

UNIVERSITY OF SIOUX FALLS

MAGAZINE | FALL 2024



Sports Build Great
People

**GOD OPENS FAMILIAR DOORS FOR
USF'S NEW CAMPUS PASTOR**

People of Impact



Hello & Welcome

Greetings USF Alumni and Friends,

As we embarked upon the new academic year, the University observed the presence of many new faces on campus to carry on the rich legacy of our institution, which celebrated 141 years of existence on September 8. One such new face is Pastor Matt Styles. Pastor Styles stepped into his new role as campus pastor at USF, his alma mater, following the retirement of Campus Pastor Dennis Thum. Reverend Thum dedicated 33 years of exemplary service to USF, and the University is grateful to him for setting a standard of excellence in leading and supporting our Christian identity over his many years of service. During Pastor Styles' time at USF thus far, he has been committed to not only the expansion of campus ministry functions internally, but also to external outreach into the community, regional churches and beyond. His work is mission-centric, as he assists in expanding our regional recruiting footprint for students and families seeking the unique brand of Christian, liberal arts education that can be accessed at the University of Sioux Falls.

High quality academics and the University's position as a significant player in workforce development has brought forth incrementally increasing interest in our graduates. Of the class of 2023 who participated in last year's graduate survey, 83% found employment within South Dakota, and 93% of those choosing to remain in South Dakota also reported living in Sioux Falls or within 30 miles of the city. Clearly, USF is contributing to economic development in the state and region and prospective employers see value in those possessing a degree from our University.

The University is proud of its rich history and its graduates, who are grounded with a Christian and ethical framework that they take into the world to serve God and humankind. However, we also know that none of this success could be achieved without the outstanding contributions of our talented and committed faculty and staff, some of which are highlighted in this fall alumni magazine.

We express our most sincere gratitude to our generations of alumni that serve as our greatest ambassadors to the external world! Best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brett Bradfield".

Dr. Brett Bradfield
President, University of Sioux Falls

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The COOcommunity came together to celebrate homecoming, family weekend and alumni reunions with a variety of events.

SCAN THE CODE TO TAKE OUR READER'S SURVEY



UPDATES

MEET USF'S VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT



Dustin Sedars joined the University of Sioux Falls as the new vice president for institutional advancement on August 12. He is a two-time graduate from Minnesota State University, Mankato, having received his B.S. in 2004 (business management and mass communications) and his MBA in 2006.

Dustin has spent a large portion of his career in the telecommunications industry, most recently with AT&T. During that time he spent over 12 years leading diverse teams and overseeing distribution strategies spanning multiple states. Dustin also worked for his alma mater in advancement at Mankato for four years, where he served as director of development for the College of Business, College of Arts and Humanities and Student Affairs.

He is passionate about education and its life-changing impact, and he sees his work in advancement as a blessing to utilize the gifts God has given him to help others. According to Dustin, "USF's Christian mission and values align with my own and brings everything together in terms of utilizing my skills while at the same time fitting the work environment I was seeking. In addition, the opportunity to work with the amazing staff, donors, alumni and friends of the University is very exciting."

He and his wife, Deb, have been married for over 22 years and reside with their four children – Norah, Jayden, Olivia and Caedmon – in Sioux Falls.

FIRST COHORT OF USF'S DOCTORATE IN LEADERSHIP GRADUATES



This past May USF celebrated the graduation of its first Doctorate in Leadership class.

Congratulations!

USF DATA VERIFICATION & ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

All alumni have a story and we want to hear yours. That's why USF is partnering with PCI to embark on a new oral history project to collect the stories of alumni in their own words. PCI is collecting stories now so watch for postcards and emails prompting you to verify your alumni data and share your story before December 20, 2024. Questions? Email alumni@usioxfalls.edu



D O N O R

Spotlight

Al Schoeneman

SHARE WHAT YOU LEARN.

GIVE WHERE YOU CAN.

If Al Schoeneman could do life over, he would go to college in Sioux Falls.

"I didn't graduate from USF, but in hindsight, it was a missed opportunity," he says. "I should have gone to college where I wanted to live. That's advice I try to pass along."

