

McGovern Center Living the Legacy

WINTER
2025-26

ABCD: A New Model

A BRAVER COMMUNITY/COLLEGE DIALOGUE

WHAT'S NEW AT THE McGOVERN CENTER?

ABCD stands for "A Better Community/College Dialogue." Braver Angels has encouraged its network agencies to try a new style of discussion.



JOEL ALLEN, Ph.D. *Director of the McGovern Center*

My DWU colleague Lori Wehlander and I are completing a training in this new ABCD mode, which is less adversarial and more dialogical. We're planning to do a series of these discussions with several classes and athletic teams, and we have two scheduled before the end of the semester. The first talk will be in a social psychology course, and the guiding question of the dialogue will be, "Why Do Otherwise 'Good' People Often Obey Harmful Orders – as in the Famous Milgram's Experiment?"

We also have a Courageous Conversation on the docket with Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary and with students at Augustana University. While we still plan to organize our own debates, we will continue referring to both models as Courageous Conversations.

Training New Legal Minds

VISITING USD SCHOOL OF LAW

For the second year in a row, the University of South Dakota School of Law invited the McGovern Center to lead a Courageous Conversation with first-year law students.

This year's topic, "The Age of Marriageability in South Dakota" (technically 18, but is actually 16), sparked deep, thoughtful engagement. The USD dean remains a strong advocate for the Braver Angels debate-style dialogue and plans to continue these civic conversations in the future.



USD law students participate in a Courageous Conversation in August.

Courageous Conversations Spark Lively Discussions

In March and April, the McGovern Center at Dakota Wesleyan sponsored two Courageous Conversations centered on immigration and deportation. The first event was on March 17 at Asbury United Methodist Church in Sioux Falls where approximately 80 people attended. And on March 24, about 50 people were in the audience at DWU.

Using the Braver Angels debate-style dialogue, participants were encouraged to speak on this resolution – "The United States should implement comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who meet certain criteria, including residency duration and lack of serious criminal activity."

The theme of immigration and deportation continued in a panel discussion on April 7. Panel members included John Hakari, a former immigration attorney; Mary Hogan, a community relations director for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Taneeza Islam, CEO of South Dakota Voices for Peace/Voices for Justice; and Ben Ready, southeast regional director for Sen. John Thune.

Fifty-five people attended and heard some passionate speeches. While the tone became a bit strained at times, it was overall a very meaningful and worthwhile dialogue.



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DWU is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Outreach and Celebrations

SHARING THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

A major focus this fall has been to bring *The Saint John's Bible* to churches, camps and service groups across the region, and it's made 15 stops so far.

With its extraordinary illuminations and sacred text, viewers have used it for devotion, dialogue and reflection.

CONNECTIONS: YOUNG CHURCH LEADERS

In September, Dr. Joel Allen led a workshop for younger United Methodist pastors across the region, drawing from *The Saint John's Bible* – "Psalms inviting pastors to imagine how local churches can become catalysts for civic renewal in their communities."

DWU's practical church leadership students also had a workshop in August.

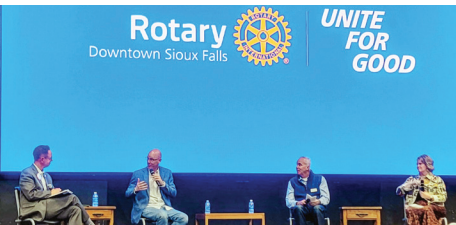
McGOVERN LIVE: FUTURE OF FAITH

As part of the McGovern Live series in September, Dr. Joel Allen gave a lecture, "The Future of Faith: What Happens When so Many Young Americans Are Ghosting God?" The talk explored shifting generational trends in spirituality and how churches might respond with creativity, hope and hospitality.

DIVISION AND DEMOCRACY

Following the tragic murder of Charlie Kirk, interest in depolarization and civic healing continues to grow.

In October, Dr. Joel Allen joined a Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary panel and discussed the topic, "Division and Democracy: Shaping the Future," where he spoke about the "Braver Angels magic" that makes genuine dialogue across differences possible.



Dr. Joel Allen, second from the right, participates in a Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary panel.

To view the 160 stunning illuminations in *The Saint John's Bible*, go to saintjohnsbible.org/turning-the-pages.



Birth of Christ, Donald Jackson, © 2002 The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

SENATE CANDIDATE VISITS DWU

On Sept. 29, DWU and the McGovern Center welcomed Julian Beaudion, candidate for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Sen. Michael Rounds.

Beaudion spent over two hours in open conversation with students, faculty and community members – a wonderful example of civic engagement.

In addition, Beaudion walked in the Blue & White Days Parade during DWU's homecoming.

"FELLOWSHIP" ON PODCASTS

In a recent podcast episode, "A More Perfect Fellowship," Dr. Joel Allen interviewed DWU President Dr. Dan Kittle about why higher education is a public good.

Allen also interviewed the Rev. Dr. John Ross about his work with *The Saint John's Bible*.

To listen to full conversations, search for "A More Perfect Fellowship" wherever you get your podcasts.

A More Perfect Fellowship



Published by the McGovern Center

NEWLY NAMED DWU STUDENT CLUB: "A BETTER SOUTH DAKOTA"

DWU's McGovern Engagement Group has a new name and a renewed mission. The club is now called A Better South Dakota and is dedicated to working together for the common good.

And what's its first project? Proposing a redesign of the South Dakota state flag, which currently says "South Dakota" twice and features a mysterious central image. But before the group gets there, it plans to request that the city of Mitchell consider the possibility of adopting a new city flag.



The official state flag of South Dakota is the only one of the 50 states to use the name of the state twice in the flag design.

The Spirit of Former Sen. George McGovern Lives On!

At the McGovern Center, we continue to nurture leadership, service and civic renewal – helping students and communities embody the spirit of former Sen. George McGovern's vision for democracy rooted in compassion and courage. Thank you for your continued support. Please continue to give toward this great mission and purpose. Use the enclosed return envelope or give online.

Visit www.dwugift.org or make a one-time contribution at give.dwu.edu/McGovern.



Thank YOU for Making McGOVERN CENTER NEWS a Part of Your Year!