

Lake Union  
**HERALD**

OCTOBER 2020

How We

Move

**Forward**

**MISSION UNSTOPPABLE**  
DISPATCHES FROM THE UNION

**ILLINOIS MEMBERS**  
**ILLINOIS FOCUS**  
INSIDE

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**On August 20, Kyoshin Ahn was confirmed as executive secretary of the North American Division.** Ahn served as NAD's undersecretary since February 2016, previously working as an associate secretary from 2013 to 2016. Before going to the NAD, Ahn served almost eight years (2005-2013) as executive secretary for the Illinois Conference.



**Wisconsin Conference president Mike Edge and his wife, Juanita, are retiring at the end of this year.** Edge has served as president since April 2010. Prior to that, he served as its Youth director from 2000-2010. Juanita has served as the Communications director since 2010.



**On Friday, May 22, the first ever virtual Tent meeting, an evangelistic series put on by Ruth Murdoch Elementary junior high students, was held in a large tent on the campus of Andrews University.** Videos are archived at the PMC Youth YouTube page. Learn more at: <https://bit.ly/2EEsVre>.



**Richard Parke, director of Media for Pioneer Memorial Church, was featured on the cover of August 2020 Adventist Journey.** Moving with his family from one small town to another, he found ways to serve in his church and community. Watch video interview at: <https://bit.ly/3hulloJ>.



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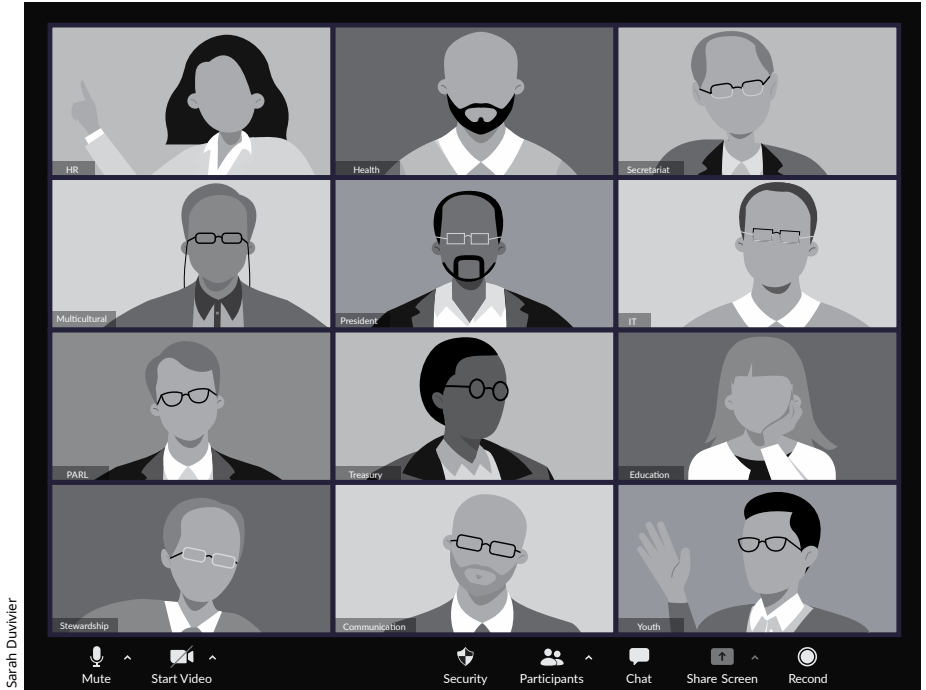


With our lives being diverted and focus redirected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided this was a good time to read through the Bible again. I'm now in the Psalms, a refreshing contrast to my new perspective of the Old Testament stories of carnage and violence, given our current culture. I had forgotten how far God's people, even His best people, had drifted away from God in such short order following the miraculous Red Sea crossing. I found myself quick to judge and condemn their actions until I read further and saw myself in the story.

However unwelcome these current events, we may find blessings. For one, it certainly has adjusted my thinking regarding priorities. We have a whole new paradigm of life on this planet and where our priorities should be. And speaking of priorities, what about our neighbors who may have no clue of Heaven's perspective? This could be our opportunity to reach them with a message of hope and spiritual healing. ■



Gary Burns  
Editor



Sarah Duvivier

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Mission Unstoppable

By Lake Union department leaders

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# Modern-day Heroes

New words and phrases have entered the American vocabulary at a faster rate than I can remember. The Merriam-Webster dictionary adds new additions every year, and this year's additions seem to have come at lightning speed.



▲ Maurice Valentine

In our lifetime we will never forget the word COVID-19, or the phrases, “social distancing,” “abundance of caution” or, the newest for me, “neck gaiter.” The one that possibly most deserves our attention is “essential workers.” Although not entirely new, the essential worker in times past has often been thought of as the farmer. In a matter of months, the term has become cemented in the American psyche as we have been reminded in many ways to be grateful for many others who do the most difficult tasks among us, most without hazard pay. Some have paid the ultimate price for their willingness to still drive a bus so people could reach the hospital or take temperatures as personnel have entered food facilities so we could be fed.

As a result of the pandemic, we now have a better appreciation for the supply chain that extends from the farm to the grocery store shelf stocker and checker, not to mention all points in between, such as truckers who have carried on while many of us sheltered in place. Occasionally while shopping, I have stopped to thank these individuals (while maintaining a safe social distance as possible) to let them know how much I appreciate them. I'm also most grateful for our first responders, utility workers, repair and maintenance people, and governmental leaders.

And who would ever forget the many healthcare professionals who have showed up day after day to take care of those most impacted by the novel coronavirus? Some neighborhoods have sung, clapped, delivered food and cards for these modern-day heroes. Certainly, there

are too many essential workers to enumerate here. Suffice it to say, I am grateful for each link in the chain that has helped to supply our collective needs.

The church has essential workers, too. Even as we appreciate food for our tables, we also are grateful for food for our souls. Paul said of Titus in 2 Corinthians 12:18 (ESV): *I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?*

Pastors, teachers, elders, school professors, and, yes, the support teams in offices that see to their payroll operations and benefits are often overlooked. Those who provide lifelong training and development of our church leaders are to be commended for the outstanding job they have done to keep the soul food served up for each of us every Sabbath.

Many walking in Paul's steps have reported they are working harder than ever. Moreover, there are many teachers whose jobs required marathon-like stamina before the current crisis, who now find their jobs to be exceedingly much more complex during the pandemic.

On many Sabbaths our local elders also bring thoughtfully prepared messages via video conferencing platforms. I like what Paul said when he expressed, *...we do all things, beloved, for your edification*” (2 Cor. 12:19).

The local church, too, has enjoyed the support of volunteer essential workers for whom we also should be grateful as they give without remuneration enormous amounts of time to keep the church services coming

our way during the pandemic. I know of one individual who is producer, director and technician (jobs typically overseen by multiple people in large churches or by our media ministries), all because of their love for the Lord and their love for God's people. The program begins with a countdown with beautiful nature scenes and music, all a result of melding together three separate computer programs to help the saints find their church's program edifying. Text sweep in from the side of the screen as the pastor preaches.

I know of another who handles the audio for their church's program, setting up, running and tearing down public address equipment on the church's parking lots for outdoor services, sometimes in scorching heat. Both individuals volunteer multiple hours, having weekly meetings to address logistics, and do dry runs with those who will be up front or before the camera.

What a blessing! Where would the church be with missionary volunteers? And the dream of many of these spiritual essential workers is that they will reach not just their own community, but that the polished professional productions they produce will beam the Three Angels' messages around the world. Like their pastors, they are working harder than ever.

In this issue of the *Herald*, we will highlight our Lake Union Conference essential workers. As I interacted with our local conference Education superintendents, one said, "We are very grateful for our Union Education superintendent, Linda Fuchs and her staff. They have helped us navigate very difficult decisions regarding school reopening."

Please look within these pages and you will see people, many of whom are working harder than ever to keep the work advancing. To each and every one of them, be it at the local church, the conference, the union conference, the division or General Conference, our schools of higher learning and our hospitals, with whom I have had many full day meetings — sometimes late into the evening to prayerfully plan for ways to keep the work of all of these institutions alive and well, we owe a great debt of gratitude. Not to mention at one point for several months, almost daily meetings with the officers of this office to grapple

with maintaining our own region's vitality, developing multi-phase strategies to support all of the above so that when any institution called, we had already crafted a response months in advance of how we would respond to their need.

Thank you, essential workers within and without the church. To God be the glory for your dedicated service, as while one plants and another waters, it is God who gives the increase. Know you, too, are an essential worker. Reaching the world for Jesus is the essential calling we all accepted when we gave our lives to Him. If you feel discouraged for the long hours of toil, don't forget, Jesus was the essential worker of heaven who volunteered to "Go" per His Father's request to represent God's love for fallen man. He labored in our midst for 33 years to give us a future and a hope. And He still labors in heaven to make intercession for us!

I close with a special note of appreciation for our essential givers. I want to personally thank you as a constituent of Lake Union Conference for your faithful tithe to the Lord. When the pandemic began, projections were for a 20 to 30 percent decrease. Thus far, as of the writing of this article, we are pleased to see that those who give a tenth back to the Lord as well as offerings are committed individuals who do so regardless of a pandemic. And while some have lost jobs, do know you are in our prayers.

In keeping with Pastors' Appreciation Month, special thanks are in order to our pastors for providing great leadership in this regard, some driving from home to home while socially distancing to pick up the tithe of the faithful. Moreover, special recognition is appropriate to our conference officials who have encouraged faithful giving through various online means such as Adventist Giving. Prayers for all and blessings to all! ■

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*Maurice Valentine is president of the Lake Union Conference.*

# Coping with the Pandemic

With the exception of the 2014 Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa, virtually no one alive has coped with a pandemic on the scale on COVID-19.



▲ Alina M. Baltazar

We do not know how long this will last, what the economic impact will be, and people are dying. We are all stressed! Our usual coping tools may not be an option now that many of us are stuck at home and cut off from our spiritual and social support networks. This impacts the family as well. Here are some tips to help you and your family cope:

- **Set a schedule and have a daily routine.** Go to sleep at about the same time every day. Getting good sleep is an excellent way to boost your immune system.
- **Exercise regularly**, especially outside to get fresh air and sunlight.
- **Eat a healthy diet at regular mealtimes.** Plan your meals ahead of time. Work on being intentional in what you eat. Allow small snacks in between meals if you need to, even the occasional treat.
- **Have more compassion** for yourself and your spouse, as well as other family members in your household. We are all going through a rough time.
- **Reach out to your friends or relatives** who may be more isolated than usual. We all need somebody we can lean on during these difficult times.
- **Do relaxation techniques** to slow your breathing down and help decrease bodily tension when emotionally distressed. Longer relaxation techniques ones could be done daily. Here are some short ones you can do throughout the day (up to 200 times), but first you need to be aware of your first physical sign of emotional distress (burning in your stomach, tightness across your chest, tightness in your jaw, clenched fist, difficulty concentrating, etc.). Try each one of these before you get upset so you know which one will work best you or your family member.
- **Body Scan/Wet Noodle** — Spend 10 seconds, scan your body (head to toe, toe to head), notice any tension, then relax while count to 10. Or tighten tense muscles for five seconds then relax. Or pretend you are a wet noodle and let it all go. This is a fun one for kids! Works for up to 70 percent of people.
- **Diaphragmatic Breathing/Pizza Breathing** — Take a slow deep breath through your nose into your belly for four seconds, hold for four seconds, let out slowly by blowing out through your mouth like it is a straw for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, and out for four seconds, and then two more time. This is called four square breathing. Or pretend you are holding a piece of pizza and you are breathing in the smell, but it's too hot to eat so you have to blow on it to cool it off. Feel the tension release when you breathe out. Do that three times.
- **Spending personal and family time with the Lord daily** can give you and your family a sense of grounding in connecting with an all-powerful Creator who knows what you are going through. He is watching over you and will take care of you. Focus on what you have control of in your life, then let God take care of the rest. The Bible tells us repeatedly to not fear because God knows the enemy uses this to take away our hope. Remember, the Lord says, *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand* (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV). ■

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Alina M. Baltazar, PhD, MSW, LMSW, CFLE is an associate professor of Social Work at Andrews University and a certified Family Life educator.

# Don't Be So Defensive

As a therapist and Seventh-day Adventist Christian, I help people navigate arguments all the time. Disagreeing is not the cause of an argument. People disagree all the time — just look at our government.

Defensiveness is the cause of arguments. When someone brings a complaint to you, it causes you to have a thought about yourself. You think something along the lines of, “If they feel that I did something wrong, it means that I am \_\_\_\_.” You then try to defend yourself in order to make the person like you, accept you, or at least not think bad things about you. Unfortunately, when we already believe part of what we believe they are saying to us, it makes us even more defensive because it's reinforcing something about which we already feel badly.

In order to reduce defensiveness during disagreements, I recommend the following suggestions:

- 1. Fully acknowledge your role in the complaint someone is bringing to you.** This does not make you weak or wrong. It simply means you are listening to the other person and they matter to you. This also will make the person less upset which is a win for both of you.
- 2. Do not try to shift the blame onto someone or something else.** If someone is hurt by you, acknowledge their hurt, accept responsibility for your role in that hurt and assure them you will work on it and do better. Trying to blame someone or something else indicates that you believe what you did was acceptable.
- 3. If possible, let the other person know what changes you are trying to make.** Be specific. “From now on I will try to help you with the kids when I get home from work so we will have more time to relax together later.” Simply saying “I'll stop” or “I'll do better” lacks specificity and can indicate to the

other person you are not hearing or understanding their request.