After graduating from the University of Kansas in 1970, the Sioux Falls native moved back home to help operate the family business. He retired from Schoeneman's Building Materials Center after 54 years this May.

While Schoeneman is unable to change his past, he realized he could impact the future for others. His generous donations to USF have helped fund projects like the Vucurevich School of Business, Sullivan Faith and Living Center, North Residence Hall and the USF Sports Complex. He also contributes to scholarships and programs that support the University's mission. As a past member of USF's Foundation Board and Board of Trustees, he had the opportunity to help shape important decisions for enhancing the USF experience.

"I would consider myself an ambassador for USF," he says. "I believe in what they are doing. I value education and I enjoy athletics, and there are fantastic people on campus. I've met students who are going to change the world."

Schoeneman doesn't have children of his own but feels it's important to invest in tomorrow's leaders and is respected as a generous community philanthropist.

"I'm in a different situation than most. I don't have any heirs," he explains. "I support causes that matter to me. I feel like we all need to do our part and give where we can."

Now that he's retired, Schoeneman shares his time between Sioux Falls and Phoenix, where he enjoys golfing and watching professional football, basketball and baseball events in the area.

"The weather in Phoenix is great in the winter, but you just can't beat the people in Sioux Falls," he says. "This is home and I am grateful to be able to give back to my community and institutions like the University of Sioux Falls." ■



A WOMAN WITH MANY HATS

A L U M N I S P O T L I G H T F E A T U R I N G

K E L L I K I S S A C K ' 1 3

Writer, photographer, interviewer, podcaster, publisher, equine agent, wife, mother and competitive barrel racer.

Give her an opportunity and Kelli Kissack will give it a try.

The 2014 USF graduate attributes her full and successful life to building connections, being open to new things and trusting in God.

"I would not have come to USF if not for my great aunt LuAnn Grossman," she says. "She worked on campus for over 30 years and encouraged me to take a tour. That was a pivotal decision."

The Minnesota native was on a path toward youth ministry but changed her trajectory after taking classes in entrepreneurial studies.

"I fell in love with the idea of entrepreneurship. I had the opportunity to design my own curriculum through USF's interdisciplinary degree and graduated with degrees in both media studies and entrepreneurial studies," she explains.

While at USF, Kissack participated in everything from basketball to student council to traveling abroad. She also started an online store called Coo Gear Locker and applied for a writing internship with Today's Horse magazine.

"My internship inspired me to write for magazines like Western Horseman and American Cowboy," she says. "It was the perfect job for a horse-crazy cowgirl."

Indeed. Kissack met her husband, Dane, while interviewing him for a rodeo story. She expanded her freelance writing opportunities while touring the country as the wife of a professional rodeo cowboy and formed key relationships in the industry.

In 2020, she began conducting interviews for the Pink and Ruby Buckle organization and met thousands of accomplished barrel racers. A year later, her passion for storytelling led to a lead writing position with Throne Publishing.

And the doors continued to open.

"People in the rodeo world knew my background and began asking for help finding performance horses," she says. "I understand and love the industry so becoming an equine agent was a natural next step."

No matter how many titles she holds, Kissack believes God puts people in her path for a reason.

"Every career opportunity came to me through a relationship," she says. "Saying yes is never a risk when you trust in God and His plans." ■



PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT FEATURING

DR. JAMES FOSTER

As associate professor of philosophy and theology, Dr. James Foster has taught 16 different courses during his tenure at USF. He leads the Honors Program, is the area chair of humanities and serves as the managing editor for the Journal of Scottish Philosophy. He has also authored numerous books, articles and reviews, and is an ordained Episcopal priest who preaches at Grace Church in Madison.

Outside his career, Dr. Foster enjoys spending time with his wife and two young children. You can often find him in the kitchen trying out new recipes or baking homemade sourdough bread.

How does he manage this full and busy life?

"Endless cups of tea and a true joy for my profession," he says. "It is a privilege to be at USF, doing what I do. My job is to help students develop intellectually and spiritually, and there is no greater reward than seeing them succeed."

