



RLRI North Central 2026 Featured Speakers – Urbana, IL

Friday

January 23

Evening Challenge

Brian Aldridge, BVSC, PHD, MS, DACVIM, RCVS

Praise & Worship

Ben Bylsma

Ben has been leading worship for over a decade. A committed husband for 18 years and father to two children, Etta and Xavier. Ben's experience has been heavily focused on the unique work of church planting, where he has served in multiple new communities. This background has involved building and leading volunteer bands and worship teams from the ground up. Ben is passionate about empowering people in the local church to simply and genuinely engage in worship. Find Ben's original music [here](#).

Saturday

January 24

Devotion

Russhawn Aldridge, PhD

Dr. Russhawn Aldridge completed her graduate work at UW Madison-Wisconsin and worked as a public health toxicologist before joining the founding faculty at the Western University College of Veterinary Medicine. She and her family lived in the UK serving in the London Bible Study Fellowship classes before returning to the US and joining the faculty at University of Illinois. She loves serving the Lord by bringing hope and help to people through a side-by-side ministry of discipleship. In this season, her greatest joy is serving the Lord with her husband Brian, and encouraging and training their two sons Caleb and Noah.

Session I

Dr. Dan Lohnes, DVM

Dr. Dan Lohnes is a 1982 graduate of the University of Illinois CVM. Dr. Dan moved to Barry, IL after graduation and is still there. Dan has recently “mostly” retired. Married to Debbie for 48 years with 3

children and 9 grandchildren. He enjoyed bovine medicine and reproduction and small animal surgery. He has been to Honduras 27 times and is on the board of directors of HOI and serves as chairman of Agriculture committee. Dr. Dan loves Jesus and is trying to live a “Christ-like” life. He also is a lay speaker in the United Methodist Church and fills the pulpit 2-3 times a month. Favorite scripture is out of the 25th chapter of Matthew, the story of the sheep and goats.

Dr. Briana Selleck, DVM

Dr. Briana Selleck graduated in 2017 from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. She moved back to her home state of Minnesota with her husband where she currently works part-time as a small animal general practitioner and owns an equine practice. Together, Dr. Selleck and her husband have a 40-acre farm that’s home to 4 children, 40 some chickens/ducks/geese, 8 cats, 1 horse, and is a summer home for cattle.

Dr. Marjorie Clark, DVM

Marjorie Clark graduated from Iowa State University in 2012 and 2016 with a bachelor's in chemistry and DVM respectively. After graduation, she spent a few years on the boarder in El Paso, Texas doing mixed animal medicine and shelter med. Then the Midwest came calling her home and she ended up in Kansas City, Missouri, where she splits her time between general practice, ER, and shelter med. She shares her home with 2 dogs and 3 cats. She spends her free time in the pool or riding her Harley. She enjoys mentoring students on short term trips with CVM and investing time with the executive team for the KCVMA.

Session II

Dr. Dr. Dan Bieck, DVM

Over the past 27 years, I have experienced some extreme highs and lows. I grew a small animal practice in Charleston, SC, from 1 ½ doctors to 4 doctors in just six years. My wife and I bought a practice in central Illinois and doubled the gross income in just four years. Unfortunately, after buying my practice, I shifted my priorities from my faith in Jesus Christ, family, and friends to my patients, clients, staff, and the practice itself. This led to compassion fatigue and burnout in 6 years. This forced me to retire from practicing medicine in 2020. My next phase of life led me to provide lectures to VBMA's at 21 different veterinary colleges nationwide. I have also provided lectures at the Midwest Vet Conference, KC FETCH Conference, and several Real-Life Real Impact conferences. In 2023, I became an Assistant Professor and Clinical Relations Veterinarian at Lincoln Memorial University College of Veterinary Medicine. My lecture topics range from leadership, compassion fatigue, and burnout, to euthanasia, and how to be a Christian veterinarian in a secular world.

Dr. Joshua Li, DVM, and Dr. Laura Li, DVM

Drs. Joshua and Laura Li are 2015 graduates from University of Illinois. They live in Bloomington, Illinois with three young boys. They both practice small animal medicine at Highland Pet Hospital and Animal Emergency Clinic. In their "free" time, Laura likes to garden and pick flowers and Josh likes to smoke meats and bake bread (classic thirties!). We spend the rest of the time taking care of kids, interacting with international students with our church, and work.

Dr. Lauren Charles, DVM

Dr. Lauren Charles is a graduate of Auburn University, College of Veterinary Medicine, class of 2005. She grew up in Louisville, KY and lives there again now. After a number of short-term mission trips to Latin American countries, she lived and served in Bolivia from 2009-2012 with Christian Veterinary

Mission, working primarily with veterinary students. Lauren adopted her daughter in Bolivia, then got married and came back to the US. They now also have 3 biological children, a son-in-law, and a grandbaby! She serves as CVM's Workplace and Student Ministries Director and Mideast Region Rep.