**4. It's okay to seek support and professional help.**

Wanting to get help for relationship problems doesn't mean you're weak or that there's no hope for your relationship. It simply means you would like guidance on navigating a difficult situation. We often ask for help with things that we don't understand; relationships are no different.

- 5. Be patient.** When a person brings a complaint to you, it doesn't necessarily mean anything about you personally. It just means something has happened that they do not like and are asking you for help so it doesn't keep happening. Think of it as an opportunity to help the other person to be happy, rather than as an attack on you.

Arguments are uncomfortable for everyone, and doing these steps can help stop an argument from occurring which should make everyone happier. ■

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*It is important to note that this article is not intended to take the place of therapy, medical advice, or to diminish the effects of mental or personality disorders.*

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*Brad Hinman, PhD, LPC, LMFT, AASECT certified sex therapist, director, Hinman Counseling Service; assistant professor, Andrews University.*



▲ Brad Hinman

# What Happened to Butler? — 2

Brother Butler was a tough old customer, but God loved him anyway. That's the good news for most of us.



▲ George R. Knight

He did have his repentant moments. In 1893, for example, he wrote to Ellen White that “the past few years” had “pretty effectually broken my back, but that is a small matter compared with the progress of the work.” And by the autumn of 1894 Butler was even inviting A.T. Jones to help him at the Florida camp meeting.

In 1901, after his wife's death, Butler came out of his semi-retirement to become president of the Florida Conference. Between 1902 and 1907, he served as president of the Southern Union Conference.

Ellen White rejoiced to see the aged pioneer back in a position of leadership. “I have known,” she told the delegates at the 1903 General Conference session, “that the time would come when he would again take his place in the work. I want you to appreciate the trials

he has passed through. . . . God desires the gray-haired pioneers” who had a part in early Adventism “to stand in their place in His work today. They are not to drop out of sight” (1903 GCB 205).

The new Butler, she wrote in 1902, was not the same man he had been in 1888. Not only was he “strong in physical and spiritual health,” but “the Lord has proved and tested and tried him, as he did Job and as he did Moses. I see in Elder Butler one who has humbled his soul before God. He has another spirit than the Elder Butler of younger years. He has been learning his lesson at the feet of Jesus” (Lt 77, 1902).

Such a bill of health did not mean that Butler was straight on the issue of 1888. He told General Conference president A.G. Daniels in 1909 that “he never could see light” in the messages of Jones and Waggoner. His motto was still “obey and live.”

Despite his problems, Ellen White wrote of him, “Though he may make some mistakes, yet he is a servant of the living God, and I shall do all I possibly can to sustain him in his work” (Lt 293, 1905). Butler would remain surprisingly active in the church until his death in 1918 at the age of 84.

God uses even less-than-perfect people. And it's a good thing. Otherwise He would have nobody to use.

*Take us today, Lord, with all of our defects, and use us to Your Glory. Amen. ■*

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*George R. Knight is a retired professor of Church History at the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. This article is from his book, Lest We Forget, a daily devotional, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, page 297. Reprinted with permission.*





# Cómo guía Dios de una generación a otra

Mi abuelo, Rubén Daniel Pechero, nació en Bahía Blanca, Argentina, el 6 de enero de 1935. Sus padres, mis bisabuelos, conocieron el mensaje adventista por medio de vecinos y amigos.

Un día, cuando mi abuelo tenía quince años, llegaron unos misioneros de Estados Unidos a su casa. Les dije-ron a mis bisabuelos que deseaban que sus hijos fueran a estudiar al Colegio Adventista del Plata.

El padre de mi abuelo era colportor y su madre era ama de casa, no les iba a alcanzar el dinero para pagar los estudios en una institución privada. Los misioneros les dijeron que si mi abuelo estaba de acuerdo, ellos le encontrarían un benefactor y no tendrían que pagar nada. Mi abuelo quedó sumamente impactado y prometió desde ese día hacer lo mismo por otros.

Poco tiempo después, mi abuelo conoció a una joven llamada Norma Mulinari y se casaron en el año 1960. Tuvieron cuatro hijos, y después de servir en el campo misionero en Perú se les presentó la oportunidad de venir a los Estados Unidos donde mi abuelo completó una residencia médica en el área de ortopedia.

Mi abuelo Rubén nos inculcaba continuamente el concepto de que la educación es muy importante y valoraba mucho la educación adventista. Sus cuatro hijos estudiaron en instituciones adventistas desde el preescolar hasta la universidad. Mi abuelo tuvo trece nietos y todos hemos asistido a escuelas adventistas. Y en este momento, cinco de sus nietos estamos estudiando en Andrews University, dos en Union College, dos en Southern Adventist University y uno en Loma Linda University.

Mi abuelo sirvió en la junta administrativa de Southwestern Adventist University, y durante los últimos veinte años fue el médico de enlace y colaboró con la escuela de medicina de la Universidad Adventista del

Plata en Entre Ríos, Argentina. Este enlace ha hecho posible que los estudiantes completen sus prácticas médicas en los Estados Unidos.

El viernes 10 de Julio de 2020, teniendo 85 años de edad y luego de haber ejercido como cirujano ortopédico por más de 52 años en el área del Rio Grande Valley, estado de Texas, realizó su última cirugía de cuello cervical. Al día siguiente desarrolló síntomas y dio positivo para Covid-19. El día 28 de Julio falleció después de dos semanas de una intensa lucha contra el Covid-19.

El legado que mi abuelo me dejó es que él deseaba que nosotros fuéramos miembros productivos y contribuyentes de nuestra sociedad. Nos enseñó a aportar lo más posible para ayudar a otros.

Estar en la Universidad Andrews durante este tiempo es un desafío personal debido a la pérdida de mi abuelo y la pandemia en la que vivimos actualmente.

Encuentro consuelo al estar en este medio ambiente adventista y al tener la oportunidad de continuar mi educación y, sobre todo, siento que puedo fortalecer mi relación con Dios. Estoy orgullosa de ser una mujer adventista hispana. Me siento muy bendecida de poder asistir a Andrews University y de ver cómo mi abuelo trazó el camino para que sus hijos y nietos continuaran su educación en un entorno que también fomenta una relación con Dios. El tener una educación cristiana y un conocimiento personal de Dios nos prepara para que un día podamos difundir el mensaje y el amor de Jesucristo en nuestras comunidades. ■

*Amanda Pechero reside en McAllen, Texas. Actualmente es estudiante en el tercer año de Arquitectura en la Universidad Andrews.*



Courtesy Amanda Pechero

▲ Amanda Pechero  
junto con su abuelo, el  
Dr. Rubén Pechero

# A Small Church Dreams Big

By Susan Jergovich

**THE SHELBYVILLE CHURCH IS NOT A VERY BIG CHURCH, WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF ONLY ABOUT 40 TO 45 MEMBERS WHO ATTEND FAITHFULLY EVERY SABBATH.** Nevertheless, what we've accomplished is proof that God does not need much to work with to perform miracles and to get His Word out. Through a low-power radio station operating from within the church building, this little church has managed to reach many people within the last few years.

The Shelbyville Church has broadcast with Life Talk Radio Network on radio station WSHI LP 98.5 FM since May 2007. The members of the church, with assistance from Don Meyer, broadcast the Sabbath sermons live over the airways every Sabbath morning at 11:30 a.m., along with different programming from Amazing Facts, It is Written and Voice of Prophecy.

The radio ministry is touching so many people and the church hears testimony regularly from people who have listened and felt the Holy Spirit move them. One listener in particular, Merv, is always sending in

considerable donations and tells us how much he enjoys the Christian station. He is a very generous giver and the donations that he provides are similar to the woman Jesus spoke of in Mark 12:43-44: *Calling his disciples to Him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."* He donates, he says, because "I have been truly touched and blessed by listening to this radio station and I want to make sure that it doesn't leave." He also stated, "I'm sure it is touching many other people's lives by what you are doing with this ministry." And he's right. Many others have been blessed through this church's radio ministry.

The radio station primarily runs on donations from church members and listeners. Although there have been many times that it looked like the radio station was not going to make it financially, "We have witnessed many miracles along the way as God provided and still provides for us today," says Tammy Begley, assistant program director of WSHI and one of the voices on the air.

Although the station is considered low power with a broadcast range of around 15 miles, several listeners said that they received the transmission all the way into Greensburg, over 22 miles away. "It might be low power," explains John Begley, program director of WSHI, "but God doesn't need much power to get His message across,"

You can hear WSHI 98.5 FM 24/7 on the radio. There is also a link on the website: [www.shelbyvillesda.org](http://www.shelbyvillesda.org) on WSHI 98.5 FM Christian Radio. ■

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*Susan Jergovich is a member of the Shelbyville Church and assists with the WSHI productions.*



Susan Jergovich

▲ Tammy broadcasting before a live sermon at Shelbyville church

# South Bend Members Mobilize to Help Farm Workers

By Howard Dukes, *South Bend Tribune*

## OLGA JIMENEZ HAS HAD TO FIELD HER SHARE OF QUESTIONS RECENTLY FROM HER TWO DAUGHTERS ABOUT THE NEWS THEY SEE ON TELEVISION.

The girls “are like, ‘Mom, why are we always hearing bad news?’” Jimenez says. “Everything seems like bad news and we want to hear some good news.’

“If that doesn’t get you, what will?”

Olga has come to realize that even at a young age, Aline, 9, and Alani, 6, understand they live in a troubled world.

So she and her husband, Mauricio, want to ensure their children see and are involved in examples of goodness.

For her, that revolves around doing missionary work at her church, South Bend Hispanic Church. Olga, 33, has been attending the church since she was eight years old and has been among the members spreading goodness throughout the community.

A couple of weeks ago, she got a chance to take her good works beyond her community after watching videos and pictures posted on Facebook by Jesusa Rivera. Jesusa works in South Bend for Proteus, a federally funded agency that supports and advocates for migrant farm workers.

Jesusa’s posts about the farms prompted Olga to reach out through the social media site. She wanted to learn more about Proteus and how she could get involved.

Olga led fellow members of her church in an effort to buy socks and long-sleeve shirts (to protect from pesticides and the sun). They also cooked a Mexican meal and asked children to make a thank you card. They traveled to a farm in Hamlet, Indiana, to bring the items to workers there on July 24.

“Some of the people that went there have done this kind of job and they know how hard it is, and we wanted to do something nice for (the farm workers) because we



Robert Franklin

▲ Olga Jimenez with her kids — Alani, 6, and Aline, 9, and her husband, Mauricio, in the South Bend Hispanic Church.

know they don’t get the recognition they deserve,” Olga said. “We feel that this is our mission. As long as we are on Earth, we have to spread love.”

Olga got Aline and Alani involved in the effort. The girls helped deliver napkins and drinks.

“I am still getting texts messages about how grateful these farm workers are because it was something they never expected,” Jesusa said. “One of workers said, ‘I haven’t had a meal like this in years.’”

Church members are used to serving the community. They will go through the neighborhood, for example, to hand out cold water to people who are working outside or waiting at a bus stop. The hope is that by making a connection, church members can talk about the Lord.

Olga said the church has a singing group that performs Christian music in front of the stores along Western Avenue.

“We also have prayer involved and we always have people talking about the trouble that they are having in their lives,” she said.

A love of God and a love of people motivates the good deeds of Olga.

Jesusa, though, never thought to ask her why she decided to help the farm workers.

“It was a blessing,” she said, “and you take it as a blessing.” ■

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*Published by permission of the South Bend Tribune, Aug. 3, 2020 (under the headline, “South Bend woman mobilizes her church to help farm workers”).*

# Love (and Baptism) in the Digital Age

## *Couple's Relationship with God and Each Other Thrives During Pandemic*

By Joel Guerra

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the bonds of many families and friends in unexpected ways.

One couple, Jonathan Ericson and Marcella Lobo, saw their relationship bloom during a time of unforeseen circumstances.

Prior to their live-streamed wedding on May 17, the Ericsons initially met last year on an online dating app and, after their engagement, began virtual Bible studies and premarital counseling led by Elgin Church pastor Gabriel Bardan.

Marcella was located in Evanston, Illinois, studying for her MBA at Northwestern University, while Jonathan was working in the Chicago area. To meet women in his area, Jonathan made an account on a dating app called Bumble, but struck out with the women he was meeting because they did not match his lifestyle. Jonathan said that, after consulting with a friend about his dating situation, his friend encouraged him to spend some time in Evanston and try swiping there. By chance, Marcella also was swiping right on her account during the same evening that Jonathan visited Evanston, and the two ended up matching with each other.

At the time of their first date, Jonathan was not religious; finding out that Marcella was a devout Adventist



Courtesy Jonathan Ericson

▲ Marcella Lobo and Jonathan Ericson

was almost a deal-breaker for him. Regardless, Jonathan decided to give the second date a chance and, soon enough, they were going on regular dates.

“He was humble, honest, and was willing to be a business partner with me, which was important,” said Marcella. “We slowly became best friends over the next few dates.”

According to Jonathan, the more he got to know Marcella, the more he realized that she was nothing like his preconceived notions about Christians.

“Each progressive date with her opened my eyes a little further to the wonderful person that I was getting to know,” Jonathan said. “Marcella sees brightness in places that I do not, always has a kind word to share, and seems genuinely inspired by the gospel. It didn’t take long for me to fall deeply in love.”

Marcella and Jonathan quickly decided that they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together, however, they did not want to get engaged before Jonathan met Marcella’s family in Brazil. It was there where Marcella’s father gave Jonathan his blessing to marry his daughter, with the condition that he would consider pursuing Christ.

It also was there in Brazil, during one particularly romantic moment floating down the Silver River in the

middle of the jungle, that Jonathan dropped to a knee and proposed. To his delight, Marcella accepted.