The Memphis, Tennessee, native began his career at USF in 2013 after earning his Ph.D. in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary. He was a Fulbright Scholar and spent his last year at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. While there, a friend and USF alum persuaded him

to apply for a position at USF. Dr. Foster flew to Sioux Falls for the interview.

"It felt right immediately," he says. "I fell in love with this school and Sioux Falls is the perfect place to raise a family."

Interestingly, Dr. Foster received his undergraduate degree in computer engineering from Northwestern University with little exposure to the humanities.

"I took a philosophy class taught by Dr. Diogenes Allen while at seminary and I was blown away," he explains. "That was it for me. That class changed my life."

Dr. Foster strives to have that same kind of influence on his students.

"Academic success is all about building confidence. I encourage students to go beyond what they think is possible. I emphasize the importance of independent thinking and being a good citizen. When students get into the seminary of their choice with a full scholarship, I feel I have done right by them," he says. "I am humbled by their achievements and so grateful to be part of that journey." ■



ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT FEATURING

KHOT JUAC

As one of the most highly decorated distance runners in USF history, Khot Juac was not ready to end her storied cross country and track career after graduation last spring. After earning degrees in psychology and criminal justice, she also wasn't done with her pursuit of academic excellence.

"I want to practice law, so continuing my education with USF's MBA program made sense to me," explains Khot. "Already I can see the principles I learned as an undergrad being applied in classes like ethical management."

The Sioux Falls native toured USF on the recommendation of her high school track coach, a USF alum who spoke highly of the university and its cross country and track programs. She committed to USF after the visit and has bled purple ever since.

She credits her strong relationships with USF's faculty and coaches for helping her succeed as a student-athlete.

"We are sometimes gone for long stretches and it can be hard to stay on top of everything in the classroom," she says. "The professors support student-athletes and help us manage our time. They are very understanding as long as we maintain open communication."

That support paid off for Khot.

As an undergraduate, Khot was named to the NSIC's All-Academic Team of Excellence, received NSIC All-Academic Honors, CSC All-District Honors and was a DII ADA Academic Achievement Award recipient.

In addition to her success in the classroom, her extensive list of athletic achievements includes NSIC Preseason Cross Country Athlete of the Year in 2024, NCAA DII Cross Country All-American in 2023 and NSIC Athlete of the Week three years in a row.

When she's not in class or at practice, Khot enjoys attending campus events and connecting with friends. She was a resident assistant (RA) in Grand Island Hall for three years and the experience remains one of her college highlights.

"I loved hanging out with people in my hall," she says. "Being an RA and watching the growth in our freshmen was rewarding. I also enjoy being part of a Christian university where people are service-oriented. The USF culture helps me be a better person." ■



//ABOVE (L to R): Jon Hart, director of intercollegiate athletics; Daevon Vereen, wrestling student-athlete; Tamia Horton, track & field student-athlete; Brittany Domino, head women's soccer coach; Grant Hieb, head baseball coach

SPORTS BUILD **GREAT PEOPLE** AT USF

TAKE A WALK AROUND USF and you're sure to encounter a diverse mix of student-athletes. With nearly fifty percent of the student population competing in sports, there is a powerful sense of Cougar pride that extends to generations of Coo alumni and a supportive Sioux Falls community.

The Division II Difference

While USF takes sports seriously and participates as a high-level NCAA Division II athletics program, the University maintains a clear perspective about the role athletics plays in the overall student-athlete experience.

“Relationships, outcomes, development of character and life after college matter just as much as athletic success. We distinguish ourselves through quality coaches, faculty and staff and are committed to building personal connections,” says Jon Hart, USF’s athletic director. “Student-athletes and their families find comfort knowing they’re in good hands.”

Daevon Vereen agrees. The sophomore wrestler came to USF as a high school standout from Banks, Oregon, where he was an all-state and all-american athlete. Vereen chose to attend college over 1,500 miles from home because he appreciated USF’s small class sizes, academic support, Christian environment and the fact that “when I talk with people at USF, they put down whatever they’re doing and listen.”

