



DISTRICT NEWS

IOWA WEST

The Parsonage

Foxes have dens for rest and protection. Birds have nests for sleep and raising their young.

But the King of kings has no castle. The Shepherd of God's sheep has no tent. The Creator during His public ministry has not even a tiny house to call His own.

Jesus travels to Capernaum. He releases the centurion's servant from paralysis and suffering. He cools Peter's mother-in-law's fever. He drives evil spirits out from people and heals all the sick. A teacher of the law declares he'll follow Jesus wherever Jesus goes. Good plan. Jesus replies, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests — but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head." MATTHEW 8:20; LUKE 9:58.

Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Martin Luther explains that "daily bread" includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, HOUSE, etc. SMALL CATECHISM.

And so even while Jesus during His three-year public ministry owned no house as He traveled from place to place — as God provides His congregations



Rev. Paul Egger
District President

with pastors — His congregations care for these men and their families. YOU care for these men and their families by giving them a place to lay their heads. This may mean a salary allowing pastor to purchase a house. This may mean supplying a parsonage. Both are wonderful blessings from God stemming from the love of God's children.

Let's discuss the parsonage. God intends the parsonage to be a blessing to pastor and congregation. The devil intends for the parsonage to become a

stumbling block and cause bitterness between pastor and congregation.

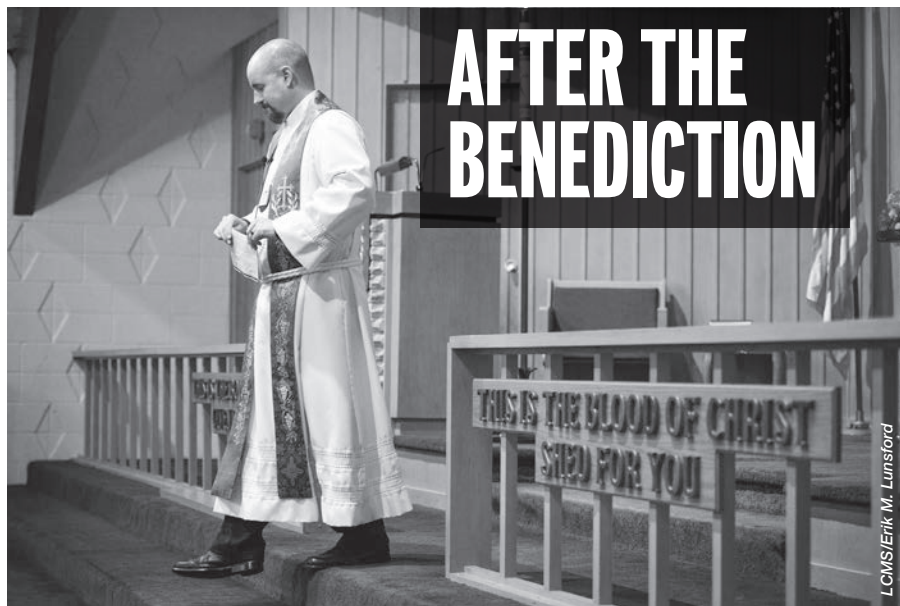
CONGREGATIONS, please consider: When you call a pastor, you pledge to care for him and his family. "Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, your pastor has been called to your congregation. I ask you now, in the presence of God: Will you receive him, show him that love, honor, and obedience in the Lord that you owe to the shepherd and teacher placed over you by your Lord Jesus Christ, and will you support him by your gifts (which certainly includes the parsonage) and by your fervent prayer? If so, then answer: We will, with the help of God. God approves your pledges! My counsel:

- ▶ Chairman and/or head trustee, schedule an annual parsonage walk-through with pastor and pastor's wife. Include a woman from the congregation.
- ▶ Elect/appoint trustees who worship faithfully. If committed to Jesus, trustees will be committed to Jesus' servant, the called pastor.
- ▶ During vacancies, hire a reputable residential inspector who is not a congregational member to inspect the parsonage.