After returning from visiting Marcella's family, Jonathan found Pastor Gabriel's contact online and decided to reach out.

Gabriel recalled in that conversation that Jonathan "didn't say that he wanted to learn for himself or he wanted to get baptized; he just said that he wanted to better understand the beliefs of the lady that he was planning to spend the rest of his life with."

After agreeing to begin Bible studies, Jonathan and Gabriel met several times throughout January and February. Jonathan was eager to learn from the beginning and had plenty of questions. Gabriel said that even though Jonathan originally inquired about Bible studies with the purpose of learning more about his fiancée's beliefs, he quickly began to show interest and buy into the beliefs himself.

After just one Bible study, Jonathan decided to visit the Deer Park Church with Marcella to hear Gabriel's sermon. That same Sabbath, they approached Gabriel about receiving premarital counseling, to which Gabriel gladly agreed. In late February, Gabriel met with the couple at a local Whole Foods Market for their first counseling session. However, they were only able to complete one in-person session before shifting over to virtual counseling and Bible study meetings, due to social distancing rules in response to COVID-19.

Gabriel, who has plenty of experience in virtual ministry and was a founding member of the Adventist Virtual Learning Network in 1999, did not allow a lack of in-person meetings to hinder him from counseling or teaching God's Word. Although there was also uncertainty with their wedding plans, Jonathan and Marcella decided that they would still get married even if their loved ones could not attend in-person.

"We decided that we were going to be married anyway. We did not want to wait for months or maybe years until [COVID-19] was gone," Jonathan said.

Ultimately, Jonathan and Marcella's plans to have their wedding in Key West with family and friends present were cancelled. According to Gabriel, Jonathan came to him saying that their plans for their wedding were ruined and they didn't know what to do, so he

offered to host the wedding at the church, as well as baptize Jonathan on the same day.

"Right away I said, 'Look, we can do the wedding in the church,'" Gabriel said. "We could stream it because we had the equipment."

Immediately following Jonathan's baptism, Jonathan and Marcella joined each other on the stage and were married by Gabriel with their loved ones present via livestream. In an effort to make the virtual wedding more personal and interactive, they played pre-recorded videos from friends and family congratulating the couple.

Right after the wedding, the newlyweds got in their car, already packed with everything they needed, and left Chicago to head west. They celebrated their honeymoon at Utah's Zion National Park and then drove on to Newport Beach, California.

While the Ericsons now reside in California, Marcella is currently serving in one of Gabriel's new virtual ministries by managing the business administration side. According to Gabriel, the ministry essentially serves as a lifestyle center in the Elgin area where they run weekly free health clinics. Jonathan is serving by helping write proposals and grant applications for the clinic.

"I am thankful to God for all that he has done for me, especially for introducing me to Marcella," said Jonathan. "I have never been happier in my life." ■

*Joel Guerra is a Chicago-based writer who enjoys social media*

▼ *Marcella and Jonathan Ericson met last spring via a dating app and were married in May. Jonathan received virtual Bible studies and was baptized right before the wedding at the Deer Park Church in Illinois.*




Courtesy/Jonathan Ericson

▼ *Jonathan and Marcella received congratulatory messages during their virtual wedding ceremony performed by Pastor Gabriel Bardan.*



Courtesy/Jonathan Ericson

# ***Mission Unstoppable***



**U**nstoppable is the word that comes to mind when you look at the early days of the church. Conflict and controversy threatened to defeat the young group but, instead of destroying it, the challenges fueled the fire that spread across the first-century landscape.

And now, in these challenging times, we are reminded of our mission through the following stories from Lake Union department leaders what being the Church is really about — God’s people doing God’s work together by the power of the Holy Spirit.



**M**ore than a hundred years ago, Ellen White had a vision of beams of light growing brighter, increasing in brilliancy, and becoming far-reaching as many more lights were added to it. She was told: “You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning, it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”<sup>1</sup>

This vision would yield a blueprint for the Communication departments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its beginnings, in the 1860s, until today. Only God could have predicted how the church’s needs would change through the years, but only God was all the church would need to thrive on its mission.

How does this tie into the Lake Union Communication Department? We can see how God has moved mightily and fulfilled the need for a “bright light” by providing digital communication for such a time as this.

The shift toward providing more channels of communication began with our foray into social media and broadened to a dynamic *Herald* website, then came the launch of a weekly newsletter. All of these avenues of disseminating information were critical and began paying dividends, even before the pandemic hit.

For instance, last fall, as a direct result of a newsletter article, “The Tent” organizer and two then-eighth-grade students were invited to talk about their student-led evangelistic meetings carried out on the campus of Andrews University. After they spoke, they were approached by a donor willing to fund another ambitious project, this time for older youth.

This brings me to where we are today. Soon after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, we were well-positioned. With lots of prayer, our scrappy, rapid-fire team shared timely and relevant information via social media and the newsletter.

But God’s vision for our department didn’t stop there. With the advent of livestreams, we quickly entered the broadcasting business. *Are you seeing the*

*beams of light Ellen White alluded to in her vision?* Our Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department was quick to launch the first broadcast on April 4 and, for the next ten weeks, Communication collaborated with the Health and Education departments to produce a weekly show, covering a range of topics from “Physical and Emotional Health in Quarantine” to “Preparing for the Second Wave” to the “Class of 2020 Dealing with Disappointment.”

One of the most popular shows — “Death, Grief and Recovery” — featured well-known Berrien Springs doctor Lowell Hamel who faced a near-death experience when he contracted the coronavirus only to be subsequently healed by God.

We just completed our 18th livestream production, which accrued over 50,000 total views and much positive feedback, such as this comment on social media: “The service you provided during the crisis was INVALUABLE! You also were cutting edge in having important conversations. Before many could gather their wits, you were in front of us, speaking for us, informing us, and preparing us.”

God’s use of the Communication Department has been an intentional one, which continues to today. We pray that we remain faithful, as a pen in the Master’s Hand, while He writes the closing sentences of His message with effulgent light.

“Then there was rejoicing in heaven. I saw that the rays of light came directly from Jesus, to form these precious jets of light in the world.”<sup>2</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup>White, *Ellen G. Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Gospel Workers (*old edition*), p. 378.

Debbie Michel, associate director of Communication, Lake Union Conference

# [COMMUNICATION]

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# [EDUCATION]

Without the prescience of a looming and negatively impactful pandemic, convening a highly collaborative forum for Lake Union’s high school science teachers just days prior to the “shut down” proved a blessing. This forum led Dave Carter, Biology teacher at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, to express appreciation for, “the excellent day and the food, company and learning [which] was well worth the trip.” Dave’s sentiments were echoed by many of his colleagues who participated in the March 3 Science teachers’ Professional Learning Community (PLC).

In the past three years, Lake Union’s Math, English and Science academy teachers participated in PLCs, forums intended to bolster a professionally-supported community where teachers conjoin on instructional strategies, engage in a supportive and collegial context, explore the nuances of the subject content, receive job-imbedded professional development opportunities, and form mentoring relationships.

At the 2019 fall English teachers’ PLC, educators collaborated on the theme: “Writing to Elevate Students.” Professors from Andrews and Southwestern universities, academy faculty from outside of our Union, and the PLC coordinator engaged with English teachers on topics such as “Giving Students the Right Kind of Writing Practice”; “Writing to Learn, Not Learning to Write” and “Increasing Student Engagement in the Language Arts Classroom.”

This spring, Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers met with a team of Science professors from Andrews University and Paul Turk, Life Sciences teacher at Sacramento Adventist Academy, to explore teaching on topics such as, “Seeing God’s Hand: Understanding Chemical Design”; “Teaching Biology: It Should Be Fun”; “Shedding Light on Physics” and “Women and Minorities in STEM.” A Physics workshop led by Dr. Margarita Mattingly and her team offered teachers experiments and ready-to-use kits.

Attendee Steve Atkins appreciated the Physics presentation in “not only showing us how to do experiments, but also providing the tools to actually do the experiment in class!” Mr. Atkins returned to his Biology

class at Andrews Academy and sent the following note — what Physics presenter, Dr. Mattingly, describes as proof-of-concept of what Atkins had implemented in just 24 hours:

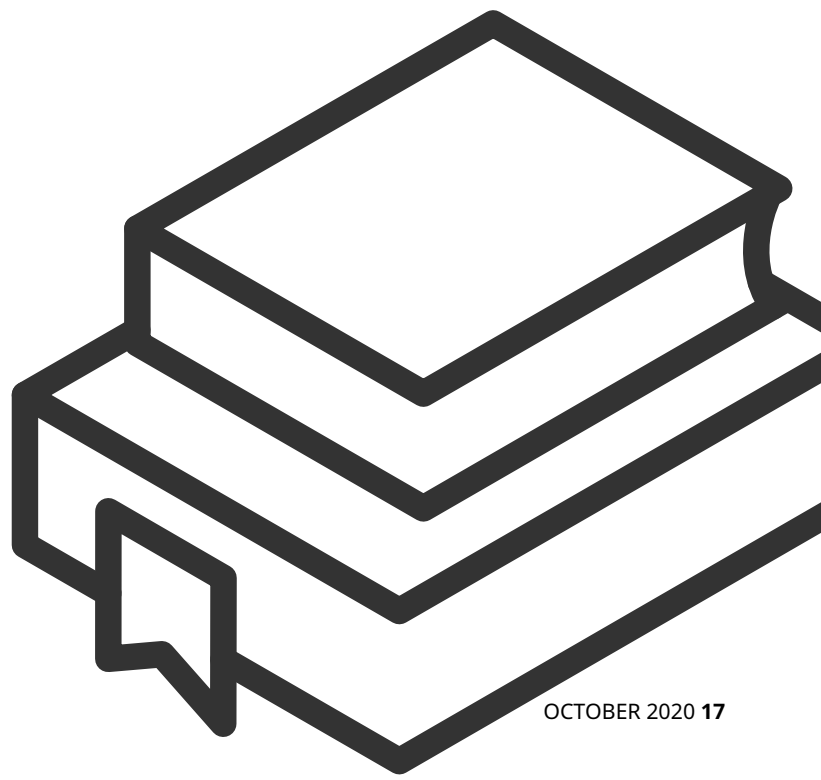
“On Monday, part of the Earth Science lesson was on why the sky is blue and sunsets are red. As I explained it to the students, I was thinking I wish I had Dr. Kutzner’s demonstration on this that I had seen him do before. So, at the worship on Tuesday, I was so glad to learn how to do this and have the container and supplies to do the experiment! As I do each day, I reviewed concepts from the previous days when I begin the new lesson . . . and today, I did the experiment as a demonstration for the students which was intended to serve as a review activity! It now will be a permanent part of the lesson that I will do about atmosphere colors.”

A professional learning community that began with bringing LUC Math teachers together is expanding to include additional subject areas in an effort to reduce the professional isolation academy subject-area teachers may experience. What a blessing! ■

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*Ruth Horton, EdD, PLC coordinator/facilitator, is the associate director of Education of the Lake Union Conference.*

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# [HEALTH]



**A**dventist Community Health Initiative (ACHI) in the Lake Union has been a tremendous blessing for many in need of health-related services these past five years. The vision of health evangelism within our Union is growing and has given numerous churches in their own communities the opportunity to meet their neighbors that they may not have had otherwise. Not only have hundreds of people been served, but our lay members have been able to create connections and contacts in their own communities that will break down prejudices with them in future evangelistic efforts.

These past several months have been a challenge for most everyone, to say the least. Having had a clinic schedule at full capacity, we were forced to cancel all clinics from mid-March through the remainder of the year as restrictions were put into place. To promote current health information during this crisis, I participated, along with the Communication Department, in two of the ten-part series of “Coronavirus and the

Church,” a series that the Public Affairs Religious Liberty and Communications departments facilitated. These two segments included a panel of experts addressing the spread, treatment and Biblical as well as scientific ways to avoid getting the virus along with numerous physical, mental and emotional consequences in social settings of the pandemic. The panel included physicians, dentists and psychologists, all of which shared information and then answered questions for lay members.

New and revised protocols in the workplace have become essential, if not a requirement, in most work environments. No locales have been immune to the virus, and the Lake Union has committed to keeping our employees safe. I helped in the study and research that led us to create and implement COVID-safe guidelines for the office. If you are to visit us, you will see that these protocols are being used accordingly. Amidst these uncertain times, we will continue to strive to keep all those who enter our doors safe.

We could look back on this past year as a painful journey, but we continue to trust in God’s timing and plans. Clinics that had been scheduled had a lot of work and planning already in place. And then, there were those that responded to the advertising and were hoping to receive dental and eye care. I came in contact with a lady in the spring within our community in Cicero, Ind., that desperately needed new glasses. She was able to get her prescription to me, select from the assortment of frames in our supply, then I was able to send them out to the eye doctor that fabricates the glasses for ACHI. She had been concerned about not seeing clearly but couldn’t afford the cost at her eye doctor’s office. She was thrilled to know that she could obtain a new pair of glasses.

These are God-given opportunities. Even though our clinics are still on pause, we all must stay aware of those around us. God’s Kingdom will be won one heart at a time. ■

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*Randy Griffin, Lake Union Health director*

**[Randy.Griffin@lakeunion.org](mailto:Randy.Griffin@lakeunion.org)**



**G**rowing older is a complicated experience. You are grateful for the years you have had; you can look backward and see so much growth and accomplishment. You have a better understanding of the areas in life where you feel like you failed. You know who you are and are able to inspire people with where you have been. But when it comes to looking forward, that can feel blurry.