For Vereen, the launch of USF’s wrestling program drew him to the University, but personal attention was the reason he became a Cougar.

“USF blew all my other campus visits out of the water. I could tell people cared about me as a person,” he explains.

That sentiment is echoed in every coach’s office across campus.

“We are a competitive DII school, but athletics is not our primary focus,” says Women’s Soccer Head Coach Brittany Domino. “We develop people first. On my team, you are not just my starting forward. You are a unique individual and my goal is to help you transition into the real world as a successful human being.”

Supporting the Whole Athlete

Domino has been coaching women’s soccer at USF since 2014. She says the University continues to improve the student-athlete experience thanks to visionary leadership and a commitment to student health and well-being.

“During COVID, we started to see a shift as students were struggling with the challenges at that time. USF stepped up by partnering with

Avera Health to offer free mental health counseling services to all students,” she explains.

Domino says the free virtual or off-campus professional mental health services are convenient and confidential.

“The Avera partnership is an incredible resource and it’s just one more tool we can offer our student-athletes,” she says. “I am proud to be affiliated with a university that normalizes the conversations around mental health so students feel comfortable asking for help.”

Winning in the Classroom

While not an impossible dream, most student-athletes at USF aren’t pursuing careers in professional sports. Instead, college athletics is an avenue for meeting new people, being part of a team and enjoying competitive sports beyond high school.

“I knew I wanted to play sports in college so that was at the top of my college search list,” says Tamia Horton, an NSIC All-Conference sprinter for USF’s track and field team. “While athletics is an important part of my life, I am here to grow as a person and my ultimate goal is to become an occupational therapist.”



Because USF emphasizes academic success, the athletics department is committed to helping student-athletes stay focused, manage their time and maintain passing grades through a system of checks and balances that varies from team to team.

“Incoming wrestlers are required to attend study halls a certain number of hours each week the first semester,” explains Vereen. “We are accountable for studying and keeping our grades up. It really helped me adjust to college.”

This kind of personal attention pays off for USF’s student-athletes, who posted a cumulative 3.38 GPA in the spring of 2024.

"We focus our recruiting on student-athletes with high grade point averages and it has been nice to see a team full of guys who take pride in what they do in the classroom and on the field," says Grant Hieb, USF's head baseball coach.



Pursuing a Bigger Purpose

Being part of a team teaches people the importance of putting others first. This philosophy is at the core of USF's Culture for Service motto and is a valuable piece of the athletics program. Every athlete is required to give back to the community through service, with USF Athletics totaling over 2,000 hours of community service in the 2023-2024 academic year.

"The baseball team does numerous community service projects, including serving breakfast at The

Banquet, packing lunches for Kids Against Hunger, going to local schools for mentorships, volunteering at Lunch is Served and helping local programs like the Sioux Empire Baseball Association," says Hieb.

Student-athletes are also encouraged to get involved on campus through various clubs, organizations and activities. Many become resident assistants, which allows them to meet a variety of people living in the residence halls.

"As a resident assistant, I host a unique event every month," says Horton. "It gives me a chance to be a leader and connect with people outside of track."

For Horton, another unexpected advantage of being a Cougar is the opportunity to explore her faith.

"Here we have track devotionals and we pray together. I have teammates with strong faith and it has had a positive influence on me. I still have so much to learn, but my faith is growing thanks to USF," she says.

According to Hart, all of these positive experiences add up to a 78 percent retention rate among USF's student-athletes.

"They are not just staying at USF, they are graduating from USF," says Hart. "Compare this number nationally and it's just one more thing that makes being a Cougar so special." ■

USF ATHLETICS BY THE NUMBERS

513 TOTAL
Student-Athletes

268 MEN

245 WOMEN

19 Different
Sports

2,000 hrs



of COMMUNITY
SERVICE



3.38

Cumulative GPA

183

*On the Dean's List
(spring 2024)*

79

NSIC **All-Academic**
Team Members (spring 2024)



In Loving Memory

1951-2024





NEXT LEVEL DEGREES AT USF

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT FEATURING

DR. BRITTANY HAMANN

"If you wait for the perfect time to start something big, you'll never start," says Dr. Brittany Hamann, a graduate of USF's M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program, as well as a very recent graduate of the Ed.D. in Leadership program.

