

First United Methodist Church

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Annual Conference, the yearly gathering of United Methodists in the Dakotas, is generally something I really enjoy. It's a time to get together with colleagues in ministry and reconnect. It's a time to visit with friends in other churches and communities that I've met over the years. It's a time to hear about what other churches are doing in ministry. It's a time to sing, pray, and worship together. In the past several years Annual Conference has been a time to gain some new ideas and skills and to be inspired for greater faithfulness and service to God's Kingdom. It's also a time to browse the bookstore and see what's on the Bishop's "read" list.

Yep, Annual Conference is more than just budget's, reports, motions, votes, and points of privilege. It really is about ministry and relationships. Oh, and did I mention the bookstore!!!

Like most pastors, I have a love/hate relationship with books. I love to get new books!!! I hate to move books!! (I'm not planning on moving for a very long time – so I can get lots of books now, right??!! 😊) The other problem I have with books is that I tend to be a bit of a slow reader. So, I've always got a long stack of books on my "Too Read" shelf.

I love books. I love the ideas, thoughts, challenging ideas, and new possibilities that they open up to me. Thus, it's always great to get more and more books!! But then a number of years ago I heard a speaker make two statements that really changed my attitude toward books. The speaker said, (statement one) "It's not enough to simply possess a book, you have to read it for any benefit to be gained." That statement made me realize there was an unrealistic part of me that believed that if I simply owned a book the knowledge or information it contained would magically float into my brain.

The speaker also said, (statement two) "It's also not enough to simply read a book, you have to apply what you learn to your life for any value to be gained." Ouch, that one pinches too. I realize now there was a time that I thought if I had the content of a book in my head it would magically change things in my life without me really doing anything different. I know, sounds crazy!

Now when I buy a book, a question I ask myself is, "Am I REALLY going to read or use this book?" And once I've finished reading a book, the question I ask myself is, "What am I going to apply to my life from this book?"

So, my question for each of us today is, "What are you reading and learning in life? And how are you allowing what you're learning to change your life? Two great questions!!! Sorry I've got to run, the next Annual Conference session is about to begin....ohhh and look – there's the bookstore. I wonder if anything new has been put out??!!

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

Join us for worship this Sunday. Rev. Boyd Blumer will be preaching and the Praise Team will be playing/singing. It will be a good day to worship God!! Worship is at 9:30 am on Sunday. 310 North Rowley, Downtown Mitchell. And let's all be praying for our VBS outreach and ministry next week!!