Retirement almost feels like starting a new identity. Often the first things people ask when we meet someone is “What do you do?” It feels as though what we do plays a large role in who we are. So, what happens when we retire? When we no longer do the things we have always done. Who are we then?

In HR, we can’t solve all of life’s big questions. We know employee benefits and policies. We think about procedures and state legislation. But I like to think that at the Lake Union we get to do a bit more than that. Sometimes we get to journey with our current and former employees and help ease some of the anxiety that retirement in today’s economic reality can bring.

One initiative we launched in March 2019 was to hold a Retirement Seminar. This was the first Retirement Seminar held in our building. Del Johnson, the former Plan administrator of the NAD Retirement Department, was our presenter. If you have ever heard Del present, you are always impressed at how he shares his information through storytelling, thus making it quite memorable.

The goal was to reach as many current employees and former employees who were within five years of retirement. The Lake Union was able to coordinate the seminar by collaborating with all four conferences as well as inviting Andrews University to participate. Del Johnson travelled across the Lake Union territory to present at each Conference. Our conference room was overflowing and our parking lot was at capacity. People need guidance as they prepare for this journey and, as a church that prides itself on serving, this felt like a great way for the Human Resources Department to add value and clarity.

In total, we assisted over 200 people to better equip them with the knowledge they needed in preparing for retirement. We were amazed and delighted with the number of people who registered. We reached out to our LUC Communication Department and they agreed to film the seminar. Technology made it possible for even more people to gather the important information they needed without physically attending.

When we think of great ministry stories, I don’t think anyone thinks of us. When we think of making an impact for God’s Kingdom, rarely will your HR director come to mind. But that is the beauty of service — all of us get to do our part, some as speakers, some as educators or medical professionals. I like to think that HR gets to make an impact, too. I like to think that the policy keepers and number crunchers, the people with the less obvious gifts and skills, get to quietly make their contributions. It’s not glorious or typically even article worthy, but I’m grateful for the opportunity to serve. I believe that many hands will make light work, and I am blessed to journey with you.

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace (I Peter 4:10 CEB). ■*

*Vicki Thompson, assistant Human Resources director of the Lake Union Conference*

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# [HUMAN RESOURCES]

# [INFORMATION SYSTEM]

Planning and problem-solving are two of the more prominent activities that take place in the Information Systems Department at the Lake Union. Often research is being done to determine what types of systems are reliable and could these systems be beneficial to our field either at the Conference office, at a church or in a school setting. In the last few months, that planning ahead (by the grace of God) has paid off as, prior to 2020, the Union office had assisted several conferences with implementing Microsoft Office 365 and the Teams module. This has been a blessing during the COVID-19 crisis as many meetings and collaborative work was and continues to be to be handled in an efficient manner in the Cloud.

The Information Systems Department can be viewed as a resource available to the conferences and the wider field. During the COVID-19 crisis, the department has continued to make itself available by ensuring that those that need support have the information necessary to contact our staff via Teams, cell phone and email. We believe this has made it possible to continue to provide support in a timely fashion and make sure departments at the conferences and academies have the technology resources they need.

Here's a case in point that demonstrates both how this works in our current environment and how we continue to assist the field. One of our conferences was having a software issue that had been going on for some time. It wasn't earth shattering, but it sure was bothersome and certainly was slowing staff productivity. Our department received a plea to take another look at this issue to try to determine the cause. We spent some time talking it over, doing some additional research and, in this particular case, a prayer was offered for Divine guidance. Although I know God does not always immediately provide a solution to an issue, it was not more than a few minutes after this prayer that a Google search pointed us to an article that ultimately solved the problem. I believe



this happened as we worked together both here at the Union and in conjunction with our counterparts at the conference office, with a prayer in our hearts and the willingness to put agendas aside and find a solution to the problem.

Life is not always perfect and we aren't always able to solve every problem, but I find it refreshing to know that we work in a place where the day starts with worship and prayer, where we are encouraged to use our talents to the best of our abilities to further the cause of God, and where we are often given positive feedback and encouragement in our work. I hope that the Information Systems Department will continue to be that kind of channel of God's blessings, both to the Union office and to the wider constituency that we serve. ■

*Sean Parker, IT director, Lake Union Conference*

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“When we approach God, it will be as one brotherhood. We are pilgrims and strangers, bound for a better country, even a heavenly. There all pride, all accusation, all self-deception, will forever have an end. Every mask will be laid aside, and we shall ‘see Him as He is.’” (*Review and Herald*, Oct. 24, 1899)

In 2015, the Lake Union officers felt the need to foster an understanding of the unique challenges in our past history that our African American members faced so, in June of that year, Don Livesay, our former Lake Union president, offered a formal apology at the Lake Region camp meeting for the racist behaviors and practices that had taken place for many years in our territory. We then decided to continue a journey seeking unity by encouraging dialogue on race and diversity in several cities. We began those conversations in 2016 in the Village Church in Berrien Springs. We then continued in 2017 with pastors and laypeople in Indianapolis, continued them in Milwaukee in 2018, and now currently we are having monthly conversations between Lake Region and Michigan conference pastors who are pastoring in the Detroit Motor City area.

In each of the conversation initiatives we have been teaching the need to understand ourselves and those of a different culture by teaching the principles of cultural intelligence. Cultural Intelligence is understood as the individual’s capability to communicate cross-culturally. Part of the journey included each pastor taking a cultural intelligence assessment so as to determine their ability to communicate cross-culturally and to see how the African American, White and Asian pastors are similar and yet different in their cultural values.

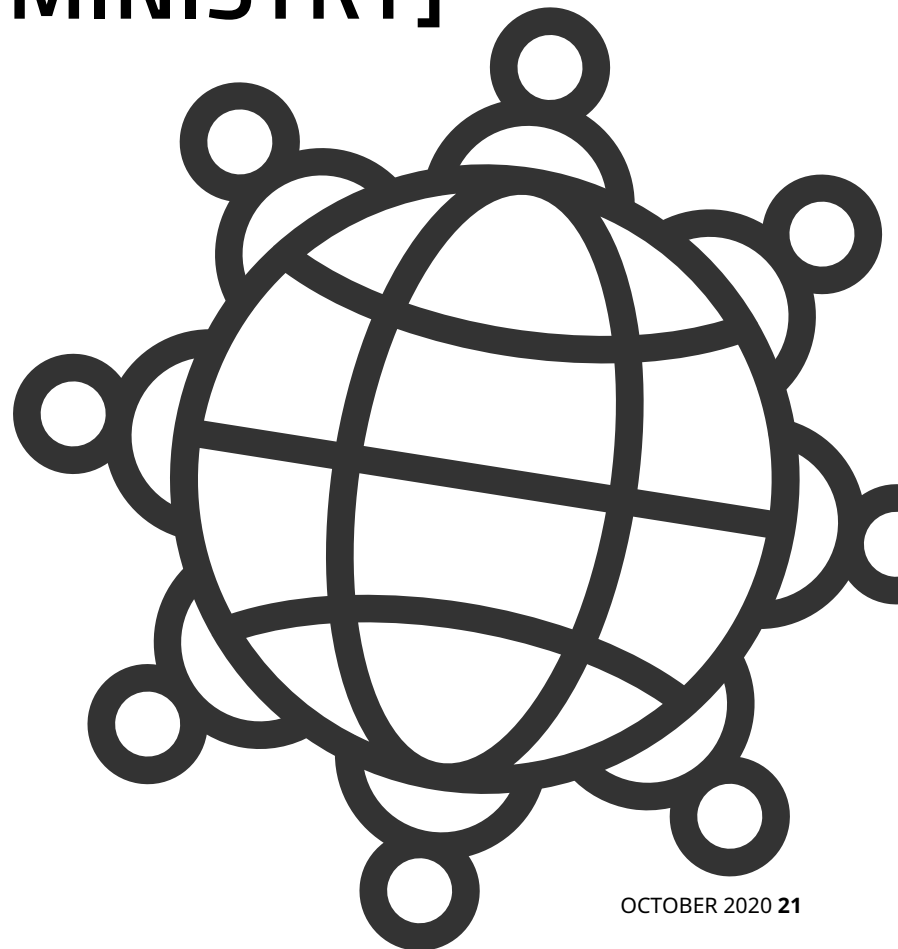
In interviewing four of the pastors who are involved in the conversations, it was interesting to hear their responses. Darryl Bentley, pastor of the Metropolitan Church, shared that the conversations have given him a “greater awareness of how we approach things” and that it’s been worth the effort to “move the needle on cultural relations.” Ron Sydney, pastor of the Pontiac Center and Pontiac Southside churches, stated that, as a millennial, he is ecstatic that he is a part of the ongoing conversations and is enjoying getting connected with the

Michigan Conference pastors. Steve Schefka, pastor of the Brighton Church, says that he is thankful for the cultural intelligence assessments that were given because it put the pastors in the right frame of mind to understand the differences in various cultures. Pastor Dwayne Duncombe, pastor of Detroit City Temple, shared that he has appreciated the frankness of the discussions and also the opportunity to relate to one another as peers, including their eating together at local restaurants. Pastor Duncombe concluded the interview by saying that he believes God can use these meetings as an opportunity to exemplify the prayer of Jesus in *that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

As we continue these conversations, it is our prayer that God will lead us to minister together in tangible ways that will live ultimately live out this prayer. ■

*Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union general vice president*

## [MULTI-CULTURAL MINISTRY]



**B**randy<sup>1</sup> had worked for a number of years as a substitute teacher and enjoyed her work, but it was only part-time so she had to supplement her job working as a security guard. But neither job offered benefits, so she continued to further her training, looking for that full-time job that would give her greater financial peace.

Finally, her breakthrough seemed to arrive. She applied for a security officer position in the city jail. After an arduous process of testing, background checks, even special haircuts, she made it to the final round of interviews for this highly competitive job.

Brandy met with the Human Resource director for the city, who asked her if she had any limitations on her schedule. Brandy explained that she was a Seventh-day Adventist and needed to have Friday nights and Saturdays to observe her weekly Sabbath. This was no problem, the HR director assured her.

## [PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY]

However, when she was hired she was stunned to discover that she was the only one of the new employees to be scheduled to working the coming Saturday.

“Surely there must be a mistake,” she thought. However, she was told the schedule was fixed and could not be changed. She even offered to work on Sundays but that request was denied.

Shortly after this, Brandy called the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty office of the Lake Union where we heard her story and prayed with her for Divine guidance. Since the case had progressed so rapidly to termination, we not only sent a letter, but also called the city’s HR office to see if the decision could be reversed.

We explained the Title VII protections that require Sabbath convictions and other religious beliefs to be reasonably accommodated. In most cases, a letter and a call is all that it takes to get an employer to offer an accommodation. But, in Brandy’s case, we could not get them to budge.



We were left with no choice but to file a complaint for Brandy with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Such a process can be successful, but takes a minimum of several months, and can sometimes extend for a year or two.

Finally, about a year later, the federal investigator called, and we got back in touch with Brandy. “Where are you working now?” I asked. Brandy revealed that in the last month she had gotten a job with the state in the agency working to protect at-risk children. She was very excited about the position, as it combined her love of children with her security expertise, and it paid more than the jail position! Brandy was relieved and happy in her new job, and grateful that her faithfulness to God’s Sabbath had been rewarded.

Standing for God does not always bring short-term success or applause. But we do know that, in the long run, it does pay to be faithful — usually in this life, but certainly in the life to come. In the meantime, the Church’s PARL Department will do its best to support its members who are facing difficulties and challenges for standing for their convictions like Brandy. ■

<sup>1</sup> Name has been changed as her case is still being negotiated.

Nicholas Miller, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Lake Union Conference

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**A**s Executive Secretary and Ministerial director, I am asked to serve two specific ministry assignments in the Lake Union. These assignments basically spread my time into 80 percent activity with the Secretary's role and 20 percent service for the Ministerial director's function.

The Executive Secretary's role includes:

- 1) Reporting Union membership quarterly growth statistics for our five conference memberships;
- 2) Approving of evangelists and pastors overseas short-term mission assignments;
- 3) Arranging for approval of pastor ordinations;
- 4) Facilitating Union calendar events;
- 5) Scheduling/assisting for the quinquennial Lake Union Session;
- 6) Attending our Lake Union administrative team meeting (ADCOM);
- 7) Recording minutes for ADCOM and other committees;
- 8) Communicating with our Human Resources director;
- 9) Assisting the president with preparation for our executive committee, officer's council, and president's conference meetings;
- 10) Assisting with conference president/officer union retreats;
- 11) Scheduling and planning for the annual Lake Union advisory/departmental meetings;
- 12) Attending the North American Division (NAD) Year-end Meeting;
- 13) Attending NAD Union secretaries meetings;
- 14) Assisting with Global Mission and Center of Influence project requests;
- 15) Chairing the Constitution and Bylaws Committee in preparation for the Lake Union session;
- 16) Facilitating an annual conference secretaries workshop;
- 17) Attending a yearly NAD HR conference;
- 18) Attending AdventHealth and AMITA Health board meetings;
- 19) Attending the five conference executive committees on a rotating basis; and
- 20) Working on other committee assignments/projects as assigned by our president.

Additionally, the Ministerial director's role includes: 1) Connecting with the local conference Ministerial directors;; 2) Facilitating the annual Ministerial directors' advisory; 3) Consulting with conference presidents and Ministerial directors for the ordination of pastors; and 4) Attending the conferences' camp meetings around our Lake Union footprint.