She should know. Dr. Hamann's daughter Hannah was born while she was pursuing her doctorate degree.

"I was terrified that a newborn could derail my progress, but my professors wholeheartedly supported me and allowed me to bring her to class. It was an incredibly positive and enriching experience," she says.

Dr. Hamann teaches science at Roosevelt High School, serves as student council advisor and leads the biology collaboration team. She applies her advanced degrees to every realm of her life, whether she's guiding students, working with adults or parenting her children.

"Although I hold a doctorate, I don't plan to seek an administrative role," she says. "My goal is to help students become leaders. Eventually I hope to teach and advise college students, but for now I love what I do here," she says.

A lifelong learner, Hamann chose to earn her master's degree from USF because it was

close to home and carried an impressive reputation. She also formed an immediate bond with Dr. Becky Thurman, director of graduate studies.

"Dr. Thurman encouraged me to pursue a doctorate, so when USF launched the Ed.D. in Leadership program in 2021, I joined the first cohort and Dr. Thurman became my committee chair. She was a huge contributor to my positive experience," she says.

As a graduating member of USF's first doctoral cohort, Hamann attests to the program's life-changing experiences. The research and findings from her dissertation topic "Student Social-Emotional Well-Being from the High School Educator's Perspective" continue to make a positive impact on her career, and so do the people she met while in the program.

"The relationships I built within my cohort were invaluable," she says. "It wasn't easy, and I'm humbled by how much I still need to learn, but so much of my success in the program came from my grit and perseverance to overcome obstacles. I would do it all over again." ■



EXPERIENCE ADDS UP

A L U M N I S P O T L I G H T F E A T U R I N G

C O R E Y B U C K ' 9 8

As the chief financial officer of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation and the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce, Cory Buck believes in processes.

"Reaching this point in my career didn't just happen overnight. It came together one piece at a time, each opportunity leading to the next," he explains. "My path started at USF. That's where I built my foundation."

Buck enrolled at USF as an elementary education major but was drawn to business classes. He accidentally registered for an upper-level accounting class his sophomore year and the mistake was serendipitous.

"The accounting professor noticed the course was over my head and redirected me to a new slate of classes. She became my advisor and helped me stay on track towards a business degree," he says.

The Sinai, South Dakota, native thrived at USF, gaining confidence through professors who taught him anything is possible. He graduated with a business degree in 1998 and enrolled as a part-time student in USF's MBA program.

Then his journey took a turn.

"USF and Reverend Dennis Thum provided me with a context for my faith and sparked an interest in learning more," he explains. "I

enrolled at a Bible college in Minnesota in order to gain a deeper grounding. I also met my wife there."

After Bible college, Buck completed his MBA, earned his CPA license and worked in the nonprofit and public accounting sectors for the next 14 years.

In 2015, he returned to Sioux Falls with his wife and four sons and was eventually hired as an accountant with The Everist Company. His experience there inspired him to apply for an opening with the Sioux Falls Development Foundation in 2020. He was promoted to his current position in 2023 and is grateful to collaborate with community leaders who share his passion for growing Sioux Falls. Some of his highlights include helping plan the vision for Foundation Park and implementing successful Forward Sioux Falls campaigns.

"USF shaped my ideals for a work environment where I have an opportunity to contribute at every level. The close-knit community helped me feel included and involved. USF is where I learned that the people around me matter most," he says. "The right people and the right place make all the difference." ■



FINANCIAL AID TO THE RESCUE

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT FEATURING

KARRIE MORGAN

One of the most difficult challenges facing college students has nothing to do with leaving home, choosing a major or taking tests.

It's paying tuition.

Fortunately, Karrie Morgan and the staff in the USF Financial Aid Office can ease that stress with a guarantee that 100% of first-time, full-time students receive financial aid. Many first-generation students credit Morgan and her staff for making a college education possible.