PASTORS, please consider: When you accept a call, you pledge to "Keep a close watch on yourself... manage your own household well... be well thought of by outsiders. 1 TIM 3-4. The parsonage is a gift for you from God and from the congregation. A trust for you in which to live thankfully. A trust for you to treasure



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Using social media to disciple your congregation all week

For many pastors and church leaders, Sunday morning feels like the finish line. We spend hours studying, praying and crafting a message, only to watch the congregation file out the doors at noon. By Monday afternoon, the distractions of daily life have often crowded out the truths preached just 24 hours ago.

But what if Sunday morning wasn't the end? What if it was simply the launchpad?

Discipleship isn't a one-day-a-week event; it's a daily walk. By strategically using social media, you can transform your Sunday sermon from a standalone presentation into an ongoing, interactive discipleship journey that meets your members exactly where they are during the week.

Think of the Sunday sermon like a seed scattered onto the soil of the heart. If it is left unattended, the heat of Monday's pressures and the weeds of worry can quickly choke it out. But when that seed is watered through prayer prompts, Scripture reminders, short teaching clips and faithful encouragement, it has room to take root and bear fruit. Jesus described this kind of fruitful hearing in the parable of the Sower:

"(But) those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit."
MARK 4:20

Here is a practical framework to turn your weekend message into a weekday discipleship engine.

Shift your mindset: From "promotion" to "pastoring"

Most churches use social media exclusively as a digital bulletin board to announce upcoming events or post graphics that say, "Join us this Sunday!" While administration is necessary, it rarely discipless people.

To use social media effectively, you must treat your platforms as an extension of your pastoral ministry. Your feeds shouldn't just look like an advertisement for a building; they should look like a resource for the soul.

Imagine your church's social feed as a front-porch light left on after dark. It does not replace the home, but it signals warmth, welcome and guidance to those passing by. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (MATTHEW 5:14). Used wisely, digital spaces can become small lamps

of Gospel clarity in the middle of a noisy online street.

Micro-chunk your message (the "cut-up" strategy)

A 30-minute sermon is packed with deep theological truths, memorable illustrations and practical applications. Don't let those gems live and die in a single audio file. Break your sermon down into bite-sized, highly shareable pieces of "micro-content":

- **THE 60-SECOND REEL:** Pull one or two high-impact video clips from your sermon footage. Look for moments where you stated a core truth clearly or shared a powerful illustration. Post these as vertical videos (reels, shorts, or TikToks) on Monday and Wednesday.
- **THE QUOTE GRAPHIC:** Identify the "sticky statements" from your message — those concise, memorable phrases that sum up a major point. Turn these into clean, text-based graphics for Instagram and Facebook.
- **THE DEEP-DIVE CAROUSEL:** Use Instagram's carousel feature to swipe through the three main points of your sermon, adding a one-sentence practical application to each slide.
- **THE SCRIPTURE ANCHOR:** Pair each post with a passage that reinforces the sermon's central truth. For example, a sermon on anxiety could be followed by Philippians 4:6-7; a sermon on witness by Acts 1:8; or a sermon on Christian maturity by Colossians 1:28.

Move from monologue to dialogue

Preaching is naturally a monologue, but discipleship thrives on dialogue. Social media provides a unique feedback loop in which your congregation can process the message in real time.

Picture the sermon as a stone dropped into a still pond. The preaching moment is the splash, but discipleship happens as the ripples keep moving outward — into dinner-table conversations, small-group texts, prayer requests and comment threads in which people wrestle honestly with God's Word. The early church devoted itself not only to teaching, but

Continued on next page

also to fellowship, prayer and shared life (Acts 2:42).

► **ASK REFLECTION QUESTIONS:** On Tuesday morning, post a question related to Sunday's application. For example: "On Sunday, we talked about forgiveness. Who is one person you need to actively pray for this week?"

► **USE INTERACTIVE STORIES:** Use Instagram/Facebook story features like polls, Q&A boxes and sliders. Ask questions like, "Which point from Sunday's message challenged you the most?" or "What questions do you still have about this text?"

► **HOST A MID-WEEK LIVE Q&A:** Go live for 15 minutes on a Wednesday during lunch. Call it "Sermon B-Sides" or "The Rest of the Story." Use this time to share a point or context that you had to cut from your sermon for time, and answer questions submitted by your congregation.