## [SECRETARIAT]

Hearing the reports of God's expansion of the Three Angels' messages is such a blessing in our Lake Union footprint. It is an honor and pleasure to experience ministry connection with administrators, pastors, teachers and lay people and celebrate their testimonials. Some of those stories you have read here in the pages of the *Herald*, but I want to highlight a few of those instances of how God is continuing to move ministry forward during the pandemic. A door was opened in Chicago for a second Center of Urban Influence to reach hearts through a unique art ministry; youth distributed 80,000 Arab-focused pieces of literature in Middle Eastern neighborhoods; educators across our region immediately switched to remote teaching and utilized innovative ways to re-create learning online; pastors, although unfamiliar with the latest communication technologies, found inventive ways to preach the Good News, resulting in baptisms which may not have come about any other way.

In addition to these exciting evangelism reports, I've enjoyed meeting colleagues and friends at camp meetings, board meetings, committees, and participating in other conference functions which bring confidence to my heart that God is definitely leading this church. My short tenure in the Lake Union Conference leadership confirms the inspired wisdom of our church in creating the union structure to bind us together as conferences in the Body of Christ. ■

*Steven Poenitz, executive secretary and Ministerial director for the Lake Union Conference*

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## [STEWARDSHIP]

I have the privilege of being a part of the Lake Union Conference Treasury team. We work well together and are a blessing as we minister with caring hearts. One of my responsibilities is Stewardship, but I am not alone when it comes to Stewardship because each of my Treasury co-workers stands and serves with me. We have presented at camp meetings and Sabbath services in churches. We use our individual abilities to answer questions when people call the office. Elder Glynn Scott is our leader; Richard Moore, Vicki Thompson and I serve as his associates.

Of the four of us, Richard Moore is our expert on church budgeting and capital stewardship campaigns. The following story, told by Jerry Schmidt, pastor of the Urbandale Church, is a witness to the effectiveness of the sound stewardship principles he uses when it comes to reducing debt and freeing up dollars for ministry at the local church:

“When I began pastoring the Urbandale Church in 2017, I was troubled by the prospect of replacing the aging parking lot. At first, I ignored the problem. I mean, what could we do when only \$20,000 had been raised over the last 15 years for a project that would cost well over \$100,000? But the parking lot would not be ignored, and the subject kept resurfacing in various church committee meetings.

“In May 2019, I heard a presentation by Richard Moore on capital fundraising campaigns. I wondered, ‘*Could this work in Urbandale, would my church members partner with me on this new venture?*’ They were willing and voted with an overwhelming majority to embark by faith on an unknown journey of sacrifice and commitment.

“Our capital fundraising campaign began with prayer. In October 2019, the elders invited the members to gather prayer requests in anticipation of a 24-hour prayer service. Members came to the church at various hours to pray . . . all through the day and all through the night! The prayer service was a spiritual highlight — some members came to pray for an hour and ended up staying two or three because the Spirit of God was moving as we prayed for one another. Prayers were answered even before the service concluded!

“The church then stepped out in faith and secured a loan from the Lake Union Revolving Fund for \$101,500. God’s leading was unmistakable! The loan process (which normally takes weeks) was completed speedily, and within days we had a check in our hands! This paved the way for the new parking lot to be poured before cold weather set in.

“In November, the church gathered for a special banquet. Our campaign motto was: ‘Not Equal Giving but Equal Sacrifice.’ Members were asked to commit to sacrificial giving for a period of three years with a goal of \$300,000 to fund three levels of improvement: a new parking lot and church sign, remodeling the bathrooms, and a church security system with new keyless locks. At the banquet alone, over \$130,000 in pledges were made. This was only the beginning!

“In January we received \$37,000 from Michigan Advance Partners and when combined with other significant donations and pledges, it placed us tantalizingly close to our \$300,000 campaign goal. This was an incredible answer to prayer, but it didn’t stop there! By the end of January our \$101,500 loan only had a balance of \$10,000 and was completely paid off by the end of May 2020, one year from the time I had heard Richard Moore’s presentation.

“I’m glad that we followed God’s leading to begin the project quickly as it would have been challenging to embark on such a journey during the uncertainty of COVID. God has been good and giving has remained strong throughout this time. We are now preparing to put in a new church sign!” ■

*Jon Corder, Stewardship director, Lake Union Conference*

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**T**he Lake Union Treasury Department has multiple ways to collaborate in mission and ministry with our five local conferences, however, the top four would include financial visioning, consulting/training, service consolidation and church policy. To accomplish this important collaboration in our territory, the Treasury Department has five team members — Richard Moore, his duties include Operating Fund, Fixed Assets and Trust Funds; Jon Corder, his duties include Revolving Fund, Trust Services and Building Management; Vicki Thompson, her duties include HR, Payroll and Risk Management; Janna Quetz, she facilitates multiple functions for the Operating, Trust and Revolving funds; and I serve as the treasurer. Together as a team we have the honor of daily being engaged in the management of financial resources for the advancing of God's Kingdom.

**Financial Visioning** — In this role, the Treasury team exercises the ability to be impactful and creative in financial management. In 2019 we wanted to be a part of experiencing membership growth within the Lake Union. To help achieve that goal, targeted financial assistance was given to the local conferences for three specific initiatives (\$225,000 total funding): 1) General church growth (Latino growth, church planting and innovation in evangelism); 2) Discipleship training; and 3) Proclamation evangelism.

**Financial Consulting / Training** — In fulfilling the role of Treasury, one of the greatest opportunities we have is meeting the needs of personnel. People are our most valuable asset; as such, local conference treasurers often call the Union Treasury team for best practice in handling difficult personnel needs.

Additionally, as the church adopted the Affordable Care Act and Locally Funded Employees, we were able to provide critical consulting to our conferences by hosting implementation experts such as Jim Kizziar, JD, and NAD HR personnel.

In 2002 we actively engaged in an internship program whereby an individual, for twelve to twenty-four months, could obtain treasury experience at the Union and Conference level. All five of our conferences have been blessed as they have engaged individuals participating in our internship program.

## [TREASURY]

**Financial Consolidation** — A core principle of stewardship requires an effective and prudent use of financial resources entrusted to us for ministry. The consolidation of financial services is an important area we use to be effective with financial resources. Consequently, the independent auditing (General Conference Auditing Services) across our field are paid by the Lake Union so that transparency and accountability is given to our donors, while local funds can be retained for mission and ministry.

Another consolidated service is the Revolving Fund Trust (LURF). This provides a funding source for the local conferences for capital projects and maintenance needs. Three conferences (Lake Region, Michigan and Wisconsin) have been blessed with new office buildings as a result of funding from LURF.

**Financial Policy** — Our church has been blessed to grow and succeed in mission and ministry principally due to our church structure and policy. NAD policy is what holds us together as a Division and Union field; the Treasury team has the role of recommending new policy or changes to policy based on actual ministry needs across the local Conference entities.

The Scripture text that governs our engagement in service is Psalm 24:1 (NKJV): *The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.* ■

*Glynn Scott, treasurer, Lake Union Conference*



[Glynn.Scott@lakeunion.org](mailto:Glynn.Scott@lakeunion.org)

Who knew that February 14–17, 2020, when hundreds of Lake Union senior youth and young adults gathered in Shpshewana, Indiana, for the bi-annual Lake Union Youth Evangelism Congress ([www.lucyouth.org](http://www.lucyouth.org)) to study about various ways to use the internet to share the gospel, that in less than 30 days the world would be shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Who knew? God knew!

God is always in control, even when everything around us seems to be out of control.

If we keep our lives mission-focused on Jesus, we will be “Mission Unstoppable.”

Historically, over the years when the Lake Union Youth ministry leadership has had to face challenges, they know how to take a deep, Midwest breath, pray earnestly for more Holy Spirit wisdom and find new ways to adapt, so as to meet a mission challenge.

Here are just a few examples of how your Lake Union Youth ministry has not just survived but thrived during this pandemic.

1. COVID-19 hit hard local church club ministries but, with God’s help, we found new ways to stay mission-focused and unstoppable. Did you know that under the inspired leadership of Lake Region Conference, Youth ministry leadership with 101 percent support from the Lake Union, moved Adventurer awards, Pathfinder honors and Master Guide training online in April 2020? In just a few weeks, over 25,000 different people from all over the world have been taught more than 75 different honors. All I can say is, “Mission unstoppable!” For more information, go to [www.lclubministriesacademy.org](http://www.lclubministriesacademy.org).
2. Did COVID-19 kill summer 2020 VBS at the local church? The answer is “No!” Lake Union Children/Youth ministries leadership worked with our NAD Children’s ministry leadership to find a new way forward. Praise God a free online Bible-themed VBS was offered to our Union’s local churches this summer. “Mission Unstoppable!” For more information, go to [www.adventistvbx.org](http://www.adventistvbx.org).
3. COVID-19 tried to take out our Union’s 2020 summer youth evangelism (some call it summer camp) master plan where hundreds, if not thousands of



## [YOUTH]

youth and adults rededicate their lives to Jesus and/or seek to be baptized. There was talk about closing our 2020 summer camps but, praise God, the Holy Spirit gave us new ways to adapt our summer evangelism plans. “Mission Unstoppable!” For more information, see pp. 30 in this issue of the magazine.

4. COVID-19 did cancel this summer’s 2020 General Conference Session set to take place in our Union. However, the Holy Spirit led our union to make plans last year to run a year-long young adult urban and Public Campus Ministry (PCM) program, so we still have an active One Year in Mission (OYiM) young adult evangelism plan in place. Since this group could not do door-to-door literature sales, their budget is about \$50,000 short. But, under Israel Ramos’ leadership, everyone agreed not to quit. “Mission Unstoppable!” For more information, visit [www.campushope.com/oyim/](http://www.campushope.com/oyim/).

If you want more information about our Union’s Children, Youth and Young Adults programs, please contact me at [Ron.Whitehead@lakeunion.org](mailto:Ron.Whitehead@lakeunion.org), or call my cell phone number, 269-208-1344. ■

Ron Whitehead, Youth director, Lake Union Conference

**[Ron.Whitehead@lakeunion.org](mailto:Ron.Whitehead@lakeunion.org)**



Mbalil Majola

▲ Luyanda "Lulu" Majola, a Renaissance Kid who participated in South Africa, displays the bridge she built.

## Renaissance Kids architecture camp 2020

This past summer, the Andrews University School of Architecture & Interior Design held their 14th annual Renaissance Kids architecture camp. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Renaissance Kids took a new form — the "Household Edition," a remote learning but hands-on experience for kids ages 5 to 16 to learn about architecture, art and design. The theme, "Kids Making a Stand," referred to the main project of designing and building lemonade stands, inspired by Heather Shelby, director of Kidpreneur Camp.

Participants joined from 18 states in the U.S. and four other countries: Canada, Greece, Mexico and South Africa. Mark Moreno, founder/director of Renaissance Kids and associate professor of Architecture, with a team of Andrews University Architecture students, met with the kids

every Monday, Wednesday and Friday via Zoom.

In planning their lemonade stands, logos and menus, the kids were encouraged to create the most enjoyable experience possible for sellers, buyers and bystanders. They also were challenged to design the stands to connect people — to nature, to choices and to each other.

Dorcas Hakiza, a fourth-year Architecture student assisting with Renaissance Kids, describes the process. "Kids designed their own stands and shared them in an online platform called Conceptboard where ideas from one child naturally get picked up by another one. Then, in Zoom sessions, we collaboratively massaged the designs into blends of them all."

She adds, "From Ella's Mr. Tart logo design came Abigail's idea to make the stand look

like a lemon. And if you have a giant lemon, it made sense that there would need to be a giant straw. Of course, from the straw would come blowing bubbles, music and/or wafting dry ice mist over merchant and customers to cool them down. Someone's picture idea of a bowl for dog treats led to providing a seat for grandma to sit and hang out. We came up with several different and very sweet, not sour, designs."

Over the course of the summer, the group was also joined by a variety of professional guests from all over the world. The kids had live tours of architects' private homes and landscapes in Fort Worth, the new Disney Star Wars Hotel in Orlando, and mixed-use urban buildings in Washington D.C. and Pittsburgh. They even had an architect in Rome give them a bike tour of the streets and a quick walk-through of the Pantheon.

In addition to these virtual tours, the kids completed a variety of building and design projects including bridges and structures that could safely carry an egg.

While the kids were not able to build their lemonade stands together this year due to COVID-19, Moreno is committed to getting one built in the fall.

"The camp, in person and online, has been a blessing, and I believe I could not be doing anything better at this time in my life," says Moreno. "I know we haven't solved the world's problems, but if we teach our kids that they can make a positive difference in the world then they will be better equipped to move forward in confidence." ■

*Hannah Gallant, University Communication contract writer, Andrews University*

# Illinois hospitals receive national recognition



Photos courtesy AMITA Health

▲ Physicians, executives and staff participate in a ribbon-cutting and dedication event at AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center La Grange.

As the COVID-19 crisis has unfolded, AMITA Health’s medical teams and support staff have exemplified its faith-based values in powerful ways. For months, associates have put themselves at risk on the front lines while working with public health officials to optimize the response to the crisis and slow the spread of COVID-19.

However, beyond the COVID-19 crisis, there are many examples of how the medical centers’ mission of extending the healing ministry of Jesus is shown.

In May, Adventist Medical Center La Grange unveiled a state-of-the-art Outpatient Pavilion for its new Heart and Vascular Institute and Center for Advanced Joint Replacement. Specially trained staff and advanced technology are housed in this bright, warm and soothing environment.

The two-story, 30,000-square-foot Outpatient Pavilion “has been designed with the patient and visitor experience

in mind,” said Adam Maycock, president, AMITA Health La Grange and Hinsdale. A blessing and ribbon-cutting event occurred Feb. 27, but its actual opening was delayed because of the COVID-19 crisis.

