That day on the farm, staring down at Sebastian, was I scared? You bet! But something changed inside me as I sat on the fence that day. Something told me that this was an opportunity that could not pass by.

Do you see places in your church where people are sitting on the fence and missing opportunities for ministry? Where is Jesus leading your church? If we help others step off the fence, imagine the abundance ahead! We can make obstacles into opportunities!

If you would like help with the first step, please call the Foundation office. We’d be thrilled to walk with you and your decision-makers as you journey to abundance!

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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and once again this year Wespath seeks to shine a light on mental health throughout the month—and all year long. They encourage you to help remove the stigma associated with mental health and, more importantly, continue the conversation about how to help ourselves and others during times of struggle.

If you missed the training sessions, you are encouraged to watch the recordings at wespath.org/r/firstaid-mh and share them with spouses, Church leaders, staff and congregation members who were not able to attend. Consider starting an accountability group in your congregation to discuss the topics presented and practice the skills.

Throughout the month of May, Wespath hopes to feature personal stories about mental health to inspire those facing similar challenges. Wespath invites you to share your story to encourage others to focus on their own mental health. By sharing your story, it continues the conversation, creates awareness and removes the stigma around mental illness. Share your story at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MHAM2022>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Update: Wespath Student Loan Forgiveness Webinar | May 9th and May 11th

Wespath's Public Service Loan Forgiveness webinar will be May 9, 2pm CDT, or May 11, 12:30pm CDT, online. Clergy, church employees, and all those working in the public sector with federal student loans, attend this workshop to see if you qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Note: the previously announced May 9 student loan workshop hosted by LSS is being replaced by this event. Please register for this event instead. Register for May 9th at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2465898239613654541> or May 11th at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6182553205730545167>

Financial Foundations Webinar | May 9th at 7:00pm (Central)

This quarter's topic: Transforming Lives in a Transactional World

How many times have you gotten stuck in the mindset of "we have to do it this way!" or, "we don't have any money for missions or ministries in our budgets". How many times have you relied on Church fundraisers to meet the budget? Join us for our next Webinar to learn how you can turn Money into Ministry by re-examining your Church fundraising, budget, and investments. We will help you understand ways to look at your Church finances and invest money for the future. Many times we find ourselves concentrating on the line-items in our spreadsheets and overlook the opportunities for ministries.

Pastors, treasurers, finance committee members, and anyone interested in stewardship and generosity in the church are welcome to join. Register at <https://www.dakotasumc.org/foundation/calendar/financial-foundations-webinar-13?recur=2182>

Church Debt and What to Do About It | May 24th at 6:30pm (Central)

Many of our churches would not have buildings without some debt. However, money that pays off debt is money that could be used for mission and ministry. Join Discipleship Ministry's Ken Sloane to discuss church debt. Register at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/may-24-2022-a-heart-strangely-warmed-by-getting-rid-of-debt>

Public Service Loan Forgiveness - Now Is The Time! | June 6th at 11:30am (Central)

LSS Financial Choice presents "what you need to know about the Federal government's changes to the student loan forgiveness program, repayment options and more." Learn more about how these changes can affect your loan's forgiveness if you have been serving a church or the nonprofit sector! If you still have questions after the Wespath webinar, sign up for this free webinar! Register at <https://lssmn-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMocOugrz0pH9xKG62ahFwwJujKUNYA0g1P>