



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

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June 29, 2026

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Today our hearts are with the people and communities of central and northeastern South Dakota who have experienced destructive storms, powerful straight-line winds, and tornadoes. Early reports indicate significant damage in some communities, including Highmore, with homes, farms, businesses, and public infrastructure affected by winds that reached extraordinary strength. As assessments continue, we pray for the safety of all who have been impacted and for the first responders, utility crews, emergency managers, and neighbors who are already extending compassionate care.

In moments like these, the Church remembers who we are. We are people who bear one another's burdens. We become the hands and feet of Christ by checking on neighbors, opening our buildings when needed, sharing resources generously, and surrounding those who have suffered loss with prayer, presence, and practical care. Long after the headlines fade, the ministry of rebuilding continues, and the Church remains.

I invite every congregation across the Dakotas Conference to hold our affected communities in prayer this week. If you are in an impacted area, please place your own safety first, follow the guidance of local officials, and let your conference superintendent know of any damage or emerging needs within your congregation or community so that we may coordinate care and assistance.

The psalmist reminds us, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Even amid broken trees, damaged homes, and uncertain days, God's presence is not diminished. Christ walks with those who grieve, strengthens those who serve, and calls all of us into the holy work of hope.

May the peace of Christ uphold every weary heart, protect those still in harm's way, and guide us as we care for one another with courage, compassion, and steadfast love.

In the hope of Christ,

Bishop Lanette Plambeck

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Resident Bishop

Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area