Physicians and associates drove the planning of the facility, focusing on optimizing patient comfort, convenience and care. The Outpatient Pavilion also will offer multiple benefits for staff, including increased workplace efficiencies, greater opportunities for collaboration and access to technology.

In March, both AMITA Health Hinsdale and La Grange, achieved Magnet® recognition for nursing excellence from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). “Fewer than 10 percent of U.S. healthcare organizations receive the prestigious honor, which represents the pinnacle of nursing achievement,” said Mary Murphy, vice president and chief nursing officer at both hospitals.

This was AMITA Health La Grange’s first four-year Magnet recognition, while AMITA Health Hinsdale earned Magnet re-designation after receiving its initial designation in 2015. ANCC also recognized both medical centers as best-practice exemplars for exceptional performance in central line-associated blood stream infections rates and door-to-balloon time, a key measure of quality in emergency treatment of heart attack patients.

Highlighting its achievements in patient safety and quality, AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook and AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks also were recently recognized as Top General Hospitals nationally by the Leapfrog Group.

More than 2,000 hospitals were considered for the award, and only 118 hospitals were selected as Top Hospitals nationally, with eight of those hospitals in Illinois.

AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook and AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Glen Oaks also received “A” Hospital Safety Grades, as did the Hinsdale and La Grange facilities.

“This recognition validates the caliber of the care we provide to our patients each day,” said Mary Ann Palermo, vice president of Quality and Patient Safety, AMITA Health. “Our patients are the ultimate recipients of this great work, and we are very proud to extend the healing ministry of Jesus to them.” ■

*Julie Busch, associate vice president, AMITA Health*

# Adventist educators prepare for unprecedented year

Educators in the Lake Union have embarked on an unprecedented challenge: a full year of instruction in the age of COVID. Teachers have welcomed their students back with classrooms rearranged and masks at the ready, while conference Education superintendents have worked to ensure safety for both staff and students.

## Opening Protocols

The Lake Union Conference is home to 69 Adventist schools run by Illinois, Indiana, Lake Region, Michigan and Wisconsin conferences. With the health and welfare of both staff and students being of utmost importance, Education superintendents have been evaluating and overseeing the implementation of local state and county health departments to create a safer environment.

Each conference is working closely with the recommendations provided by the North American Division and local governments to implement strict cleaning procedures, create safety practices for students moving throughout the building, and developing safety plans in the event a teacher, staff or student becomes sick with the coronavirus.

During summer Lake Union Education Department Zoom meetings, conference Education superintendents shared ideas for preparing for the 2020–2021 school year rife with challenges amid a pandemic. During the meeting, superintendents compared notes on their various guidelines and how they're trying to incorporate them.

For instance, in Michigan the State requires grades 6 through 12 to wear masks, which has caused frustration in some families who do not see the need for their children to wear masks in school.



Courtesy Andrews Academy



Courtesy Wisconsin Academy



Courtesy Wisconsin Conference



GLAA Facebook page

▲ **Top:** This fall, Adventist educators are conducting face-to-face, virtual and/or hybrid classes, such as this hybrid model at Andrews Academy; **Middle:** Wisconsin Academy; **Bottom left:** Marantha Christian students enjoying the great outdoors; **Bottom right:** Great Lakes Adventist Academy students spent time in prayer at the chapel in the pines.



▲ Students at the Three Angels School.

Courtesy Wisconsin Conference

**UNDERSTANDABLY, PARENTS ARE FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT SENDING THEIR CHILDREN OFF TO SCHOOL. IN HOPES TO RELIEVE THIS ANXIETY, MANY SCHOOLS IN THE LAKE UNION CONFERENCE ARE OFFERING VIRTUAL CLASSES FOR FAMILIES WHO WISH TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN HOME.**

The State of Michigan also is requiring schools to have a preparedness plan for phases 4 and 5. "It's been stressful for some of our schools as they try to navigate between government guidelines and the angst that some of our families have about what the State is requiring," reports Jeremy Hall, Michigan Conference Education superintendent.

Lori Aguilera, Illinois Conference Education superintendent, has walked through her schools with principals to inspect and make sure that all schools are up to the set protocols and guidelines for reopening. As Illinois state health guidelines appear to be stricter than other states, Aguilera is making sure that all the desks are six feet apart or have a protective shield. Per the governor's executive order, all students and teachers will be wearing masks. Without following these guidelines, Illinois schools are not allowed to reopen.

In Indiana, Tom and Renee Coffee, Indiana Conference Education superintendent and associate Education superintendent respectively, report that guidelines appear to be less prescriptive compared to other states, but the Indianapolis area does have stricter guidelines and protocols.

#### **Adjusting to Multi-Platform Teaching**

During a normal school year, teachers are busy preparing their classroom for the start of a new year. But this fall, Adventist educators are having to plan their classes for face-to-face, virtual and/or hybrid classes.

As a result, educators are finding that their workloads have been significantly increased. "They are not only teaching, they are preparing to teach both in the classroom and/or online," says Linda Fuchs, Lake Union Conference Education director.

According to an article published by Brookings Institution in 2019, teachers

work an estimated 42.2 hours a week — teaching, mentoring, grading and attending meetings, a number that is higher for most Adventist educators. With the inclusion of preparing for distance education as well as in class teaching, teachers are feeling the load.

The burnout factor for teachers is high on the superintendents' minds. They are sensitive to the hours that teachers are putting in and recognize that every teacher has to make a decision on what's a balanced and sustainable workload for themselves.

"However, at least for the short term," Hall says, "our teachers are going to have to work a little harder to make sure that they're delivering a good quality education, meeting the needs, and keeping students engaged."

But at the same time, Brian Kittleson, Michigan associate Education superintendent, adds, "We know it's also important that we encourage our teachers to take care of themselves."

One short-term solution is for teachers to have an opportunity to learn from each other. "If our teachers are consistently putting in more than 50 hours a week without a way of balancing their work, we need to find a better way to help our teachers think smarter to avoid burnout," says Fuchs.

Another challenge for educators is the use of cameras in the classroom for remote learning. While many camera programs already have safety features, school administrators are looking for even stronger ways to protect their students from potential danger zones.

#### **In-person vs. Online Classes**

Understandably, parents are feeling anxious about sending their children off to school. In hopes to relieve this anxiety, many schools in the Lake Union Conference are offering virtual classes for families who wish to keep their children home.

One way Thomas Huntress, South Bend Junior Academy principal, is helping to reassure parents is to make sure they have a list of protocols and understand them. "The first thing we did was draw up protocols to follow. We then took a look at our facilities and evaluated what changes needed to happen, like retrofitting drinking fountains to bottle stations, and making sure students have their own individual equipment to reduce sharing potential germs."

Maranatha Christian School in Wisconsin is a close-knit school with eight students. Because of it being rural, many families weren't feeling as anxious about sending their children back to school.

"Our families haven't seen a lot of changes in their socializing and work life," says Rosanna Zeismer, Maranatha Christian School principal. "We gave our parents the opportunity to tell us if they wanted their children to have face-to-face instruction or distance education. Since we are a small school, we were able to leave it up to the parents' comfort level."

Zeismer says she's keeping her students outdoors as much as possible while in school and has two tents outside where she can hold classes.

Meanwhile, in a more urban setting, two teachers in two different Lake Region school who started the year virtually, decided that since they are in small schools and are teaching the same subject, they would share teaching responsibilities. "This could be a model for the future," says Lake Union Associate Education superintendent, Ruth Horton.

### Staying Afloat Financially

Since the school year began, enrollment across the Lake Union is down around 14 percent. Fueling this dip is a list of multiple reasons, according to Fuchs. "Some parents have lost jobs or don't feel safe about sending their children to school. Several parents have decided to homeschool."



Indiana Academy Facebook page



Courtesy Wisconsin Conference

The pandemic has impacted personal finances and church/school budgets. But Fuchs says, "We are committed to pray every day for our schools. It is early in the year, but we are confident that God will bless our teachers as they stay committed to bringing spiritual values into every day of academic lessons." ■

**SOURCE:** Startz, D. (2019, June 7). Do teachers work long hours? Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/06/12/do-teachers-work-long-hours/> Accessed Sept. 7, 2020.

Katie Fellows is the Communication assistant for the Lake Union Conference.

▲ **Top:** Indiana Academy student relax in the student lounge; **Bottom:** Temperature check station at Wisconsin's Three Angels School.



▲ *Wakonda on Wheels* was led by six staff members and featured a variety of activities that included worship, “silly” stories and songs, games and group activities such as tie-dye.

Courtesy Wisconsin Youth Department

## Summer camps adapt to new realities

*Unique programs sprout up as way to maintain connection with youth*

The sounds of fun and laughter typically echoed across the campus as summer camp staff and campers went about their daily activities. But what once used to be a place full of laughter and fun camp songs was eerily silent.

Like many other events and activities, most summer camps were unable to escape the effects of the pandemic. As the novel coronavirus became a pandemic earlier this year, many Adventist summer camps held out for as long as they could before making the dreaded decision — that there would be no traditional summer camp this year.

However, instead of forfeiting their summer altogether and losing an opportunity to mentor the youth in their communities, many camps planned creative ways to host virtual or mobile camp programs. “Summer youth ministry is too important to quit,” said Lake Union Youth director, Ron Whitehead, “so, we adapt. All for His glory.”

### Importance of Summer Camp

The very first summer camp in the North American Division was held in 1926 in Townline Lake, Michigan. Wisconsin opened one the following year, in 1927, Illinois in 1928, and then, soon thereafter, other conferences followed their example.

The Lake Union Conference is now home to six Adventist camps: Camp Akita in Illinois, Timber Ridge Camp in Indiana, Camp Wagner in the Lake Region, Camp Au Sable and Camp Sagola in Michigan, and Camp Wakonda in Wisconsin.

Since those early days, camping ministry in the Lake Union has grown exponentially and served as an important venue for youth evangelism. “Some people believe camp ministry is only about fun and games, but in the Lake Union camp ministry is first about calling people to Jesus and then fun and games,” remarks Whitehead. “Every summer hundreds to thousands of youth and adults rededicate or give their lives to Jesus for the first time at our camps.”

In fact, last year more than 2,300 campers attended a summer camp in the Lake Union, plus more than 1,200 attended family camp. Of that number, more than 1,900 decisions were made for Christ and over 600 requested baptism.

This year it came as no surprise that many camps were forced to cancel their summer programs. Perhaps this was the first time they were forced to do so. Youth leaders watched as state regulations allowing only small groups to congregate during the pandemic forced them to rethink their plans. The idea of virtual summer camp seemed like an anathema. After all, one big incentive for parents to send their kids to camp, aside from the evangelism component, was that the kids would spend more time in nature and away from screens and digital devices. Directors had to weigh their options, considering either a virtual experience or a smaller, mobile day camp.

Below is a snapshot of four creative virtual and mobile summer camps offered this summer around the Lake Union. (Michigan offered a scaled-down, in-person summer camp experience at Camp Au Sable.)

### Camp Akita

With a group of seven veteran staff members, Michael Campos and his staff filmed segments to show live. The week-long program featured different speakers, activities and show segments called Good Morning Akita, the Lake Show and the Late Lake Show.



Each day, virtual campers were treated to a morning show, two lake shows and a range of activities. Roger Henderson, Camp Akita manager, guided campers through changing a tire; Debbie Henderson, Camp Akita kitchen and housekeeping director, shared how to make pancakes at home; Renae, veteran Camp Akita staff, taught campers how to play a new camp song on the ukulele; and TJ Pittenger shared nature nuggets of how to make their own garden and take care of their pets at home.

### Timber Ridge Camp

At Timber Ridge Camp, a skeleton crew of twenty-two young adults pioneered a digital camp experience.

The administrative team wanted to bring as many of the trademark experiences to the campers' homes. This meant creating, recording and producing videos for Camp Council, daily online classes, and ending each evening with a campfire program.

All of the staff's effort did not go unnoticed. Little by little, "campers" and parents began pouring in their feedback, grateful for all of the staff's efforts. The staff saw struggle, but they also saw the kind of God moments one only experiences while at camp. In the midst of seemingly organized chaos, there was something new to experience, something new to learn, something new to pray about and thank God for. Even in its short duration, many staff members left camp feeling so blessed.

### Camp Wagner

Camp Wagner, nestled in the historic village of Cassopolis, Mich., planned a week-long program with virtual fun for kids across the five states which comprise the Lake Region Conference. Every day during the week, Abraham Henry, Lake Region Conference Youth director, and Avery Clarke, executive coordinator for junior camp, hosted a three-hour virtual experience with worship thoughts, games, activities, health nuggets and two classes.

During a special performance, 30 children produced a virtual play called, "The Baggage Claim," where they challenged their audience to make three different sandwiches with different ingredients.

"I never knew a kid could get so excited about making a sandwich!" remarks Clarke. "Something simple can become exciting for a kid to learn. It taught us how to work together even when we can't be out together."

Besides the play, the group also participated in "Creating Your Own Super Hero," a game about family and loved ones; they also had scavenger hunts and movie nights.

### Wakonda on Wheels (W.O.W.)

Wakonda on Wheels was led by six staff members and featured a variety of activities that included worship, "silly" stories and songs, games and group activities such as tie-dye.

Over the course of four weeks, about 200 kids showed up with some parents traveling four hours round trip to attend the mobile camp. He was especially pleased that "many of the kids that came would have probably never had the courage to attend overnight camp."

Wisconsin Youth director, Eric Chavez, found that many of these kids came from the surrounding community because a church member or family invited them. "We also discovered that, in doing this program, many of the churches we visited saw that we are more than just fun and games," he says. "We are a ministry that shares Jesus, in every real way that we can."