Equip your members to be the messengers

True discipleship means equipping the saints for the work of ministry. When you post valuable, sermon-based content, you aren't just ministering to your members; you are giving them tools to minister to their own circles.

Encourage your congregation to share the video clips or quote graphics on their personal feeds. A short, powerful video clip from their pastor is an incredibly low-friction way for a church member to share their faith, encourage a struggling friend or start a spiritual conversation with a neighbor.

This is Ephesians 4:12 in digital form: leaders equipping the saints "for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." A shared post may seem small, but in the hands of a faithful member it can become a doorway, an invitation to coffee, a text to a hurting friend or the first spark of a Gospel conversation.

Building the digital bridge

Social media is often criticized as a place of distraction and division — and it certainly can be. But as leaders, we have the opportunity to redeem these spaces,

THE WEEKLY RHYTHM: A SAMPLE FRAMEWORK

To keep from burning out, establish a predictable content calendar based entirely on the sermon you've already preached.

A weekly rhythm works like a trellis in a garden — it does not create the life, but it gives growing things a structure to climb. Scripture provides the life-giving truth; the calendar simply helps the church return to that truth again and again.

Day	Content Type	Purpose
Monday	High-energy video reel/short	Re-engage the mind and set the spiritual tone for the work week
Tuesday	Reflection question/text graphic	Push toward personal application and prompt comment section discussion
Wednesday	Mid-week live or "Behind the Scenes" text	Address lingering questions; provide a mid-week spiritual course correction
Thursday	Actionable challenge carousel	Give a specific, practical way to live out the sermon before the weekends
Friday/Saturday	Preview/teaser	Shift focus forward and invite them into the next movement of the community

transforming them into digital highway systems that carry the truth of God's Word straight into the daily rhythms of our people.

By turning your Sunday sermon into a week-long conversation, you ensure that the seed planted on Sunday has the time,



space and community watering it needs to take deep root and bear lasting fruit.

In this way, the church's digital ministry becomes less like a megaphone and more like a shepherd's staff — guiding, gathering, correcting and comforting throughout the week. Paul's counsel remains fitting: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom" (COLOSSIANS 3:16).

What is one step you can take this week to extend your message beyond Sunday?

Rev. Dr. B. Keith Haney

Assistant to the President for Missions, Human Care and Stewardship

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MISSION CENTRAL

June 16: We were blessed to have our newest LCMS missionaries visit us for orientation and a tour of the campus. They will be deployed to their field of service later this year. Thank and praise God for their servant hearts, and please remember to keep them in your daily prayers.



Beatrice Suggs
Eurasia



Cadence Fulfs
Latin America/Caribbean



Hannah Potantus
Tanzania



Deaconess Kate Phillips
Dominican Republic



Nora Betts
Latin America/Caribbean



Rev. Sergio and Yoxandris Maita
Puerto Rico



Rev. Christopher and Rebecca Amen
Dominican Republic



Evreda (Evy) Cépeda
Peru



Rev. Timothy and Lisa Sandeno
Germany



June 3: We welcomed visitors from Peace Lutheran Church, Hastings, Neb. They enjoyed a noon meal and a tour of the campus. They rejoiced to hear that we are all missionaries who can tell other people about Jesus.

IOWAY

More than enough

Once again, I circle back around to: “Of course I remember that, it was just a couple of years ago;” only to be blasted with the reality that it happened two decades ago, or more. It happens often for me these days, and I have to be grateful that one, thankfully, I can remember whatever it was, and two, that I have so many beautiful things to reflect back on.

I’m a big music buff and enjoy all kinds of genres, although one of my favorites has always been church music, both traditional and contemporary. The gifts that God has given people to compose melodies and create lyrics connected to Scripture are extraordinary. Spotify is in my daily routine since it allows me to put together playlists that I can pull up with the touch of a phone screen. If you’re part of my generation, it’s so much easier than trying to put together a mixtape off a boom box from a radio DJ. And bonus — no pencil needed to keep handy!