"Our department works hard to find unique financial aid options and reduce out-of-pocket costs," explains Morgan, director of financial aid. "We love working one-on-one and getting to know students and families."

Morgan started as a USF financial aid counselor in 2011. She accepted a leadership position in 2013, overseeing the department and playing a valuable role in USF's recruitment and retention. Financial aid applications have a daunting reputation, which is why her office is a warm and welcoming haven inside the McDonald Center.

"Our number one priority is excellent customer service. We pride ourselves on taking care of people and making them

feel comfortable," explains Morgan. "I also appreciate our ability to collaborate with other offices and build relationships on campus."

Assisting students and parents with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a critical part of Morgan's job. The application determines eligibility for federal student aid and is often overwhelming.

Last year the U.S. Department of Education revamped the FAFSA in an effort to simplify the process and expand aid eligibility. Glitches and delays provided a frustrating application experience and created new challenges for Morgan.

"Nationally there was a 10 percent reduction in FAFSA applications," she says. "We have expertise in the FAFSA and the advantage of being nimble. If people come to us, we'll do all we can to help. There is no bigger reward than a student realizing a USF education is attainable with their financial aid."

When she's not in the office, Morgan enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and two children and is a fan of watching Caitlin Clark and the WNBA. ■



GOD OPENS
FAMILIAR DOORS FOR

USF's New Campus Pastor

It's not easy to replace a legend.

That was the challenge USF faced when Dean of Chapel and Campus Pastor Dennis Thum retired last May. After 33 years of exemplary service, leadership and dedication to faith and learning, Reverend Thum said a hard goodbye to USF, leaving a hole in the University of Sioux Falls campus community.

A search committee was thoughtfully selected after Reverend Thum's departure and the process to find a new campus pastor began in earnest. A solid pool of applicants was received for the position; many who had strong ties to USF, exceptional experience and impressive educational backgrounds. A handful of highly qualified finalists were invited to USF as the committee worked to determine who would best guide the next generation of campus ministry.

"We needed to find that special person who could effectively provide ministry to a diverse group of campus stakeholders, establish a comprehensive vision for campus ministry in the future, and assist us with external outreach and church relations focused on advancing our Christian mission into the local community and beyond," says Dr. Brett Bradfield, president of USF.

Campus leaders and the search committee set high expectations for a position that plays a critical role in the USF experience. As a private Christian university with a rich 141-year tradition in Sioux Falls, the committee focused on a person committed to community outreach, ecumenical thinking, Culture for Service and a desire to reach every segment of the USF population with an approachable, open and sensitive mindset.



“USF SERVED AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN
MY OWN SPIRITUAL
JOURNEY. NOW I HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN
THAT ROLE FOR OTHER USF
STUDENTS.”

After an extensive search, Pastor Matt Styles started his new position on August 19 with the education, vast experience, understanding of USF and a vision for the future that checked all the boxes.

Pastor Matt is a Sioux Falls native and a USF alum who majored in both media studies and theology. He attended Sioux Falls Seminary and became a pastor at Komstad Covenant Church in Beresford after graduation. In 2016, he applied for the lead pastor position at Trinity Baptist Church in Sioux Falls where he served for over seven years.

"Ironically, every position I've applied for has come from a connection with former professors," he says. "USF served an important role in my own spiritual journey. Now I have the opportunity to be in that role for other USF students."

To find out more about Pastor Matt (he says you can just call him Matt), we sat down for a Q&A with USF's new campus pastor.



GET TO KNOW PASTOR MATT STYLES

What led you to apply for this position?

I wasn't actively looking for a new job, but my former academic advisor Dr. John Hiigel invited me to get together for a meal. He told me Dennis Thum was retiring and that I should consider applying for the position. Ever since my time at USF, the idea of working in an academic setting intrigued me, but I also enjoyed serving the local church in pastoral ministry. This seemed like the perfect opportunity to do both.

What are some of your goals for campus ministry?