### The Future

Charlie Thompson doesn't see plans to continue their virtual camp next year. However, they are planning to repackage their virtual program as children's stories or special features for Sabbath School lessons. He says, "This isn't the summer we wanted, but it's the summer we had."

Wisconsin's Chavez acknowledges that it is hard to tell what the future holds for summer camp because everything in our

world seems so unstable. However, his advice is to remember that "the Lord has not forgotten His people and will still find ways for us to minister to as many people as we can, no matter the level of creativity and effort it takes." ■

### Where to find virtual camp videos

**Illinois:** Camp Akita's YouTube page

**Indiana:** Indiana Youth YouTube page

Lake Union Communication assistant, Katie Fellows, has enjoyed serving for numerous years as camp staffer across the North American Division. Raquel Mentor assists Timber Ridge Camp and the Indiana Conference with managing their social media.



Joshua Pedroza

▲ This year, summer camps across the Lake Union were very different. Pictured here: Indiana camp staff having fun during a taping for their virtual program.



Camp Akita YouTube screenshot

Jordanne Howell-Walton, Camp Akita activity director, says that the productions were far from easy and similarly intensive as having kids at camp. "Each day was a new learning experience. 'Where to film?' 'How to film?' 'How will the campers like this?'"



Gracy Yonas

▲ Israel Ramos, director of the Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students (CAMPUS) and Public Campus Ministry (PCM) coordinator for the Lake Union, has overseen the One Year in Mission program and guided each site in how to set up their program.

## Public Campus Ministry forging ahead despite challenges

### *One Year in Mission program launched*

When the nation of Israel was faced with an insurmountable challenge, Jonathan chose faith. He triumphantly proclaimed God's ability to save by many or by few. The One Year in Mission+ (OYiM+) for the Lake Union is committed to the same faith. Each year in the Lake Union, over two million students enroll at a college or university, but there is only a minute fraction of Adventist ministry establish to reach these students. OYiM+ seeks to establish centers of influence near three university campuses by enlisting young professionals to take a year and serve God in these local mission fields. OYiM is an initiative by the General Conference to impact the cities around the world through young professionals

that take a year to be a missionary to a city. Therefore, the Lake Union coined the program OYiM+ to establish centers of influence near the thought centers for young adults.

Israel Ramos, director of the Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students (CAMPUS) and Public Campus Ministry (PCM) coordinator for the Lake Union, has overseen the OYiM+ initiative and guided each site in how to set up their program. The initiative was open to all conferences, according to Gary Blanchard, World Church Youth director, who presented this to the Union Youth directors at the Center for Youth Evangelism. Based on the presentation, leaders took the information back to their conferences. The pastors of Bloomington, Detroit and East Lansing reached out to Ramos and began planning.

The year-long preparation began with lots of prayer. Ramos enlisted the gifts of Lydia Matiushenko, a member in Illinois Conference, to meet with program directors through the design thinking process.

The process required research into needs of each target group on their campus and to develop their goals and benchmarks in how to accomplish their mission. The synergy between each of the program directors afforded an opportunity to grow and learn from one another. Each site was very unique — Indiana learned that any place near campus to study was closed at 8 p.m., making it difficult for students to find a place to study; Detroit realized the campus community was deeply interested in resources for mental and physical health; and East Lansing discovered the need to develop social media posts that were missional where students could share with their friends.

In Bloomington at the Indiana University, PCM director John Leis and his team decided to establish a café that would stay open later to accommodate the students study needs and use the space for Bible studies as well. In East Lansing at Michigan State University, Jermaine Gayle, pastor of the University Church, continued to build upon the already established missionary training program by developing strong social media presence and training them how to use their personal platforms to reach their peers. In Detroit, Steve Conway, pastor of Detroit Northwest, and his team designed a multi-phase plan, which included an outreach to the Detroit public schools, health coaching, and the final phase being a food truck near the campus of Wayne State University.

Each OYiM+ site was responsible for their own recruiting and the launch date was set for August 16 with Bible Bootcamp in the north woods of Camp Au Sable, Michigan. However, in March, COVID-19 closed the campuses at each site and Zoom replaced the face-to-face ministry. Each campus utilized Zoom to connect with students and provide support to their students, finding creative ways to continue ministry.



Photos by Grady Yonas

▲ On August 16, Bible Bootcamp launched the OYiM+ year with worship, Bible study, training and lots of team-building activities. The attendees were a mix of Adventist student leaders.

John Leis began a Friday night Bible study via Zoom using Dr. Ranko Stefanovic's book, *Plain Revelation*. A Chinese student from Indiana University connected with the Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) president and began attending the Bible study, too. Each week more Adventists and seekers alike joined the study. Leis previously tried to connect the Adventist students, but the schedule never aligned for everyone to meet. Now, he was able to connect not only the Adventist students, but they invited their friends to join the study. Also, through this online study, he learned of active chapters that he had not before known were organized. "This has given us a great

opportunity to find out specific needs and start to plan for next year and reaching more students on these campuses," he said.

Pastor Gayle found a way to safely follow through with a student's baptism even amid the COVID-19 crisis. The student, Deontee Dent, was the only Adventist in her family.

Conway opened his living room each evening for family worship via Facebook Live. Detroit was also able to establish a student organization at Wayne State University in preparation for ministry this semester.

As events began to be cancelled, recruiting missionaries became a little

more difficult. However, there were six committed missionaries at that time, five for East Lansing and one for Detroit. Due to the uncertainty of how the COVID-19 restrictions would affect the café plans, Leis wisely chose to work with local members to develop the ministry as the changes might arise and withdrawal from the OYiM+ project.

### Launch of Student Missionary Program

On August 16, Bible Boot Camp launched the OYiM+ year with worship and Bible study with speaker Alex Niculaescu, pastor of the Edwardsburg and Glenwood churches, training with Ramos on leadership and Gayle on evangelism, and lots of team-building activities with OYiM+ fellows Andrew Park and Grady Yonas. The attendees were a mix of Adventist student leaders with two of the missionaries from the East Lansing site. One student shared that she always enjoys Bible Boot Camp because she learns so much and is able to use it throughout the school year.

Even though many campuses have cancelled face-to-face classes, students still have a face-to-face lease agreement. As a result, the need for ministry is even more present now than before.

The final count for OYiM+ missionaries includes one serving in Detroit, Upuia Fineaso; and two serving in East Lansing, Joi McClellan and Erika Hernandez. The OYiM+ fellows, Andrew and Grady, will provide support to both programs. Although there are only a few that are officially serving, each of them firmly believe in God's call to serve Him this year. Stay tuned for their individual stories! ■

*Alanna Rodriguez, assistant to the director of Public Campus Ministry, Michigan Conference*



Ron Whitehead

▲ Artwork seen in a Kenosha window

## Lake Union responds to Kenosha shootings

We are deeply distressed about what happened in Kenosha, Wisconsin. In just one week, we witnessed the horrific police shooting of Jacob Blake and violent unrest devolving into mayhem, including the tragic shooting resulting in the death of two men during a protest. Those of us who love this country are pained to see the racial fractures splitting our nation and the increased tensions in our communities. As Seventh-day Adventists, we long to see inequities addressed and we long to see the Bible teaching “loving your neighbor as yourself” lived out as the overriding, guiding principle in our society.

As a result, we call on our Seventh-day Adventist members to be involved in what Paul calls a “*ministry of reconciliation*” (2 Corinthians 5:18). This ministry of reconciliation should include the following:

We call for all believers to pray for healing. Pray specifically for:

- The healing and recovery of Jacob Blake and for the families of the protesters who died (James 5:16).
- For our law enforcement and government officials so that they may act and speak wisely and justly (John 7:24).

- An end to systemic racism in our land. For this to happen we must first pray for the Holy Spirit to transform our own hearts and minds so we can recognize, confess and repent of our biases (Matthew 7:1-5). We also must pray for those who are treating and hurting others unjustly (Matthew 5:43-45).

We call on our members to reflect the healing ministry of Christ by being involved in local community compassion ministry (Galatians 6:2; Romans 15:1). We are thankful for the Seventh-day Adventist pastors and laity who gathered in Kenosha on Sabbath, Aug. 29, to worship and participate in clean-up activities, and pray with individuals in an African American neighborhood as well as with small business owners affected by the looting and arson fires. The Bible teaches that it is appropriate on Sabbath to both worship and perform a practical healing ministry for those who are hurting in our community (Matthew 12:10-12). There is no doubt that this ministry done in Kenosha, a ministry of healing and reconciliation, served as a healing balm.

The Lake Union calls on our members to take a stand against hate. We must recognize that violence of any sort is not in keeping with the character of Christ and,

therefore, an unacceptable route for the Christian. As Christians, we call on our members to take a stand for love, “agape” love. This love is the very character of God which accepts people from all races (Acts 10:34-35), keeps a tender heart and a humble mind (1 Peter 3:8), seeks the good of others (1 Corinthians 10:24) and is conscientious in performing unselfish acts of service to those who are in pain (Matthew 25:34-40).

For further information on this subject, we encourage you to please refer to the August issue of the *Lake Union Herald* to see how together we can make a difference. This issue of our magazine is devoted to the challenges we face and the core value of all Christians to embrace the ministry of reconciliation as brothers and sisters in Christ. ■

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*Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union general vice president and Multi-cultural Ministries coordinator*

**THE LAKE UNION CALLS ON OUR MEMBERS TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST HATE. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT VIOLENCE OF ANY SORT IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST AND, THEREFORE, AN UNACCEPTABLE ROUTE FOR THE CHRISTIAN.**

## New Wilson Church building opens

*Rebuilding after a fire presented its challenges, but 'the Lord just richly blessed on all levels through this process.'*

After a fire three years ago heavily damaged the Wilson Church building, members of the Michigan Upper Peninsula church worshipped in their new permanent home for the first time on Sabbath, Aug. 29.

"To have this building complete is significant," said Wilson Church pastor, Tom Hubbard. "We're thrilled at the opportunity to labor for the Lord and use it as a tool for outreach in our community and beyond."

Excitement was high for this first Sabbath service, and word of mouth about it brought a large number of neighbors and friends to share in the experience. Normally, there are 150 in attendance but over 200 people showed up. This could be called a "practice run," or "maiden voyage," or "shakedown cruise," as lists were made of things that needed to be added to make services welcoming and run smoothly. For instance, the guestbook from the old church had not been replaced, so an accurate recording of who came was not obtained. But several who have not attended recently were noted to be present.

One of those in attendance was Howard Berger, whose 101st birthday was a few weeks prior. He helped build the previous structure and last spring turned the first shovel of dirt at the groundbreaking for this newest sanctuary. "It is good," he said. "This building has so many features like the big foyer, and it's all on one level, so no damp basement." But then he noted, tongue-in-cheek, "It's disgusting that they've been able to do this without me."

Photos by Aaron Berger



▲ The new Wilson Church building opened for service on Aug. 29 and is the third Adventist church located on this site since 1908.

### Breaking Ground

On March 31, 2019, members of the church gathered for a groundbreaking celebration to begin construction on the 12,500 sq. ft. building. Constructed by Moyle Construction out of Houghton, Mich., the church was slated for completion in December 2019 but there were several delays. First, it was weather and then the pandemic caused construction to grind to a halt when the Michigan stay-at-home order was announced.

While the building was under construction, members met in the school's gymnasium across the street. According to Hubbard, it was a challenge getting the space ready each Sabbath, as every week during the school year students would take down the chairs on Monday morning and then set it back up on Friday afternoon. "It was quite the effort to bridge the gap," said Hubbard.

Hubbard is grateful to Adventist Risk Management for ensuring a smooth process and helping the church achieve a debt-free status. "The Lord just richly blessed us on all levels through this process," said Hubbard. "The church is a testimony to His blessings!" Now that the building is complete, Hubbard said, "It's nice to have it behind us so we can focus is on hastening of the coming of Jesus."

### Meaningful Location

There has been a church on this site for well over 100 years. It is called the Wilson

Church because it is on the Wilson mail route but, in fact, the town of Wilson has been virtually extinct for several decades. Even the mail for the mail route is no longer "put up" in the tiny post office. County Road 551 in Gourley Township of Menominee County is a busy road serving as a connection between highways 2 and 41 and M35. It is well traveled by folks going to Lake Michigan for boating, fishing, camping, and is a favorite of motorcyclists. Several large loads of logs go by every day. And, for the entire length of this road, there is not one commercial establishment. Thus, the presence of this structure which is obviously a place of Christian worship in this very rural setting makes a strong statement that we have this Hope in the coming of the Lord. ■

Charlotte Moon, member of the Wilson Church Building Committee



point of view

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# PASTOR

# APPRECIATION MONTH

## ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

- Oct. 9–11** *Pathfinder Skills Campout, Camp Akita*
- Oct. 14–21** *Mission Akita, Camp Akita (undetermined)*
- Oct. 23–25** *Youth "One Day" Youth Rally (virtual)*

## INDIANA CONFERENCE

- Oct. 9–10** *Indiana Academy Alumni Weekend (virtual)*
- Oct. 9–11** *Pathfinder Backpack Trip (stay tuned)*
- Oct. 17** *Sabbath School Workshop (virtual)*
- Oct. 23–25** *Public Campus Ministry Retreat (virtual)*

## LAKE REGION CONFERENCE

- Oct. 2–3** *Youth Ministries Leadership Summit (virtual)*
- Oct. 8–11** *Chicagoland Youth Federation (virtual)*
- Oct. 16–17** *Oakwood University Live (high school student recruitment)*
- Oct. 23** *Youth Justice Awareness program, 7 p.m. EDT, LRC YouTube channel*
- Oct. 30–31** *Black Adventist Youth Directors Association (BAYDA) Bible Bowl Championship*

## MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

- Oct. 2–4** *Public Campus Ministry Retreat, Camp Sagola*
- Oct. 23–25** *Teen Leaders in Training (TLT) Squared, Camp Au Sable*

## WISCONSIN CONFERENCE

- Oct. 16–18** *Wisconsin Academy Alumni Weekend*
- Oct. 30–Nov. 1** *JAHWI Retreat, Camp Wakonda (canceled)*

## LAKE UNION

- Oct. 23–25** *Lake Union Club Ministries Training, Berrien Springs*

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>. Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside back cover.