One of the groups that have made a recent playlist of praise songs is Barlow Girl. Now, Barlow Girl is the group I was sure was in my very recent past. However, after looking closer, their song “Enough” came out in 2005. As I reflected, once I came to grips with the time travel, I knew why it stayed with me all these years. The lyrics were simple and profound, and helpful when I was feeling overwhelmed some days as a wife, mom of two young children, a full-time teacher, and from all the other life activities.

All of You is more than enough for
All of me for every thirst and every
need
You satisfy me with Your love



And all I have in You
Is more than enough

You are my supply
My breath of life
Still more awesome than I know.

Knowing that God is the supplier of everything we need both in this daily, earthly life as well as for eternity is such a comfort. Knowing back then, and truthfully now as well, that He is always “more than enough” allows me to fully live the life He intended for me. Some days does it still seem overwhelming? Absolutely, even now, as I’m an empty nester. But God, in His infinite wisdom and love, is always going to be enough.

No matter if you are in the early years of your life adventure, in the chaos of the middle when life seems to move at warp speed, or hanging with me in the “remember that” stage until heaven greets us, know that your hope and joy is solidly planted in what God has done for us!

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Julie Mann

IOWAY Director

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Health

Chiggers

Getty Images

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Chiggers are a species of mite and are a close relative to spiders and ticks. They are microscopic and almost invisible to the naked eye. Once chiggers hatch from eggs, the mites feed on the skin tissue of a host (human or animal) before falling off and turning into an adult mite. They live outdoors in grassy or wooded areas near water and thrive in warm temperatures, especially during the summer.

Chiggers will attach to clothing and move to skin areas to feed. Chigger larva will release a liquid chemical (digestive enzyme) onto the skin to kill skin cells. Changes to the skin cells allow the chigger to drink the skin tissue. The chigger’s chemical causes itching that is very intense for the first 24 to 48 hours before slowly fading over the next two weeks. Favorite sites to feed are areas where skin and clothing have close contact, especially at waistbands, bra lines, sock lines or folds in the skin. Common areas where chiggers bite include ankles, lower legs, behind the knees, waist and groin. It could take up to three hours after the mite makes skin contact before symptoms are experienced.

Because chiggers don’t burrow into the skin, treatment focuses on alleviating itchiness. Treatment options include cold compresses, cleaning affected areas with soap and water regularly, applying topical creams/lotions (calamine lotion), taking oral antihistamines, and using an anti-parasite medication (permethrin). Prevention of chigger bites includes wearing protective clothing, treating clothing with repellent and using bug spray.

See your healthcare provider if severe itching causes an infection (redness, swelling, drainage) as antibiotics may be prescribed.

(Information is referenced from the Cleveland Clinic website.)

Darlene Rueter, RN • IDW Parish Nurse Rep
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Adoption and the Theology of the Cross

By Kim Laube

Lutheran Family Service

As she watched her daughter dart through the grass, carefully placing brightly colored eggs into her basket, she thought the sky had never looked so blue or the grass so green. On that Easter morning, she thanked God for His salvation plan and for His faithfulness in making her the mother she had longed to be.

The scene seemed picture-perfect, the sort of memory worthy of a frame on the wall. Yet much of what lay beyond the edges of that picture went unseen. The full story remained untold.

The joy she felt that day had been forged through years of sorrow. A decade of marriage had been marked by miscarriages, unanswered prayers and the ache of waiting. The laughter ringing across the yard was precious precisely because she knew what it meant to grieve.

That same morning, another mother thought of the daughter she had not held in years. She did not know the final color of her eyes, the day she took her first step, or which Easter candy she reached for first. The memory of cradling her newborn before signing the relinquishment papers returned often. Some days, the grief threatened to overwhelm her;

on others, she found peace in trusting the decision she had made out of love.

Both women loved the same child. One celebrated her presence; the other carried her absence.

What the picture doesn't show

Adoption stories are often told as stories of joy, and rightly so. Yet every adoption begins with a loss. A child is separated from biological parents. Birth parents surrender daily moments they can never reclaim. Adoptive parents often arrive at adoption through their own experiences of heartbreak and disappointment. To focus only on the joy is to tell only part of the story.