Session III

Dr. Dr. Gina Wintermantel, DVM

Dr. Gina and her husband Steve joined CVM long term staff in 2018. They moved their family of six to South Sudan and worked with a team of South Sudanese pastors and Kenyan pastors to start Kingdom Builder's School (KBS). KBS equips and trains South Sudanese believers to take the Gospel to the unreached villages of South Sudan.

Unfortunately, Steve unexpectedly passed away in 2023. Gina continued to serve in East Africa, and Kingdom Builders School continues to equip believers to be sent out. She is now back in the U.S. for home assignment. Gina enjoys spending time with her family, anything outdoors (hiking, camping, triathlons), and hanging out with their Ridgeback, Sabi.

Dr. Diane Noll, DVM

Dr. Diane Noll has been in mixed animal private practice for 36 years in Iowa, sold her clinic in 2018 and has now returned to relief work. She has ventured into some teaching at a local Vet Tech school, but 4 children, and 14 grandchildren keep her busy in between trips with CVM to Nicaragua and Haiti. An additional passion calls her to Zambia, Africa frequently where she and her husband lead a ministry to over 400 orphans, beginning with a feeding program and now growing to a Christian academy for the orphans in the community. Dr. Noll may be contacted at leftydiane@gmail.com.

Dr. Karren Eales, DVM

Dr. Eales is a dedicated veterinarian with a DVM from The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. With a deep passion for both animal care and human well-being, she has expanded her knowledge into mental health, becoming a certified mental health coach and brain health trainer. She is also trained in Hope-Focused suicide prevention, equipping her to support individuals facing life's challenges.

Beyond her professional work, she finds joy in spending time with her husband, George and four children, traveling, camping, and caring for their odd menagerie of animals. Dr. Eales' unique blend of veterinary knowledge and mental health advocacy allows her to serve both people and animals with compassion and purpose.

Session IV

Dr. Cheryl Loken, DVM

Dr. Cheryl Loken is a University of Wisconsin graduate and is working as a small animal general practitioner in rural Wisconsin. She is married with two adult children and one granddaughter (by the time of this conference 😊). She has one cat, Harmony, (who hates other cats) and a granddog, Bella. She loves Jesus, reading His Word, and being involved in her local church where she is on a worship team, part of a growth community, and works with the youth group. God has given her a passion for missions and enjoying His beautiful creation while hiking, kayaking, and biking.

Dr. Emily Massie, DVM

A recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Emily enjoys serving her community not only as a veterinarian, but as a lover of Christ, wife, and farmer. Emily started practice as a predominantly large animal practitioner, but made an early career change that allowed her the space to enjoy life outside of work. She and her husband, Noah reside near Chetek, WI where they raise beef cattle, have a Golden Retriever, and enjoy spending time with their family.

Dr. Brandon Scharping, DVM

Dr. Brandon Scharping grew up in rural Wisconsin, and met his wife, Morgan on a mission trip during college. Morgan and Brandon both attended the University of Wisconsin for Veterinary School. He graduated veterinary school in 2017. Drs. Morgan and Brandon have been working as food animal veterinarians at Lena Veterinary Clinic in Lena, IL ever since. Their daughter Avery was born in June of 2021, and their son Brooks was born in February of 2025. What a blessing these children have been to their lives! The Scharpings live in the countryside of Pearl City, IL. However, they are still avid Wisconsin Badger and Green Bay Packer fans. Brandon has a passion for teaching veterinary students, and enjoys having externs ride with him. He also enjoys helping students come up with a plan to pay off their student debt.

Evening Challenge

Dr. Ashley Propst, DVM

Dr. Ashley Propst is a follower of Christ, wife, daughter, sister, friend, and veterinarian. She graduated from University of Illinois in 2018. She is currently located in Worthington, MN. She started as a mixed animal practitioner right after graduation and through a clinic change, she became a small animal only practitioner. She enjoys spending time with her husband Tyler. She also enjoys hiking, biking, reading, baking, music, and being snuggled up with their two cats. Ashley is grateful to be serving as the North Central Region Rep since July 2025.

Sunday

January 25

Praise & Worship

Ben Bylsma

Devotion

Jeremy Rodriguez

Jeremy, a New York City native, joined CVM as a contractor for app development in July of 2021. He joined the CVM staff in July, 2022 and is responsible for the CVM Website, the CVM App and all General Communications. In his personal time Jeremy enjoys pastoral ministry, aviation, travelling, tech and spending time with friends & family.

In Loving Memory

In Loving Memory of Clinton, who was excited to share a devotional and a breakout session this weekend but was unexpectedly called to be with the Lord in October 2025.

Clinton Rice

Clinton Rice, a 1992 graduate of Cedarville University and current doctoral candidate at Capella University, is a devoted follower of Christ, committed to loving God by loving others. A loving husband and father to four daughters and four grandchildren (and counting), he leads with compassion and integrity. Since joining EMVC in 2021, he has combined his expertise in technology with a heart dedicated to service, ensuring that technical excellence is rooted in love and care. His faith guides his life and work, reflecting a deep commitment to community, family, and making a positive impact every day. If you would like to know more, you can read his obituary here: <https://www.bowenfuneralhomes.com/obituaries/clinton-rice-3/#!/Obituary>