There is a sweet spot where communion, community and commission all come together. I'd like to help USF build toward that, while also considering how we could collaborate together with other local churches and ministries in our community. The kingdom of God is bigger than our local ministry and it's important to reach out to other groups, organizations and ministries to see how we might partner together and serve our community.

What three things should we know about you?

1. I am fascinated by Jesus.
2. I love to laugh. I enjoy comedy and silliness and others who have a good sense of humor.
3. I was born and raised in Sioux Falls and graduated from USF. Returning to this campus feels like coming home.

Any new ideas or plans you will introduce to campus ministries?

I enjoy creating experiential worship opportunities and hope to incorporate aspects like multimedia, drama, art, music and interactive prayer stations. Helping people structure their prayers and providing opportunities to integrate faith and field are also on my list.

What can people with tough questions or lack of faith expect when they need answers?

My experience is that people with questions and doubt are usually not running away from Jesus but are often pursuing and seeking truth. It is my hope that those with questions be met with compassion, a willingness to listen and a gentle response. I want to create a gracious space where people can untangle false ideas about what God is like while pointing to the good news of the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

What inspired you to become a pastor?

I had zero idea I would become a pastor when I started at USF. I liked making funny videos and thought I would mainly focus on media studies. However, as I started taking theology classes, I found them to be fascinating and decided to pursue a double major. Although I was not planning to be a pastor, the professors in the theology department continued to see and point out gifts in me that I didn't initially recognize in myself. Their affirming words and encouragement led me to pursue seminary and sent me on a trajectory towards pastoral ministry.

What are your passions or hobbies?

I love spending time with family and playing all sorts of games with my two sons. We have a good time making goofy videos together. I also enjoy watching stand-up comedy, cheering for the Minnesota Vikings and grilling.

Tell us about your family.

My wife is a pharmacist at Avera and also graduated from the University of Sioux Falls. We met in high school, dated in college, and she is the major reason I transferred from the University of South Dakota to the University of Sioux Falls in my sophomore year. We now have two sons; one is a fourth grader and the other is in preschool. ■

Culture for Service Day

'24

Faithful to USF's mission of serving God and humankind in the world, the University has a long-standing tradition of encouraging students to integrate service into their everyday lives. To exemplify this spirit of service, USF devotes one day during the academic year-dubbed 'Culture for Service Day'-to serving the community. On September 25, 2024, over 450 USF volunteers made an impact at over 20 local organizations.



CLASS NOTES

All notes are based on information received between March 1, 2024 and September 30, 2024. Send us your update today at usioxfalls.edu/keepintouch.

// CELEBRATIONS

Alumni

Jamie (Beck) '03 married Justin Grieve on June 1, 2024.

Amanda (Nielson) '07 married **Joe McGregor '19** on May 17, 2019.

Julie (Elder) '09 married Abraham Duut on Dec. 2, 2023.

Shannon (Smith) '09 and Aaron Poor Bear welcomed Aaron Luther on April 23, 2024.

Kendra (Kooiker) '12 and Ross Leonhardt welcomed Eagan Joy on May 9, 2024.

Damian Kardas '13 married Amanda Kardas on Oct. 6, 2018, and welcomed Mila on Aug. 2, 2023.

Nate Schlatter '13 married Libby Schlatter on May 25, 2024.

Jake Steffen '14 married Anne Steffen on Sept. 8, 2018.

Teagan (Molden) '16 married Kirby Schoepp on Oct. 8, 2022, and welcomed Brooks Stanley on Nov. 11, 2023.

Alecia (Martinez) '17 and Jake Juelfs welcomed Isaiah John on Aug. 24, 2024.

Milana (Arambasic) '17 married Austin Semmler on Nov. 17, 2022.

Trey Gross '19 married Meghan Loutsch on April 27, 2024.

Kaitlin (Catlin) '19 welcomed Sofia Kay on March 31, 2021, and married Craig Leathers on Sept. 23, 2023.

Laycee (Cain) '20 and Jared Kluin welcomed Mara Jo on Sept. 15, 2024.

Kylin (McKean) '21 married **Ezra Hunter '21** on May 4, 2024.