Just as Easter cannot be understood apart from Good Friday, the beauty of adoption cannot be fully appreciated apart from the sacrifices, griefs and losses that surround it. Only when we tell the whole story can we begin to see how God works through brokenness to bring His gifts of love, hope and redemption.

Suffering is not something Christians seek, nor do we call suffering good. Yet Luther reminds us that God often does His work in places where the world expects Him least. The theology of the cross teaches us to look for God not only in moments of visible blessing, but also amid

weakness, grief, sacrifice and loss. At Calvary, what appeared to be defeat was, in fact, God's greatest victory. In a similar way, adoption invites us to recognize that God often works through circumstances marked by both joy and sorrow.

Bearing the weight of loss

Suffering within an adoption story has many dimensions. For children who are adopted, the profound loss of being separated from their biological family is often overlooked. Many adoptees wrestle with questions that most people never have to ask: Whom do I resemble? Why was I placed for adoption? Where do I belong? These questions are not evidence of ingratitude. They arise from the very human desire to understand one's story. Even adoptees raised in loving homes may experience grief over relationships and histories they never had the opportunity to know. The church serves adoptees well when it listens to these questions rather than rushing to answer them.

For adoptive parents, the heartbreak of miscarriage and infertility brings grief again and again. Complicated decisions regarding treatments, constant questions from others, and the pain of losing a child can create lasting trauma and, in many cases, strain a marriage.

The grief experienced by birth mothers is perhaps the most recognizable. Separation from an infant after months of bonding during pregnancy, along with the judgment and pressure of others, the longing for different circumstances while knowing they cannot be changed, all deepen her agony. Often, her loss extends beyond separation from her child. For some birth mothers, choosing adoption creates distance — or even an abrupt break — from other important relationships, including her family of origin or the birth father, especially if they disagree with her decision.

The grief of a birth mother is unique because it is often chosen. Out of love for her child, she makes a decision that requires her to live with absence. Every birthday, holiday, graduation and milestone can remind her of what she has surrendered. The church should not

Continued on next page

minimize this sacrifice. The existence of grief does not mean the decision was wrong. Rather, the depth of grief often reflects the depth of love.

Seeing through the cross

Luther contrasted the theology of glory with the theology of the cross. A theology of glory seeks God in strength, success and visible triumph. A theology of the cross learns to recognize God at work even amid weakness and suffering. Adoption challenges us to do the same. We naturally want stories with clear heroes, happy endings and neatly resolved pain. Yet adoption rarely fits such categories. Wounds may heal, but many remain visible. Questions may find answers, but some endure. Christian hope is grounded in the faith that Christ has entered into suffering and redeemed it.

A theology of glory wants every adoption story to end with a smiling family portrait. It wants every question answered and every wound healed. Yet a theology of the cross allows us to acknowledge suffering without allowing suffering to have the final word.

Christians confess a Savior who still bears the marks of His wounds after the resurrection. Easter does not erase Good Friday; rather, it reveals God's power working through it. The blessings

of adoption do not erase the losses that preceded them. Grief remains part of the story, but it is not the whole story.

Adoption by grace

Adoption can teach us something profound about our relationship with God. Scripture speaks of believers being adopted as God's children through Christ. "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons" (ROMANS 8:15). Yet unlike earthly adoption, God's adoption comes without uncertainty. In Holy Baptism, He places His name upon us, claims us as His own, and promises never to leave or forsake us.

For adoptees who struggle with belonging, for birth parents who carry grief, and for adoptive parents who know the cost of sacrifice, God's promises provide a foundation that cannot be shaken. In Christ, our deepest identity is found not in our circumstances, but in whose we are.

Telling the whole story

The Easter egg hunt eventually ended. The basket was emptied. The photographs were printed and placed in albums. But the story continued.

One mother thanked God for the child running through the grass. Another entrusted that same child to God's care from a distance. An adoptee continued growing, learning, questioning and belonging.

Adoption is not a story without loss. It never has been. We need not fear telling the whole story. The theology of the cross teaches us to look honestly at suffering and still confess God's goodness. We follow a Savior who brought life through death, hope through grief and resurrection through a cross. In Him, even stories marked by loss are not beyond redemption.