## ANNIVERSARY



**Charles and Janet Schlunt** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 19, 2020. They have been members of the Terre Haute Church in Terre Haute, Ind., for 15 years. They were married on Sunday, June 19, 1960, in Battle Creek, Mich., by Pastor James Rhoades. Charles was an Adventist educator until his retirement in 2005; and Janet was a teacher and secretary until 2003 when she retired.

For their celebration, the Schlunts traveled to northern Michigan to Mackinac Island, places in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and then to Manitowoc, Wis., where they boarded a car ferry to cross Lake Michigan back to Indiana.

The Schlunt family includes their children, Sylvia and Glen Middaugh of Terre Haute, Ind.; Norman Schlunt of Ontario, Ore.; and Raewyn (David) Cheng, deceased; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

## OBITUARIES

**ERVICK, Donald "Don" Kenneth**, age 89; born Oct. 9, 1930, in Chicago, Ill., died Aug. 15, 2020, in Midland, Mich. He was a member of the Midland Church in Midland. Survivors include his wife, Joyce A. (Wines) Ervick; sons, Clifford Ervick, Todd Ervick, and Donald Ervick Jr.; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Rodney Thompson; interment was in Midland Cemetery.

**GRUBBS, Carolyn M.**, age 93; born March 16, 1927, in St. Louis, Mo.; died Aug. 10, 2020, in Battle Creek, Mich. She was a member of the Urbandale Church in Urbandale, Mich. Survivors include brothers, Jim Grubbs, Harry Grubbs, Burgess Grubbs, and Charles Grubbs; and sister, Sue (Grubbs) Perkins. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. Lari Grubbs; interment was at Green Pond Cemetery in Pearl, Ill.

**HEISIG, Betty Lou (Olson)**, age 92; born Jan. 12, 1928, in Madison, Wis.; died July 22, 2020, in Monona, Wis. She was a member of the Madison East Church in Madison. Survivors include Gregory H. (Anita) Heisig, and James William Sr. (Becky) Heisig; and daughter Julie (Kent) Ganske. Funeral services were conducted by Titus Naftanaila and Lren Nelson; interment was in Roselawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Madison.

**HENDRICKS, Kenneth J.**, age 66; born July 14, 1953, in Holly, Mich.; died June 29, 2020, in Loma Linda, Calif. Survivors include sisters, Wanda (Harold) Blackwell; Louise (Bill) Smith; brother, Gary (Sabrina) Hendricks; sister, Mary (Richard) Bendler; five nieces and three nephews. Inurnment will be later this year in Mt. Vernon, Mo.

**LUDEMAN, Robert "Bob"**, age 91; born April 28, 1929, in Kolin, Mont.; died May 30, 2020, in Niles, Mich. He was a member of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. Survivors include his brother, Russell

(Karin) Ludeman. Private family memorial and inurnment will take place at a later date in Hot Springs, Mont.

**MCCALMENT, Frank**, age 97; born May 14, 1922, in Veedersburg, Ind.; died March 21, 2020, in South Bend, Ind. He was a member of the Niles Westside Church in Niles, Mich., but previously a long-time member of 54 years at the Muskegon Church, in Muskegon, Mich. Survivors include his wife, Marilyn (Parmer); daughters, Cheryl Bishop, and Carol (Dan) Minter; sister, Eleanor Fleming; five grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Daryl la Roux and Dr. Bruce Bauer, with private military inurnment.

**RORABECK, Richard**, age 93; born April 2, 1927, in Hastings, Mich.; died July 11, 2020, in Royaltown Township, Mich. He was a member of the Village Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. Survivors include his son, John A. Rorabeck; daughter, Donna J. (Rorabeck) Davis; half-brothers, Wayne Roush, and Ray Roush; half-sister, Carole (Roush) Hussey; and two grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Ron Kelly, Paul Pellandini and Endi Stoyanovic; interment was in Rose Hill Cemetery in Oronoko Township, Mich.

**TRUXAL, Kenneth Raymond**, age 70; born Nov. 10, 1949, in Terre Haute, Ind.; died Aug. 1, 2020, in Terre Haute. He was a member of the Terre Haute Church in Terre Haute. Survivors include his wife, Joyce (Payton) Truxal; sons, Dustin (Evelyn) Truxal, and Matthew (Brooke) Truxal; daughter, Heather Zentner; four sisters; and six grandchildren. Funeral services were held; interment was in Roselawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Terre Haute.

**WATTS, Helen (Kwiek)**, age 91; born Jan. 9, 1926, in Sandusky, Mich.; died September 2017, in Howell, Mich. She was a member of the Farmington Church in Farmington, Mich. Survivors include sons, Wesley R. Watts, William E. Watts, and Timothy J. Watts; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Ira Lane and William Down; inurnment was in Northville, Mich.

Churches, schools, conferences, institutions and organizations may submit announcements to the *Lake Union Herald* through their local conference communication directors. An easy way to do this is to visit the *Lake Union Herald* website at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org> and submit the announcement online. Readers may verify dates and times of programs with the respective sources, as these events are subject to change. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SHARON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN MILWAUKEE IS CELEBRATING 100 YEARS (1920–2020).** You are invited to a **special virtual anniversary program on October 30 and 31.** For more details, visit our website: [www.mke-sharonsda.com](http://www.mke-sharonsda.com).

**WEEK OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL: LOOK TO GOD IN DIFFICULT TIMES, Oct. 19–23.** Where can you find hope during difficult times? Join the AdventHealth family in exploring the topics of loss, discouragement, anxiety, loneliness and anger. You will find hope in God's promises and practical help for living in difficult times. Visit [www.LakeUnionHerald.org](http://www.LakeUnionHerald.org) to subscribe to the daily video messages.

**CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS**

- Oct. 3** Local Church Budget
- Oct. 10** World Budget (*Emphasis: NAD Voice of Prophecy/ La Voz de la Esperanza*)
- Oct. 17** Local Church Budget
- Oct. 24** Local Conference Advance
- Oct. 31** Union-designated

**CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS**

**FOCUS FOR THE MONTH — ADVENTIST HERITAGE**

- Oct. 3** Children's Sabbath
- Oct. 10** Spirit of Prophecy Sabbath
- Oct. 10** Clergy Appreciation Sabbath
- Oct. 17** Pathfinder Sabbath

All classified ads must be sent to your local conference for approval. No phoned ads will be accepted. Allow at least eight weeks for publication. Fifty words maximum. No limit of insertions. Rates: \$36 per insertion for Lake Union church members; \$46 per insertion for all others. A form is available at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org> for printing out and filling in your ad. Ads must be prepaid. Make money order or check payable to the Lake Union Conference. There will be no refunds for cancellations. The *Lake Union Herald* cannot be responsible for advertisements appearing in its columns, and reserves the right to edit ads in accordance with editorial policies. The *Lake Union Herald* does not accept responsibility for typographical errors. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

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**RESTAURANT** — for sale across from Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, TX. Has survived well during COVID-19. Great opportunity. Please call Jody at 540-454-5960.

**EMPLOYMENT**

**HEAD RANGER NEEDED AT TIMBER RIDGE CAMP** — Timber Ridge Camp is taking applications for a new Head Ranger. Send résumés to [pastorcharliet@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcharliet@gmail.com).

**STALLANT HEALTH, A RURAL HEALTH CLINIC IN WEIMAR, CALIF.** — Is accepting applications for an Optometrist to join the team. Interested individuals should contact Marva by email: [marva@stallanthealth.com](mailto:marva@stallanthealth.com).

**TOPSHAM DENTAL ARTS** — located in picturesque coastal Maine, is seeking Christ centered Dentist, Dental Hygienist, and Dental Assistant. Please send résumé to Dr. Nichols at [tda@topshamdentalarts.com](mailto:tda@topshamdentalarts.com).

	Oct. 2	Oct. 9	Oct. 16	Oct. 23	Oct. 30
Berrien Springs, Mich.	7:23	7:11	7:00	6:50	6:40
Chicago, Ill.	6:29	6:17	6:06	5:55	5:46
Detroit, Mich.	7:10	6:58	6:47	6:36	6:26
Indianapolis, Ind.	7:23	7:12	7:02	6:52	6:43
La Crosse, Wis.	6:42	6:29	6:18	6:06	5:56
Lansing, Mich.	7:16	7:04	6:52	6:41	6:32
Madison, Wis.	6:35	6:23	6:11	6:00	5:50
Springfield, Ill.	6:37	6:26	6:16	6:06	5:57



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Village Seventh-Day Adventist Church | Berrien Springs, MI

**DANIEL 11 CONFERENCE**  
OCTOBER 22-24



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# Show His Love Through Actions

By Kandis Draw



Irina Doytcheva Photography

▲ Miki Valchinova

**ON ANY GIVEN SABBATH WHEN YOU APPROACH THE BOLINGBROOK CHURCH,** before you walk in the sanctuary, you are welcomed by a group of warm, loving individuals who smile and greet you. Amongst these greeters is 20-year-old Miki Valchinova.

Miki and her parents migrated to the United States from Bulgaria when she was just four years old. She was taught at an early age to “trust and believe God,” no matter what, due to the many issues that her family faced as new immigrants to this country. Her fondest memory growing up was her first communion and a turning point in her life was when she was baptized at 15. Miki was worried because she didn’t quite grasp all the laws and traditions that she had seen and heard regarding baptism, but she knew she loved Jesus and He had convicted her to give her life to Him.

It was when José St. Phard, former pastor of Bolingbrook Church, emphasized to her that, “God

doesn’t need you to be perfect; He needs you to be you” that she decided to move forward and live out His will for her life.

As a pre-med major who just began her junior year at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Miki is coming face-to-face with, as she describes it, “a world without love.” Several of her peers struggle with the longing for more, being mostly atheists and agnostics, but they have a deep, profound respect for her. She has earned the nickname “mom” because she is always careful to give advice, but does so in a loving manner. Miki shares her faith openly, but never wants to be judgmental towards anyone.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and her campus shut down, she encountered many students who had no place to go, so she encouraged them the best she could. Miki says she relates to people in this manner because Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb who spoke up when needed and dealt gently with people. Bolingbrook associate pastor, David Quilitan, recognizes these qualities in Miki and describes her as an adaptive leader. “No matter what situation or context she finds herself in,” he explains, “she is able to lead from her values and principles, and parse them into her current situation.”

Here are a few tips Miki says that you must remember when dealing with people who don’t believe as you do. First, have boundaries, and don’t let anyone manipulate your niceness. Say “No” when needed. Second, don’t just talk about God; show His love through your actions. Lastly, your job as a Christian is to love that person and plant the seed. Let the Holy Spirit do the rest!

Miki credits Jesus and the Seventh-day Adventist medical missionary, David Livingston, as her ultimate heroes and examples. She wants her life as a doctor to be about compassionate treatment and not based solely on money. Her ultimate goals are to show God’s love to everyone she encounters. ■

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*Kandis Draw is a member of Bolingbrook Church and a columnist for an online women’s magazine called Curvicality.*

## Serve Like Jesus

By Elijah Horton



Arlene Leavitt

▲ Pedro Dominguez

**PEDRO DOMINGUEZ ATTENDED GREAT LAKES ADVENTIST ACADEMY (GLAA)** and, during his junior year, he was often sought out to sing during the Praise and Worship service segment. Since he was a member of the high school choir, initially he didn't mind, although he didn't think of himself as a singer. "I was fine with doing praise and worship or singing in groups because there were other people singing," he shyly admits.

As time went on, Dominguez recalls being asked to sing more and more frequently, and to do so with fewer and fewer people accompanying him. "I felt nervous," he recounts. His attempts to surreptitiously decline fell on deaf ears.

In 2018, Pedro graduated from GLAA, moved back home to Chicago and enrolled at Wilbur Wright College, where he is currently studying Networking, Computer and Cybersecurity. His goal is to work in the government intelligence community, fighting cybercrime.

For a few months after returning home, the 19-year-old continued helping out with

the AV system at Chicago Logan Square Hispanic Church, while contemplating the idea of uploading to YouTube songs of which he'd done covers. Finally, on January 18, 2019, he gave in and uploaded a cover of "Here Again" by Elevation Worship.

"I didn't really expect much," he says, but in the days and weeks following, he received affirmation and support from friends and family, as well as positive feedback in the comments section. "One comment [in particular] changed my whole mindset," he recalls. "A person said, 'No matter what you're doing, make sure you're doing it to glorify God.'" He has covenanted to do just that: use his talents, his ministry, to glorify God.

In the last year-and-a-half since Pedro uploaded that first video, churches as far west as California and as far south as Florida have called to come and sing. "I've always had a passion for youth and youth ministries. It's what I love to do — minister and show who God is through music."

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the landscape of churches and the conventional church services have changed. With churches adjusting to new delivery platforms, Pedro is receiving requests for videos of his musical performances to be used for various livestream church services. He's grateful to be living out his mantra, "Serve like Jesus; live like Jesus," and is reminded that, despite the situation, we can use the tools at our disposal to minister for Christ. ■

*To hear Pedro singing, scan this code:*



*Elijah Horton is a Chicago-based freelance writer.*

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