Katelyn (Grangaard) '23 and Donovan Peterson welcomed Bellamy Corey Layth on March 4, 2024.

// IN MEMORIAM

Alumni

Grace (Bellows) Reed '48, June 7, 2023, Salem, OR

Lydia (Kaiser) Krantz '50, July 10, 2024, Minnetonka, MN

LaVern Haas '57, June 10, 2024, Minot, ND

Alvin Harsch '58, Aug. 5, 2024, Vancouver, WA

Marge (Johnston) Stromberg '61, May 5, 2024, Chicago, IL

Loren Peterson '62, July 24, 2024, Duluth, MN

David Johnson '65, Aug. 8, 2024, Pierre, SD

Arden Egan '66, Sept. 20, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Ron Lindner '66, March 5, 2024, Hartford, SD

Tom Goddard '67, Oct. 13, 2023, Scotts, MI

Wendell Plucker '67, March 19, 2023, Littleton, CO

Jarene (Gunst) Rudolph '67, Aug. 28, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Shirley (Helgeson) Skogerboe '67, May 4, 2024, Sherburn, MN

Jim Greer '68, June 5, 2024, Casper, WY

Robert Darrington '69, Aug. 1, 2023, Forrest City, MO

Dave Maack '69, May 17, 2023, Valley City, ND

Penny Ritter '69, Aug. 19, 2024, Truman, MN

James Ring '70, Sept. 14, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Marilyn Woodden '70, Aug. 20, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Dean Harms '71, June 25, 2024, Grand Island, NE

Bob Jones '71, Aug. 14, 2024, Brookings, SD

Rick Myers '71, April 23, 2024, Grand Blanc, MI

Tom Schacht '71, March 19, 2024, Saint Paul, NE

David Hillary '72, Sept. 30, 2024, Sheldon, IA

Alice (Bak) Sylliaasen '72, May 2, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Roberta (Lueth) Jacobs '73, Aug. 13, 2024, Hartford, SD

Ken "SID" Kortemeyer '74, Oct. 14, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Paul Kemper '75, May 23, 2024, Moorhead, MN

Gretchen (Knorr) Zloty '75, April 26, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Norb Griebel '76, April 27, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Tim Lear '76, March 2, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Connie Lilla '85, March 12, 2024, Harrisburg, SD

Craig Wear '85, May 24, 2024, Boone, IA

Scott Peters '86, June 4, 2024, Delmont, SD

Scott Brende '87, Aug. 21, 2024, Renner, SD

Melva (Worlie) Christensen '88, July 13, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Wendy Maeder '92, June 19, 2023, Rapid City, SD

Bryan Engen '96, April 15, 2024, Fort Pierre, SD

Ron Kersbergen '99, May 11, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Dean Jones '04, May 4, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Toshea Lemme-Womble '06, April 30, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Dave Anfenson '09, Sept. 27, 2024, Waco, TX

Randi (Wallenberg) Van Der Sloot '11, April 27, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Jaimie (Ball) Calmus '12, Aug. 22, 2024, Seward, NE

Noah Leners '14, Sept. 23, 2024, Arnolds Park, IA

Friends

June Gunn, April 9, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Mary K. Moen, April 9, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD

Bob Roberts, June 2, 2024, Spearfish, SD

Carolyn Schuler, Aug. 17, 2024, Sioux Falls, SD



COUGAR FAMILY MEMORIES

The USF family celebrated tradition and long-standing relationships at this year's Cougar Days, October 17-October 20. Each year, alumni return and reunite with friends and old classmates, and parents join their students to celebrate homecoming with special family weekend events.



Tailgate

**FAMILY CARNIVAL
& FOOTBALL**



COUGAR

Royalty

Queen: Abby Khobloch
King: Caleb Scott



CLASS *Reunion* **LUNCH**



ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT

Awards



Family
WEEKEND



Athletic
HALL OF FAME

Save the date!

GIVE2COO

USF'S GIVING DAYS MARCH 18-20



SHOP IN-STORE OR ONLINE

Not in Sioux Falls? You can get all your USF gear through Cougar Central's online store!



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