Kim Laube is director of Life Ministries at Lutheran Family Service (LFS). She has spent more than 30 years serving in adoption and life ministry through organizations such as America World Adoption, Catholic Charities and Iowans for Life, along with LFS. Married for 34 years, Kim is the mother of four children, one of whom joined her family through adoption.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and maintain. Your commitment to care for the parsonage reflects your commitment to care for the congregation who gives you this house. God approves your pledge! My counsel:

- ▶ Regularly clean the parsonage.
- ▶ Before taking upon yourself any parsonage updates/changes ("Hey, let's paint the kitchen bright pink!"), discuss with trustees.
- ▶ Be reasonable with choices for pets.

The Son of Man had no place to lay His head during His earthly ministry. By God's grace, you do. And Jesus reminds you that even as we care for our temporary daily-bread earthly houses, He's preparing a permanent home for you in His Father's house. JOHN 14.

As Jesus lives,
Pastor Paul Egger
President, Iowa District West

A new resource for learning the catechism

LCMS Family Ministry supports the teaching of the faith with resources to help families pass down the faith to the next generation, nurture the spiritual formation of children, and be Christ-bearers to the culture at large and their local communities. Newly available from LCMS Family Ministry are free, downloadable and printable catechism memory cards designed to help children learn Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism by heart.

Children can practice memory work with cards containing questions with answers taken verbatim from Scripture and the catechism. There are also cards intended to inspire further discussion. The cards, which are available in both black and white and color, may be printed double-sided, flipping on the long edge. It is recommended that they be printed on cardstock, then hole-punched and kept on a key ring.

For more information and a link to the resource, visit resources.lcms.org/general/catechism-memory-cards.



Conflict & Difficult Conversations Workshop

Saturday, November 7, 2026 | Iowa District West Office | 409 Kenyon Rd, Suite B, Fort Dodge
A Free Event For All Church Workers & Laity

Session 1

Coping with Conflict Constructively & Productively: Communication Strategies & Christian Principles

How do you handle conflict in life? Are you a conflict dreader, a conflict spreader, or a conflict solver and resolver? Conflicts happen - in our families, in our workplaces, and in the church - but we are so often unprepared for how to handle conflict. Too often, conflict becomes destructive, rather than productive. Learn research-backed strategies from the field of Communication Studies, and God-given wisdom from Scripture, on how to make conflict less harmful and more helpful.

**Participants will head home equipped with wisdom on how to navigate conflict situations with God-serving communication. They will learn how to reflect on and improve their personal approach to conflict with new tools for their conflict management and with Biblical knowledge of Christ-centered conflict management.*

Session 2

Dealing with Difficult Conversations Calmly & Effectively

Certain conversations are, by their very nature, more difficult. It is not easy to talk with someone when there are high emotions, strongly different opinions, or a feeling of friction. In this session, a communication expert shares research-backed tips and beneficial Biblical insights to make uncomfortable conversations less uncomfortable and more successful, in a way that brings people together, rather than tears them apart.

**Participants will head home equipped to face difficult conversations more calmly and less anxiously, with insights on how to make these conversations unfold more smoothly. Participants will receive specific strategies to communicate more comfortably when engaging in uncomfortable conversations, as well as Biblical knowledge of Christ-centered principles for dealing with difficult conversations.*

Schedule

10:00-10:15 a.m. Arrival / Coffee, Juice & Light Snacks
10:15-10:30 a.m. Welcome & Opening Devotion
10:30-11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30-12:00 p.m. Discussion Time (Conflict)
12:00-12:45 p.m. Lunch
12:45-1:45 p.m. Session 2
1:45-2:15 p.m. Discussion Time (Difficult Conversations)
2:15-2:30 p.m. Closing Devotion & Sending

Copy Link or Scan QR to Register

Online - Fill out form



About the Speaker



Rev. Dr. Todd Jenks is Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ames and Teaching Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies and Psychology at Iowa State University. With 30+ years as a pastor and communication professor, his areas of focus include conflict management, leadership communication, and intercultural communication. Todd earned his PhD in Communication at Bowling Green State University.

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
— Romans 12:18*

Hosted by IDW Christian Education Committee

